

## CHAPTER II.

THE SCOT SETTLES NORTH DOWN AND COUNTY  
ANTRIM.

TWO miles south from Donaghadee, on the shore road into the Upper Ards, that narrow peninsula between Strangford Lough and the Irish Sea, there lies a little enclosure which must arrest the stranger's attention. It is a graveyard, and is called Templepatrick. It is surrounded by low stone walls; no church or temple is now within its confines; no trees or flowers give grateful shade, or lend colour and tender interest; it is thickly covered with green mounds, and with monumental slabs of grey slaty stone,—the graves are packed close together. Read the simple "headstones," and you discover no trace of sentiment; few fond and loving words; no request for the prayers of the passer-by for the souls of those who sleep below; nothing more akin to sentiment than "Sacred to the memory of." Above, great masses of grey clouds, as they go scudding past, throw down on the traveller, as he res

and thinks, big drops of rain; and before him is spread out, north, south, and east, the sullen sea, whose moan fills all his sense of hearing. It is not the spot which a man would love to picture to himself as his last resting-place. Read the names on the stones, and you discover why here in Ireland there is to be found nothing of tender grace to mark the higher side, nothing of tinsel to show the lower, of Irish character. The names are very Scottish—such as Andrew Byers, John Shaw, Thomas M'Millan, Robert Angus; it is a burying-place of the simple peasants of County Down, who are still, in the end of the nineteenth century, as Scottish as they were when they landed here nearly three centuries ago. *In 1910 this is part of row 10*

These graveyards of the Scots are now on every shore,—among the great forests of Canada, as well as here by the side of the Irish Sea; where the new Dunedin rises out of the Southern Ocean, as well as in the old Dunedin, under the shadow of its Castle rock. Thus enter into a common rest those who shared a common toil, whether in the old motherland, or far away scattered over the wide world. Why should they indulge in sentiment in death who have known only stern toil in life?—for them is more fitting some expression of that high faith which they have kept, even though they may in holding it have made it somewhat unlovely. And what reck's it, after all, to the Scot whether he sleep in an unknown grave, as sleeps John Knox, beside the "great kirk"

of Edinburgh, which had so often resounded with his eloquence; or, like Scott, rest, where he desired to rest, among the ruins of Dryburgh Abbey; or, like that other sweet singer of our Border-land, lie far away from the sound of his dearly-loved Teviot, where

“A distant and a deadly shore has Leyden’s cold remains.”

It is enough if he have done the work which his hand found to do, whether it be, like Knox’s, the building up of a nation’s character, or, like these peasants, but the tilling of thirty acres of not too fertile land in County Down.

The stuff of which the great body of the emigrants was made formed one element in the success of the colony, the other was the character of the two men who led and controlled them.

Had the system of “cram” been invented in James I.’s time, and had the two men on whom devolved the colonisation of South Clannaboye and the Great Ards been chosen by the most exhausting of Civil Service examinations, it is somewhat doubtful whether our modern system of discovering administrators would have put forward men so well fitted for the work as Hamilton and Montgomery. Both seem to have possessed those qualities, amiable and unamiable, which go to make up the very successful man. Montgomery, too, as the chroniclers tell us, was supported by an able and active wife—a requisite for successful colonial governors, which

the authorities have not yet, as far as has been reported, attempted to discover by competitive examination. Each of the two "adventurers," as soon as his patent was passed by the Irish Council, crossed into Scotland to call upon his whole kith and kin to aid him in his great scheme. Both were Ayrshire men, and both from the northern division of the county. Hamilton was a "son of the manse" of Dunlop; and still the curious may see the quaint monument which he raised to the memory of his father and mother in the kirkyard of Dunlop, within a stonethrow of the railway between Kilmarnock and Glasgow. Montgomery was one of the great Ayrshire family of that name, and sixth laird of Braidstane, near Beith. It is well to note that matters were differently managed in the beginning of the seventeenth century from what they are in the end of the nineteenth. Nowadays, Hamilton and Montgomery would have an interview with some enterprising firm of accountants in Glasgow, who would thereafter issue a circular citing the Limited Liability Acts of Victoria, and calling on all sensible people to take advantage of the enormous power of developing wealth possessed by the lands of Con O'Neill, Esq., by taking shares in an Upper Clannaboye Land Colonisation Company, Limited. In those old days the two "undertakers" had to rely on their own resources, and on the assistance which their Ayrshire friends were able and willing to give them.

