

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE SCOT BRINGS WITH HIM HIS SCOTTISH CHURCH.

I N this manner, during the early years of the seventeenth century—from 1606 to 1611—there was opened up a field for emigration into which Scotsmen were to pour during the succeeding half-century. The stream of emigrants must have varied in volume from year to year, but probably never altogether ceased; while the intercourse between the mother country and her sons in the neighbouring island was, during the whole of that period, close and intimate. Naturally, those counties which were nearest Scotland received the greatest numbers of the emigrants, until Antrim and Down contained districts as Scotch as Roxburgh or Wigtown—districts of which thirty years ago, two centuries after the emigration, a writer who knew the people well could say, these “are inhabited by a population speaking as broad Scotch as is now to be met with in the parent country, and who read and enjoy the poems of Ramsay and Burns with as much zest as

their brethren of the West of Scotland."<sup>1</sup> But, although Down and Antrim received the greatest number of settlers, the Scots also spread into every part of Ulster in which there was good land to be had; or they took up their abode in the towns which slowly began to rise round the new castle of Belfast; at Londonderry and Coleraine, in the Londoners' territory; and at Donaghadee, and Newtown, and Bangor, and Lisburn, in the Scottish and English settlements of Down and Antrim. Probably none of the colonies which Scotland has sent out more deserves the support and encouragement of the mother country than does this colony in Ulster, for in none have the colonists had to struggle against greater odds. For more than a century the Scots of Ulster were oppressed by laws which deprived them of their civil and religious rights and crippled their trade; while all through the centuries they have been crushed, as they still are, by the presence of an inferior race, whose lower civilisation makes all their ideas of comfort lower, and causes them to multiply with a rapidity which ever presses on the means of subsistence. Thus always facing up to the savage realities of life, these Scots of Ulster are in character more akin to our common forefathers of the seventeenth century, retaining more of their stern Calvinism than the Scots of this generation in the mother country. The establishment and growth of this Calvinistic Church

<sup>1</sup> Ulster Journal of Archaeology, vol. i. p. 3.

in Ireland is a remarkable chapter in the history of the Scots.

For two or three years after the "great settlement of 1610," the colony went on increasing; and then its progress was checked by rumours of a great plot among the natives to sweep away the foreign settlers. Such a conspiracy did actually exist, and was certainly a thing which might be expected; but it was discovered and suppressed in 1615, before it came to a head.<sup>1</sup> This danger past, the settlement again made progress, the Government putting pressure on the undertakers to compel them to fulfil the conditions of their contracts, and fully plant their lands with "British" tenants. In 1618 the Irish Government instructed Captain Pynnar to inspect every allotment in the six "escheated" counties, and to report on each one, whether held by "natives" or "foreign planters." The report presents a very exact picture of what had been done by the settlers in the counties inspected—Londonderry, Donegal, Tyrone, Armagh, Cavan, and Fermanagh. Pynnar points out that many of the undertakers had altogether failed to implement the terms of their agreements. On the other hand, he reports the number of castles, "bawns," and "dwelling-houses of stone and timber built after the English fashion," and mentions the number of tenants, and the size and conditions of their holdings. He states that "there are upon occasion 8000 men of British birth and descent

<sup>1</sup> Calendar of State Papers, Ireland, 1615-25, p. viii.

for defence, though a fourth part of the lands is not fully inhabited."<sup>1</sup> Of these, fully a half must have been Scots; and if there be added the great colonies in Down and Antrim, there must have been an immigration from Scotland of between 30,000 and 40,000 in these ten years. Pynnar regrets that "many English do not yet plough nor use husbandry, being fearful to stock themselves with cattle or servants for those labours;" and states, that "were it not for the Scottish, who plough in many places, the rest of the country might starve."<sup>2</sup> When we come to the detailed report of each holding, it is easy to understand why the Scots were doing the work of colonists so well—they were led by men of energy, who were devoting their lives to the task. Pynnar's report also enables us to understand the new framework of society which it was intended to build up in Ulster. James and his advisers quite understood that to give a feeling of security to the new colony, it was necessary to have fortified houses all over the country, with a certain number of walled towns which should contain garrisons. Every undertaker was therefore bound to raise a "castle of stone," which would certainly vary much in size and strength, but which was at least to give to the small settlements as much protection as did the "little towers and peels, such as are common in our Borders."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Calendar of State Papers, Carew, p. 422.    <sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 423.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from Alexander Hay, Scottish Secretary of State—Privy Council Record, vol. viii. p. 793.

