
My Heart's in the Highlands, by the Author of 'the Nut-Brown Maids'.

Keddie Henrietta

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MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS.

MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'THE NUT-BROWN MAIDS.'

'My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here,
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.'

BURNS.

'Were it not for the French and the caterpillars we should be quite happy;
but the former disturb our peace and the latter our gooseberries.'

ANNIE GRANT OF LAGGAN.

LONDON:
PARKER, SON, AND BOURN, WEST STRAND.

1861.

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THE Author is indebted to a song and a picture for the name of the book, and to Anne Grant of Laggan's Letters and the great Doctor's famous 'Tour' for contemporary casts of character, modes, and customs.



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MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS.

CHAPTER I.

SUNSHINE AND SHADE.

IN her little hat and tartan habit—for those were the days when ladies perversely walked in habits, and many a fair town bride was churched in a riding-dress who never mounted steed either in her married or maiden days—in her habit, with the long, inconvenient skirt tucked smartly over her arm, and carrying a bag rather notable and useful than ornamental, but with a handful of wild flowers, particularly the rich yellow lady's bedstraw, because she loved cheerful flowers—Mary Macdonnel walked up Glen Aldour.

Glen Aldour, with its *towns* and *parks*, was on a small scale, but it had many of the essentials of a Highland strath—a little loch, a tumbling river, a glen 'opening back' from the house of the laird, with tacksmen's houses and cottages, 'where every man

was a hunter, a fisher, and an architect in his own way, and there was a musician in every house, and a poet in every hamlet.' It answered the description of another glen, 'so narrow, so warm, so fertile, so overhung by mountains which seem to meet above you, with sides so shrubby and woody, the haunt of roes and numberless small birds.' Its patriarchal mansion stood alone, but its scattered dependents clustered round, and its braes, 'like lofty wa's,' closed the whole into one large family circle, and shut out the rest of the stranger world.

This was the bold nest of a sparrow-hawk, not the wild eyrie of an eagle. The loch was a lochan—a lovely blue basin; the river was a burn; and many of the heather hills might well have been climbed 'without a sob' by Malcolm Græme, since Mary had ascended them again and again every summer within her recollection. But then Mary was a hardy mountain maiden, as active as most boys, and there was one towering summit—the shoulder of the pass, the Ben Falloch of the neighbourhood—which Mary only secretly sighed to attempt, but had never yet accomplished. The patriarchal mansion was no more than a tall, narrow white house, with small, irregular windows, steep roof, odd turrets projecting from the gable, and a honeysuckle porch, which the flowery good or bad taste of some gentle domestic laird had substituted for the strong, stone-arched doorway; and the ancient grey tower, nearer the loch, existed only in such crumbling masses that its half-levelled walls were a favourite