

CHAPTER V.

THE SCOTS AND THE IRISH REBELLION OF 1641.

THERE is mingled pain and pleasure in reading the history of the Great Rebellion, as it affected first Scotland, and then England. There is no feeling but pain and weariness for him who is so unfortunate as to be compelled to toil through the sad story of the long-drawn-out struggle, which for ten years desolated Ireland, and which needed Cromwell's iron hand and iron will to bring to an end, so that the weary wretched land might have rest. Much misery, much bloodshed the great Civil War caused in England: but it has left a glorious legacy in the memory of Cromwell's strong manhood; of Milton's noble purity of purpose and search after an ideal in politics; of the manly simplicity of many brave men who fought and died on either side—Pym, and Hampden, and Falkland; while we Scots are proud to record the intellectual greatness and moral worth of Henderson and of Rutherford, and never tire to sing the praises of that dashing cavalier, "Bonnie

Dundee." There is no silver lining to the black cloud which forms Irish history at this time ; there is no name among the English and Scots who fought in Ireland which should be rescued from kindly oblivion ; while the one man of pure life and principle whom the Irish put forward—Owen Roe O'Neill—lacked that strength and moral force which made men like George Washington the founders of great nations.

It is fortunately not necessary here to recount at length the horrors which characterised the revolt of the Irish in 1641, or to relate the confused story of the prolonged civil war which followed, and desolated the land. For nearly two centuries a strife of tongues has raged regarding the character of the revolt, and apologists have been found who have denied the atrocities committed on the settlers, and done their best to wipe out the bloody stain which rests on the character of the Irish people. The difficulty of arriving at the truth regarding this sad portion of Irish history is very great ; for not only are the facts covered over thick with the fabrications of succeeding generations of controversialists, but even the original documents of the period are not to be trusted, many of them being framed for the purposes of deceit. Recent research has, however, proved, that while the accounts of the horrors of the revolt have been greatly exaggerated, the cruelties practised were only too horrible. This must have been so ; for it is to be remembered that in Ireland it was

the rising of race against race, and that the race which rose in rebellion was the lower in civilisation, and considered that it was suffering under grievous wrongs at the hands of the Government of their conquerors. Probably no fairer or more weighty account of the Rebellion of 1641 has been written than that of Mr Lecky, who says—"No impartial writer will deny that the rebellion in Ulster was extremely savage and bloody, though it is certainly not true that its barbarities were either unparalleled or unprovoked. They were, for the most part, the unpremeditated acts of a half-savage populace."¹ (*starved*)

Wentworth's government bore hardly on the Ulster Scots, and there are traces in his letters that he had in view a plan even more thoroughgoing than dra-gooning and religious persecution. He certainly did not like these Irish Presbyterians, and feared their sternness. There seems to have floated in his mind some half-formed plan of getting quit of their troubling for ever by driving them out of Ulster in a body.² It was not fated, however, that Wentworth was to carry out his plan; the Scots were to remain, and their stern determination to have their own way was destined to trouble the Irish dictator of the nineteenth as it had done his prototype of the seven-teenth century. Wentworth was by far the ablest,

¹ History of England in the Eighteenth Century, by W. E. H. Lecky, vol. ii. p. 143. Compare also Gardiner's Fall of the Monarchy of Charles I., chaps. xv. and xvi.

² Reid, vol. i. p. 273.

and therefore the most dangerous, of all Charles I.'s lieutenants, and when the Long Parliament began its sittings in 1640, he was its first victim. He was impeached and executed, his death leaving Ireland really without government; for he had permitted no one near him who was capable of grasping the reins when they fell from his hands. Wentworth's rule had been hard on all—on the Roman Catholics, whether Irish or Norman-Irish, as well as on the Presbyterians, and he had given fresh sharpness and poignancy to the remembrance of the many wrongs under which they suffered. To men smarting under great grievances, the time appeared well suited for a blow for freedom. The Scottish people had just accomplished a successful rebellion, and had compelled the English king virtually to agree to all that it demanded; while England itself was evidently rapidly drifting into civil war. Ireland, moreover, was almost devoid of troops, for the army which Wentworth had raised was disbanded early in 1641; while the Government at Dublin was in the hands of two Lord Justices, lacking both character and ability. The northern settlers, besides, were without cohesion, and badly armed. The leaders of the Irish determined on a great struggle for independence. The rising was arranged with great ability, the plan being consummated largely by the aid of Roman Catholic friars, who passed from district to district unnoticed. Warning of impending danger was sent from England to the Lord Justices, but they remained unmoved;

and Dublin Castle itself would have been secured by the rebels if one of the party intrusted with its surprisal had not turned traitor on the evening before the outbreak.