We have accounts of many of these castles, and of the colony which was gathering around them.

This, for instance, is a description of the settlement made in East Donegal by one of the most energetic of the Wigtownshire undertakers: "Sir W. Stewart, 1000 acres, called Rumaltho. A large and strong court 80 feet square and 14 high, four flankers, fair strong castle of same materials three and a half stories high. A large town of forty-five houses, and fifty-seven families, all British, some having estates for years. A church begun of lime and stone, built to setting on of roof. A water-mill for corn. This is a market town, and stands well for the good of the country and the King's service."<sup>1</sup> In County Armagh here is another very Scot-

tish name: "Arch. Acheson, 2000 acres. A castle begun 80 feet long, 22 wide, now two stories high. Planted with British; *in toto*, 29 tenants, with undertenants, making 144 men with arms. Has also built a town called Clancurry, wherein dwell 29 British tenants, each having a small parcel of land—in the whole making 173 men armed."<sup>2</sup> The Achesons—there were two brothers among the "planters"—were from the neighbourhood of Edinburgh. Archibald was afterwards raised to the Peerage, and took his title from his property of Gosford, in East Lothian. His descendants are still Earls of Gosford. The brothers of that Sir James Hamilton who had "planted" in Down along with Sir Hugh Mont-

<sup>1</sup> Calendar of State Papers, Carew, p. 408.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 417.

gomery, also turned out most enterprising colonists. One of them, John, settled in Armagh beside the Achesons, and along with them founded "the flourishing colonies of Markethill, Hamilton's Bawn, and Mullabrack."<sup>1</sup> They assisted, too, in the settlement of County Cavan; Sir James "had built a very large strong castle of lyme and stone, called Castle Aubignee, with the King's arms in freestone over the gate. This castle is five stories high, with four round towers for flankers. "It stands upon a meeting of five beaten ways which keep all that part of the country." He had "settled" "forty-one families, which do consist of eighty men-at-arms."<sup>2</sup> Of the fortified towns, the "Londoners" were bound to erect two—Londonderry and Coleraine; and grants were given to undertakers to build forts on selected sites, round which it was intended to raise towns, like that which Lord Chichester was building round the Fort of Dungannon.<sup>3</sup>

The only county in which the Scottish settlers failed to take firm root was Fermanagh, for there, by 1618, when Pynnar reported, a large number of the Scottish proportions had been sold, and were held by Englishmen. The result is seen in the small number of Presbyterians in comparison to Episcopalians to be found at the present day in County Fermanagh.

It is strange to turn from these records, nearly

<sup>1</sup> Hill's Plantation, p. 568 note.

<sup>2</sup> Calendar of State Papers, Carew, p. 392.    <sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 414.

three centuries old, to the political map of to-day, and compare the one with the other. It makes the reader feel how brief a period three centuries are in the history of races, and how little races change in the course of centuries. For the North of Ireland is now very much what the first half of the seventeenth century made it. North Down and Antrim, with the great town of Belfast, are English and Scottish now as they then became, and desire to remain united with the countries from whom their people spring. South Down, on the other hand, was not "planted,"<sup>1</sup> and it is Roman Catholic and Nationalist. Londonderry County too is loyalist, for emigrants poured into it through Coleraine and Londonderry city. Northern Armagh was peopled with English and Scottish emigrants, who crowded into it from Antrim and Down, and it desires union with the other island. Tyrone County is all strongly Unionist, but it is the country round Strabane, which the Hamiltons of Abercorn and the Stewarts of Garlies so thoroughly colonised, and the eastern portion, on the borders of Lough Neagh, round the colonies founded by Lord Ochiltree, that give to the Unionists a majority; while in Eastern Donegal, which the Cunninghams and the Stewarts "settled" from Ayrshire and Galloway, and in Fermanagh, where dwell the descendants of the Englishmen who fought so nobly in 1689, there is a great minority which struggles against separation from