It must be kept in remembrance that Hamilton

received the grant of Irish land on the express condition that he should "plant" it with Scottish and English colonists. We know generally how he implemented his bargain. He seems to have received the hearty support of his own family, for four of his five brothers aided his enterprise, and shared his prosperity: from them are descended numerous families in Ulster, and at least two Irish noble families. Further, there is no doubt that Hamilton did "plant" the land which he had acquired with Scottish tenants, and administered his great estate with prudence and ability. There are recorded the names of those who held farms from Hamilton, and good Scottish surnames they are, and evidently from the same country as the men whom we shall find followed Montgomery. Hamilton founded the towns of Bangor and Killyleagh, in County Down. It is mentioned, too, that he attended to spiritual things, for he raised churches in each of the six parishes embraced in his estate—Bangor, Killinchy, Holywood, Ballyhalbert, Dundonald, and Killyleagh. He "made it his business to bring very learned and pious ministers out of Scotland, and planted all the parishes of his estate." Moreover, we discover how primitive were the times in which the Lord Clannaboye lived, for we read "that he maintained the ministers liberally, received even their public reproofs submissively, and had secret friendly correspondence with them."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hamilton MSS., p. 33.

To Hamilton fell the western portion of North Down, to Montgomery the eastern, and both seem to have added to their estates, as Con O'Neill was forced to sell the third, which he had reserved for himself. There is preserved an exceedingly careful account of how Hugh Montgomery "planted" his estate—the country round Newtown and Donaghadee, known as the Great Ards. Montgomery belonged to a family having numerous connections throughout North Ayrshire and Renfrewshire, and to them he turned for assistance. His principal supporters were his kinsman Thomas Montgomery, who had done the successful wooing at Carrickfergus; his brother-in-law, John Shaw, younger son of the laird of Wester Greenock; and Colonel David Boyd, of the noble house of Kilmarnock. With their help he seems to have persuaded many others of high and low degree to join in trying their fortune in Ireland. The names of the emigrants are intensely Scottish<sup>1</sup>—Montgomerys and Calderwoods, Agnews and Adairs, Cunninghams and Shaws and Muirs, Maxwells and Boyles and Harvies, and many others with good west-country surnames. They began to cross in May 1606, and found the country "more wasted than America (when the Spaniards landed there)," for between Donaghadee and Newtown "thirty cabins could not be found, nor any stone walls, but ruined, roofless churches, and a few vaults at Grey Abbey, and a stump of an old castle at Newtown."<sup>2</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Montgomery MSS., p. 56, note.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 58.

NGLO-  
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war with Tyrone had been conducted with such savage cruelty on both sides, that great tracts of country had been reduced to a desert, and this district seems to have been one which had been swept bare of inhabitants.

The colonists were of very various ranks of life, and of varied experience, probably most of them accustomed to farming and agricultural work; but the chronicler tells too of "smiths, masons, and carpenters. I knew many of them, old men when I was a boy at school, and had little employments for some of them."<sup>1</sup> They crossed in the early spring of 1606, and their first work was to build cottages and booths for themselves of sods and saplings of ashes, with rushes for thatch, and to make the "stump of a castle" at Newtown fit to shelter Sir Hugh and his wife and family. They then proceeded to break up the ground and plant crops. The soil, which had lain fallow for some years, yielded abundantly, so that "the harvests of 1606 and 1607 stocked the people with grain, for the lands were never naturally so productive since that time."<sup>2</sup> These plentiful seasons gave the colony a great impetus, as there was plenty, not only for home consumption, but for sale to new-comers. Besides, the tidings of success of course induced others to follow, for it would immediately become known along the Scottish shore that the first emigrants were comfortably settled in their new country, and that there was

<sup>1</sup> Montgomery MSS., p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

every prospect of the colony succeeding. With the vigour characteristic of the race, the new colonists soon established themselves firmly in their new home, and the face of the country assumed a different appearance from the desolation it had before presented. The town of Newtown grew up round the "stump of a castle," while Sir Hugh Montgomery transformed the ruin into a great country-house. In 1613 letters-patent were issued creating Newtown a borough, with provost and burgesses, and with right to send two members to the Parliament at Dublin. Before many years were over, Newtown proudly boasted of a market-cross, "an excellent piece of freestone work of eight squares," with stair leading to a platform, where proclamations were made, and from which, on very festive occasions, claret ran, just as was the custom at the Cross of Edinburgh at this very time. At the present time Newtown, now known as Newtown-Ards, is a clean, thriving little town of 9000 inhabitants, with broad streets, and just enough linen manufacturing going on to keep the people busy; while it is famed for the culture of roses all over the three kingdoms.