It was in Ulster that the greatest fury of the rising was felt, for it was in the northern province that the land had been to the fullest extent taken from the original proprietors ; religion, patriotism, and interest therefore alike called on the native population to attempt to recover supremacy. On the night of the 22d October 1641, all over Ulster, as if with one accord, the Irish rose on the English settlers, who lived in most cases in isolated farmhouses in the midst of an Irish population ; while armed bodies, led by the chiefs of the Irish septs, easily surprised most of the forts, which were feebly held by small English garrisons. The plan of the original settlement had been broken through by Wentworth, when he, out of jealousy of the Presbyterians, disarmed the country, and so destroyed that system of defence which James I. had wisely judged necessary for the protection of the settlement. Before the morning broke all Ulster was ablaze with burning villages and farmhouses. There followed what must take place in every agrarian revolt—murder and outrage, even though it may have been true that “the main and strong view of the common Irish was plunder,”¹ and that the leaders, with some exceptions, deprecated murder, and desired only the expulsion of the English.

¹ Carte's History of Ormond, p. 175.

The settlers were driven out of their homes unarmed and defenceless, many of them stripped of clothing, in a singularly inclement season, with no place of refuge near at hand to which they could retreat; while around them flocked, like birds of prey, all the blackguardism of an unsettled country. It is not necessary nor desirable to describe the horrors which accompanied the flight of this miserable crowd—men, women, and children, the aged, scarce able to walk, the babe at the breast—toward the cities of refuge on the coast. None dared give them shelter or succour their distress. Many perished of cold and hunger, many were barbarously outraged and murdered; while famine and fever carried off in Dublin and Londonderry and Coleraine not a few of those who had escaped the perils of the way. One curious point it is very difficult to determine—how far the Scottish settlers suffered along with the English. It appears that the leaders of the revolt desired to distinguish between the two nationalities, probably rather to cause diversity of interest than because the Irish had reason to love Scottish more than English settlers, or because Presbyterians were more tolerant of Roman Catholics than Episcopalians.¹ It is stated by one of the bravest of the Englishmen engaged in the defence of the colony in Fermanagh, that “in the infancy of the rebellion the rebels made open proclamations upon pain of death that no Scotchman should be stirred in body, goods,

¹ Lecky's History, vol. ii. p. 130.

or lands, and that they should to this purpose write over the lyntels of their doors that they were Scotchmen, and so destruction might pass over their families."¹ This may have been the intention of the Irish leaders, but no such plan could possibly have been carried out after their followers had tasted blood, and we know for certain that many Scottish settlers perished in the uprising, while, of course, very many fell in the long civil war which followed. The Scottish settlements, as far as they escaped destruction, seem to have owed their safety to the thoroughness with which the plantation had been carried out. Thus the original Scottish colony in North Down did not suffer severely; while the settlement, by this time probably more Scottish than English, in South Antrim, and the plantation along the Foyle in Donegal and Londonderry, escaped with little injury, because in all these districts the foreign population was stronger than the native, and because the planters soon took arms in defence of their hearths and homes.