<sup>1</sup> Knox's History of County Down, p. 17.

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England. Over the rest, even of Ulster, the desire for a separate kingdom of Ireland is the dream of the people still, as it was three centuries ago. In many parts of Ireland, which were at one time and another colonised with English, the colonists became absorbed in the native population ; but in Ulster, where the Scottish blood is strong, this union has not taken place, and the result is the race difference which is so apparent in the electoral statistics of the present day. It is perhaps the stern Calvinism of these Scots, which still survives, that has prevented the colony from mixing with the surrounding people, and being absorbed by them as the Jews of the northern kingdom became merged in the surrounding "heathen." The history of the Presbyterian Church is therefore an important part of the story of the Scot in Ulster ; in fact, for many years the history of Ulster, as far as it has a separate history, is chiefly ecclesiastical. It must be so ; for this is a story of Scotsmen and of the first half of the seventeenth century, and at that time the history of Scotland is the history of the Scottish Church. Church polity, Church observance, Church discipline, fill all the chronicles, and must have formed the public life of the people. We moderns may be extremely surprised and very much bored by the heavy polemics of these old annals ; but our wonder does not alter facts, nor our disdain in all probability affect the souls of our pious ancestors.

Before glancing at the building up of the Presby-



terian Church of Ireland, it is necessary to note two acts of legislation which much aided the consolidation of the Scottish colony. In 1613, after an interval of twenty-seven years, a Parliament met at Dublin, to which were summoned members from many northern towns, such as Dungannon and Coleraine, which were certainly then boroughs rather in embryo than in reality.<sup>1</sup> This Parliament repealed a law of Queen Mary, which was intended to prevent the Scots from settling in Ireland; the Scots thus aimed at being the Western Islesmen, who infested and plundered Northern Ulster.<sup>2</sup> Two years later there met a convocation of clergy, which proceeded to draw up a Confession of Faith for the Episcopal Church of Ireland, as an establishment separate from that of England. The Irish clergy were at this time strongly tinged with Puritanism, and the result was that a Confession was adopted much more Calvinistic, and therefore nearer that of the Scottish Church than was the Thirty-nine Articles. The formation and growth of the Presbyterian Church was also much aided by Archbishop Ussher, the Primate of Ireland. Ussher is remembered as the most learned Englishman of a learned age; but better worth recording even than his learning is his broad-minded toleration. Unlike his contemporary, Archbishop Laud, he was incapable of rage against men who differed with him about mere forms, and ever ready to recognise the great realities in which they agreed.

<sup>1</sup> Calendar of State Papers, Carew, p. 170.      <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

He steadily prevented all persecution of Presbyterians by Episcopal bishops, and treated the Scottish preachers as friends and fellow-Christians.<sup>1</sup>

There is in the Manuscript Room of the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh a quaint narrative of the history of the early days of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, which tells how a revival of religion spread through the Scots of Ulster. Its description of the first settlers is not flattering. "In few years there flocked such a multitude of people from Scotland that these northern counties of Down, Antrim, Londonderry, &c., were in good measure planted, which had been waste before; yet most of the people, as I said before, made up a body—and it's strange, of different names, nations, dialects, tempers, breeding, and, in a word, all void of godliness, who seemed rather to flee from God in this enterprise than to follow their own mercy."<sup>2</sup> Probably the narrator blackened the characters of these first settlers for the purpose of heightening the effect of the mighty change which came over them. In several cases the "plantationers" came accompanied by clergymen. Both Hamilton and Montgomery looked after the spiritual wants of the emigrants in County Down, and a "minister" is stated to have accompanied Lord Ochiltree who had hereditary connections with the Presbyterian Church, his aunt

<sup>1</sup> History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, by James Reid, D.D., vol. i. p. 137.