Sir Hugh was not unmindful of the spiritual affairs of the colony. He had brought with him "two or three chaplains for his parishes;" and one of his first cares was to proceed to rebuild the ruined church of Newtown. In this work he was assisted by the "general free contribution of the planters, some with money, others with handicrafts, and many



with labouring," so that before the winter of 1607 the church was ready for service.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps it is one of the most remarkable and most striking features of this Scottish colony in Ulster, that it was from the first, and has remained even through many persecutions, so consistently and so strongly Presbyterian. The Presbyterianism of the colonists was a strange comment on the apparent success of King James in Scotland; for during these very years (from 1607 onwards) it appeared as if the King was going to realise the dream of his life—the establishment of Episcopacy in his native country.<sup>2</sup> The back of the Presbyterian Church seemed broken, and the King was steadily introducing Episcopalian forms of worship. It becomes apparent how "skin-deep" and unnatural the change in Scotland must have been, to find that these Scottish colonists set up for themselves the Presbyterian worship in Ireland, although there the Established Church was Episcopalian. The clergy seem either to have come with the colonists, as in the case of Sir Hugh Montgomery's "plantation," or to have been "called" as soon as the Scots were sufficiently settled to be able to form a congregation and build a church. Ulster Presbyterianism was not, however, altogether derived from Scotland. A considerable portion of the English colonists, especially those who came to the London settle-

<sup>1</sup> Montgomery MSS., p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> Register of the Privy Council of Scotland, vol. viii., Pref. xviii.

ment in Londonderry county, were Puritans, and joined with the Scots in Church affairs. A strong Calvinistic element was also afterwards infused into the district by the French Huguenots, who settled in different parts of Ireland after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. From the settlement which they made at Lisburn, Ulster derived much of her pre-eminence in the linen manufacture. Many French names thus introduced are still to be found in Ulster.

The foundations of the industries of Ulster were laid by Montgomery, who was assisted in this work by his wife. The productiveness of the first harvests caused Lady Montgomery to build water-mills in all the parishes, which did away with the use of the native "quairn stones." Her ladyship had also farms at Newtown and Grey Abbey and Comber, which gave employment to the emigrants who had not capital enough to start small farms. To these cottagers she gave grass for a cow and sheep, and a plot for flax and potatoes. She also encouraged the spinning and weaving both of linen and wool; and shortly the people were able to weave their own "breakin," and to dress in homespun, as they had been wont to do in their native Ayrshire. This wearing of the Scottish "breakin," which was either tartan, or more likely a kind of "shepherd check," was afterwards alleged as a reproach against these Ulster Scots in the English Parliament, in the course of a debate on 3d December 1656. "For in the

north the Scotch keep up an interest distinct in garb and all formalities, and are able to raise an army of 40,000 fighting men at any time.<sup>1</sup> A market was established at Newtown, which soon became a place of resort, both for the people of the surrounding country, and also for merchants from the Scottish coast, who crossed to it from Stranraer and Portpatrick. Many of the wealthier class of colonists too, it is recorded, began to act as merchants and carry on business with the continents. "They built stone houses, and they traded, to enable them to buy lands, to France, Flanders, Norway, &c., as they still do."

The success of this settlement made by Hamilton and Montgomery was immediate; for four years after the foundation of the colony—in 1610—Montgomery alone was able to bring before "the King's muster-master a thousand able fighting men to serve, when out of them a militia should be raised."<sup>2</sup> Four years later, we have again specific information of the progress of the Scottish colonies under Hamilton and Montgomery. It is contained in a letter from the Earl of Abercorn to John Murray, King James's Secretary of State. Abercorn had been called in to act as arbiter between Hamilton and Montgomery, who were constantly quarrelling about boundaries, Con O'Neill's estate being by this time pretty well absorbed. He writes: "They have above 2000 habile Scottish men weill armit heir, rady for his

<sup>1</sup> Montgomery MSS., p. 65, note.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

Majestie's service as thai sall be commandit." "Sir Hew Montgomerie is in building ane fyin house at the Newton, quhair of ane quarter is almost compleit, an Sir James hes buildit at Killilarche ane very stronge castill, the lyk is not in the northe."<sup>1</sup> This muster of 2000 men able to bear arms, of course represented an emigration of at least 10,000 souls. Even now, after this long interval of time, it is cheering to read of any success being accomplished at any period in Ireland, and it is not surprising that the old historian of the colony should have broken forth into singing. "Now everybody minded their trades, and the plough and the spade, building and setting fruit-trees, &c., in orchards and gardens, and by ditching in their grounds. The old women spun, and the young girls plyed their nimble fingers at knitting, and everybody was innocently busy. Now the golden peaceable age renewed; no strife, contention, querulous lawyers, or Scottish or Irish feuds between clans and families and surnames."<sup>2</sup> Verily it must have been a golden age which had dawned on one sea-washed corner of unhappy Ireland.