When the rebellion broke out, Charles I. was in Edinburgh, endeavouring to make terms with the Scottish Parliament, in order to separate the interests of the Covenanters from the English Puritan party. The news of the outbreak was sent to the King by Sir Arthur Chichester, Governor of Carrickfergus, and Charles read the letter to the Scottish Parlia-

¹ Lecky's History, vol. ii. p. 130, note.

ment on the 28th October 1641.¹ Chichester's letter, dated two days after the outbreak, announced that "certain septs of the Irish" had risen in force, and that "great fires" could be seen from Carrickfergus. The House at once appointed a committee to consider the matter, and instructed it while it awaited fuller news from Ireland to meet, that afternoon, with Lord Eglinton, and inquire "what shipping the western coast of Scotland can afford." The inquiry drew out the answer that shipping for four to five thousand men could be found from Glasgow to Ayr.² By 1st November the King was able to give Parliament more exact information, which he communicated in person. He read a despatch from the Lords Justices, informing him that all the north of Ireland was in rebellion; and asked the assistance of the Scottish Parliament, desiring especially their help in saving Carrickfergus and Londonderry. "The President answered, these two places did indeed very much concern the Scots, that were most numerous in the north parts of that kingdom. His Majesty replied, if he had not been a Scotsman himself, he had not spoken that."³ The King knew that he appealed to Scotsmen as such, and that in a matter so important as the safety of their Ulster kinsmen, they would rise superior to the intense party hate which then divided Covenanters from Cavaliers.

¹ Balfour's *Annales of Scotland*, vol. iii. p. 119.

² Thomson's *Acts of Scottish Parliament*.

³ Balfour's *Annales*, vol. iii. p. 129.

The Scottish Parliament was not slow in responding, for on the 3d November, only ten days after the revolt broke out, it adopted the report of the committee, which recommended that if the English Parliament would accept their assistance, and were willing to pay the troops, a Scottish force of 10,000 men should be sent into Ulster; and further, "that they should supply their brethren in Ireland with arms out of the common magazine for 3000 men, two parts muskets and the third part pikes."¹ The practical difficulty was that Ireland was a dependency of England, and that therefore the Scottish Parliament had no right to send troops without the consent of England. The force was promptly offered, but not so promptly accepted by the English Parliament, which was at this time entering on its long struggle over the Great Remonstrance. Ireland was therefore on this occasion, as it has been so often since, sacrificed to the contention of English parties; for the English Cavaliers objected to the employment of an army of Covenanters, fearing what it might do in case of success in Ireland; while the Roundheads as strongly protested against the King being allowed to raise any other force to be sent to Ireland, in case it might be afterwards used against the liberties of his English subjects.

Meanwhile the news of the rebellion, and the reports of the atrocities attendant on it, had sent a shudder of rage and horror through Scotland, in the

¹ Balfour's Annales, vol. iii. p. 134.

same way that the tidings of the Indian Mutiny excited this country during the autumn months of 1857. The diary of John Spalding of Aberdeen, who was a kind of seventeenth-century James Boswell, and kept jottings from day to day of what struck him, is full of the prevailing feeling. His evidence is the better proof that this sympathy was universal in Scotland, and not confined to one party, from the fact that he himself was Episcopalian in his leanings, and not therefore of the party which was supreme in Parliament. "Great cruelty in Ireland, and mekill blood spilt of the English and Scottish Puritan Protestants; fire and sword went almost through the whole land, nor mercy to sex or kind, young or old, man, woman, or child, all put to death, and their goods spoiled."¹ Again, some months later, he writes that the Irish use "fire, sword, and all manner of cruelty against man, wife, and bairn of English, Scottish, and Irish Covenanters within their kingdom, without pity or compassion."² The same annalist tells that on 27th February 1642, a collection was made in every parish in the kingdom for behoof of the Ulster Scots, who were forced to flee into the west parts of Scotland. He adds that out of "this poor paroche fourscoir poundis were collected."³ This flight of great numbers of Ulster settlers into the parts of Scotland from which

¹ Memorials of the Troubles in Scotland (Spalding Club), vol. ii. p. 99.

² *Ibid.*, p. 155.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

they had emigrated, is corroborated by the Records of the City of Glasgow. In February 1642, the Council votes a sum from the city funds for behoof of the refugees. This not proving sufficient, on the 5th March the Corporation "ordanis ane proclamation to be sent throw the toune to desyre all these quha will give or contribut any supplie to the distressed people that com from Ireland, that they cum upon Weddnesday next at the ringing of the bells."¹ The great excitement caused in Scotland by the rebellion in Ulster, and the intense interest shown by the country in the fate of the settlers, prove conclusively how many in every part of the mother country were personally concerned for friends and relatives among the settlers in the North of Ireland.