Meantime, across the river Lagan, in County Antrim, a "plantation" had been made which, although not at first peculiarly Scottish, was soon to become so. During almost the whole of James's reign probably the most powerful man in Ireland was Sir Arthur Chichester, who in 1604 became Lord-

<sup>1</sup> State Papers of James VI. (Abbotsford Club), pp. 233, 234.

<sup>2</sup> Montgomery MSS., p. 66.

Deputy, an office which he held until 1616. He was an exceedingly able and resolute man, a faithful servant of the King, but one who never lost sight of his own advantage. In the distribution of lands which took place during his term of office, he shared largely; but even before he became Deputy he had received a piece of land which is still in the hands of his descendant, the Marquis of Donegal. In 1603 Chichester obtained a grant of "the castle of Beal-faste or Belfast, with the appurtenants and hereditaments, spiritual and temporal, situate in the Lower Clandeboye;"<sup>1</sup> while in the years immediately succeeding he acquired the lands along the north shore of what was then called Carrickfergus Bay almost to Lough Larne. There seems to have been an old castle, in a tumble-down condition—as most things were in this part of the country—at Belfast, when Chichester got the lands, and probably a hamlet, but it was a place of no importance. Belfast is in reality, from its very foundation, not an Irish, but an English and Scottish town. Chichester was too busy with the affairs of the State to attend to "planting" his allotment of land, so he contented himself with building a great house, and let his lands on long leases, largely to the officers of his army, so that they might do duty for him. The survey of 1611 tells us how the settlement was progressing. What is now covered by the southern portion of Belfast had been leased by Chichester for sixty-one years, at £10 per annum,

<sup>1</sup> Benn's History of Belfast, p. 78.

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to Moses Hill, "sometime lieutenant of his horse-troop." From this Moses Hill is descended the Marquis of Downshire. Hill was busy building a new castle on the site of the old ruin, for the defence of the ford on the river Lagan, and near it "the town of Belfast is plotted out in a good forme, wherein are many famelyes of English, Scotch, and some Manksmen already inhabitinge, and ane inn with very good lodginge, which is a great comferte to the travellers in these partes." The Settlement Commissioners passed along the north shore of Belfast Lough, finding everywhere houses springing up, and in every part of the Lord-Deputy's lands "many English famelies, some Scottes, and dyvers cyvill Irish planted."<sup>1</sup> At Carrickfergus the Commissioners found a pier and town-wall being built, and all through South Antrim—in island Magee, at Templepatrick, at Massereene, and along the shores of Lough Neagh to Toome—settlements of English and Scots, and houses and "bawns" being erected.<sup>2</sup> While South Antrim was thus "planted" mainly by English settlers, the northern half of the county was opened up for settlement, without the violent transference of land from Celt to Saxon which was carried out in other parts of Ulster. The north-east corner of Ireland had been long held by the Macdonnells, a clan which also peopled the island of Jura, and Cantyre on the mainland of Scotland. The chief of these Scoto-Irishmen, Randal Macdonnell, after Tyrone's rebellion, resolved to throw

<sup>1</sup> Benn's History of Belfast, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 674-676.

in his lot with the Government, and turn loyal subject. He persevered in this course, notwithstanding many trials to his loyalty, and as reward he received a grant of the northern half of County Antrim, from Larne to Portrush, and the honour of knighthood. He set himself ardently to the improvement of his lands, "letting out to the natives on the coast, and also to the Scottish settlers, such arable portions of his lands as had been depopulated by the war, for terms varying from 21 to 301 years."<sup>1</sup> These leases seem to have been largely taken advantage of by the Scottish settlers, who allowed the natives to keep the "Glynnes" or Glens—that district so much visited now for its splendid coast scenery—and themselves took possession of the rich land along the river Bann, from Lough Neagh to the town of Coleraine near its mouth. So Macdonnel and his property prospered; and in 1620, when King James raised him to the dignity of Earl of Antrim, the patent conferring the honour, after enumerating the faithful services which Macdonnel had rendered to the Crown, specially mentioned "the fact of his having strenuously exerted himself in settling British subjects on his estates."<sup>2</sup> Thus County Antrim, from north to south, became nearly as Scottish as the portion of County Down north of the Mourne mountains.

<sup>1</sup> The Macdonnels of Antrim, by the Rev. George Hill, p. 229.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 231.