When at last, in the end of January 1642, terms were arranged between the English and Scottish Parliaments,² the Scottish authorities had no difficulty in finding at once a portion of the troops which they wished to send to Ulster. Scotsmen had been fighting for a generation on both sides of the great Thirty Years' War, and many of these "soldiers of fortune" had returned home when the war broke out between Scotland and King Charles in 1638. The Scottish Estates had now three regiments which had not been disbanded after the King's surrender—two stationed near Edinburgh and one in Aberdeen, where it had

¹ Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Glasgow, vol. 1630-1662.

² Rushworth, vol. iv. p. 501.

been sent to overawe the northern Episcopalians.¹ These regiments were at once ordered to Ireland, while after the manner of the time, certain noblemen received commissions to raise other regiments to follow. There exist two most vivid sketches of the character of these troops, who were mostly professional soldiers, trained in the wars of the Continent. In Scotland they had been led against Charles by men of genius and high enthusiasm, and had behaved well; in Ireland their leaders had no spark of genius, and discipline soon became slack. We can therefore easily understand why they accomplished but little, and were not an unmixed blessing to the northern settlers. Let one of their commanding officers, Major Turner, speak for himself: "I had swallowed without chewing, in Germanie, a very dangerous maxime, which militariemen there too much follow, which was, that so we serve our master honestlie, it is no matter what master we serve"²—quite the code of morals for a soldier of fortune. Here, too, is an account of how the regiment in which Turner served, Lord Sinclair's, had behaved while posted at Aberdeen: "This regiment did no good, but maikill evil, daylie deboshing, in drinking, nicht walking, combatting, sweiring, and brocht sindrie honest women servants to great misery."³ The Scottish army of Ulster was placed under the command of David

¹ Memoirs of his own Life and Time, by Sir James Turner, p. 17.

² Turner's Memoirs, p. 14. ³ Spalding, vol. ii. p. 101.

Leslie, "newly created Earl of Leven, for his successful rebellion against the King;" and the advanced-guard, which crossed from the western ports to Carrickfergus on the 14th April 1642, was led by his lieutenant, Monro, who, like Leslie, and most of the army, officers and privates, had been trained on the Continent in the Thirty Years' War.

But long before the Scottish forces landed at Carrickfergus, the Ulster settlers had recovered from their first panic, and had formed themselves into regiments for mutual defence. It is a fact, that if the Irish leaders intended to respect the lives of the Scottish settlers, it was the latter who formed the greater portion of this militia. From the open country of Cavan, Armagh, Tyrone, Londonderry, and Fermanagh, the rebellion swept the English and Scottish settlers; "for the wild Irish did not onlie massacre all whom they could overmaster, but burnt townes, villages, castles, churches, and all habitable houses, endeavouring to reduce, as far as their power could reach, all to confused chaos."¹ Enniskillen was saved by the bravery of its people, who again, fifty years later, showed the stuff of which they were made. Londonderry and Coleraine were safe, while the south of Antrim and north of Down, and the settlement on the borders of Tyrone and Donegal, had been rescued from plunder. From these districts as centres the settlers attacked the Irish. In the east, the regiments were commanded by Chichester and Lord Conway,

¹ Turner's Memoirs, p. 19.

and by the natural leaders of the Scots, Lord Montgomery, and Hamilton, Lord Clannaboye; in the west the settlers of West Tyrone and East Donegal rallied round two very capable Scotsmen, Sir William and Sir Robert Stewart, who proved in the war that was to follow, dashing partisan leaders.¹ To these troops arms were sent by both the English and Scottish Councils, while the settlers supplemented this supply by purchasing arms. There is a proof of this in the Register House of Edinburgh, in the shape of a quaint bond, whereby Mure of Caldwell became security that his kinsman Lord Clannaboye would pay for 400 muskets at 10 pounds Scots each, which he had purchased from the "Scottish War Office."²

During the winter of 1641-42, these forces more than held their own against the Irish, and after Monro's arrival in April 1642, they were able, in conjunction with him, to push southwards, and retake and garrison Newry. In the west, too, the Stewarts recovered the command of much of Tyrone and Londonderry counties, and relieved Coleraine, which had been hardly pressed. Thus the principal Scottish settlements were freed, and many who had fled to Scotland, either from Wentworth's tyranny or after the rising of October 1641, began to return to Ulster. One peculiar effect the rebellion had on the North of Ireland—it swept away the Church established by law, the bishops and most of the parish clergy-

¹ Reid's History, chaps. vii. and viii.

² Hamilton's MS., p. 46.

men having perished or fled. In its place, the Scottish army proceeded to establish a Presbyterian Church. It would appear that it was the custom for each regiment to have an ordained minister as chaplain, and to elect from the officers a regular kirk-session.¹ In June 1642, the clergy and elders attached to the Scottish regiments met as a Presbytery at Carrickfergus, and, in conjunction with a number of the Scottish residents of Down and Antrim, petitioned the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, which met at St Andrews in July, to send over a number of ministers. The Assembly consented, and appointed certain members who had been settled as ministers in Ireland before Wentworth's persecution, to proceed on a mission to Ireland. This mission the Assembly repeated next year; and in 1644, a larger deputation was sent to carry the Solemn League and Covenant to Ireland and to present it to the people. The Assembly's deputation on this occasion proceeded all through Ulster, as far south as Sligo and Enniskillen, and both troops and settlers, English as well as Scottish, adopted the Covenant in great numbers.² It is evident that the great majority of the settlers left in Ulster were Presbyterians; for not only would the Scots be so almost without exception, but very many of the English who had immigrated since 1610, belonged to the Puritan party.

Meanwhile the operations of Monro's little army were sadly hampered for want of supplies. It is

¹ Reid's History, vol. i, p. 370.

² Ibid., chaps. ix., x.

doubtful whether his force ever reached the stipulated number of 10,000, although it is certain that 4000 men joined it in the autumn of 1642. The arrangement between the two Parliaments had been that the English should pay the Scottish troops; but by the autumn of 1642, England was plunged in civil war, and the money which had been raised for the war in Ireland was seized to carry on war against Charles.¹ The Scottish regiments, therefore, fared very badly, and at times seem to have been driven to live on the country in which they were settled. The campaign of 1643 was not a brilliant one, although ground was recovered. The winter found the troops very discontented; ² they had received almost no pay since they landed, and when news came of the proposed expedition into England in support of the Parliament, three of the regiments were no longer to be held back, but returned to Scotland against orders.³ The Ulster settlers were greatly alarmed at the prospect of being left unprotected should the rest of the Scottish troops also go; but fortunately a supply of money and of provisions arrived at Carrickfergus in April 1644—a portion of the food being a free gift of 3000 bolls of meal from the shire of Ayr. About the same time, too, the Dutch showed their sympathy with the cause of Protestantism in Ireland by making a collection in all the churches of Holland

¹ Rushworth, vol. iv. p. 775.

² Turner's Memoirs, p. 29.

³ Reid's History, vol. i. p. 436.

by order of the States-General: they transmitted to Ulster four shiploads of provisions and clothing, which were distributed among both people and soldiery.¹

Thus once more Presbyterianism was re-established in the North of Ireland, and rapidly strengthened its organisation, until, in 1647, there were thirty regular congregations in Ulster. Meanwhile the war dragged its slow length along, devastating the country horribly, and causing terrible loss of life, with changing fortune, and ever-varying parties, until Cromwell crossed in 1650, and in one dreadful campaign crushed the opposition of Catholic and Presbyterian alike, and established the rule of the English Parliament. At first Cromwell's Government pressed hardly on the Ulster Presbyterians, and many of the settlers were scheduled for transportation into Leinster and Munster on account of their having opposed the army of the Commonwealth.² Cromwell relented, however; the orders for transportation were not carried out, although lands seem to have been found for some of the Commonwealth soldiers in the northern counties.³ Government allowances were made to the Presbyterian clergy; and under Cromwell's strict rule the North of Ireland seems to have recovered steadily from the terrible blow of the Rebellion of October 1641.

¹ Reid's History, vol. i. p. 437.

² Ibid., vol. ii. pp. 187 and 552.

³ Prendergast's Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland, p. 90.