<sup>2</sup> Stewart's Narrative, p. 313.

having been John Knox's second wife. There is, too, a curious record of the Bishop of Raphoe's importation of clergy from Scotland. This northern see, now styled Derry and Raphoe, was in the early years of the settlement filled by George Montgomery, a brother of Sir Hugh, the great "planter" in County Down. Bishop Montgomery held the lands assigned to his see; and we are told that he made "proclamation in the Scottish ports from Glasgow south to Larggs," "at how easy rents he would set his Church lands, which drew hither many families."<sup>1</sup> The colony he formed must have been considerable; for we find in 1612 that his successor, Bishop Knox, who was living on Lough Swilly, at some distance from any English garrison, obtains protection for himself and for "seven ministers that he brought out of Scotland, who are hated by the Irish."<sup>2</sup> The real founders of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, however, were clergymen who took refuge in Ulster, driven from Scotland and England by the persecuting spirit then abroad against the Puritans. These men were, therefore, of necessity strong Calvinists. It must be borne in mind that the south-west of Scotland, from which the Ulster Scots largely came, was during this whole period intensely Presbyterian; it was the district from which in the succeeding generation came the "Westlan' Whigs" who fought at Bothwell Brig, and which produced the martyrs whose graves are still

<sup>1</sup> Montgomery MSS., p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> Calendar of State Papers, Ireland, 1610-15, p. 315.

*Speaks badly for those clergies*

visited at Wigtown, and in the quiet upland kirkyards of New Galloway and the "clachan" of Dalry. The first minister to come seems to have been Edward Brice, an Edinburgh graduate, who settled at Broad Island in Antrim, in 1613. He had been minister of Drymen in Stirlingshire, but was driven from his charge by Archbishop Spottiswoode. Echlin, Bishop of Down, following the example of the Primate, made no difficulty about recognising Brice.<sup>1</sup> Others, both Scottish Presbyterians and English Nonconformists, followed—among whom one of the best known was Robert Blair. He had been a professor in Glasgow, but disapproving of the prelatie changes going on in that University, he accepted the invitation of Hamilton, Lord Clannaboye, and settled at Bangor in Down, in 1623. The story of his ordination by Bishop Echlin shows how the spirit of Ussher was reflected in the other bishops. Blair objected to the "sole ordination" of the bishop, whereupon Echlin rejoined, "Will you not receive ordination from Mr Cunningham and the adjacent brethren, and let me come in among them in no other relation than a Presbyter?"<sup>2</sup> In this way Blair's scruples were respected, and the law which imposed ordination by the bishop of the diocese satisfied. When divines of opposing Churches could thus agree, verily the old chronicler was right in declaring that the "golden peaceable age" had returned.

<sup>1</sup> Reid, vol. i. p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

The Presbyterian Church rapidly strengthened, and became powerful; and the more the bishops pushed things to extremes in Scotland, the more were able men driven to take refuge in Ulster. In 1626, a son of John Welsh of Ayr, and grandson to John Knox, threw up the Chair of Humanity in Glasgow, and settled at Templepatrick in Antrim, being ordained by his kinsman Knox, who had succeeded Montgomery as Bishop of Raphoe.<sup>1</sup> In 1630, he was followed across by John Livingston, who was long a power in the North of Ireland. Livingston's story was similar to that of the others. He had been minister of Torphichen, and was "silenced" in 1627 by Archbishop Spottiswoode; being in Irvine during his wanderings, he was induced to go over to Ireland, where Bishop Knox acted like the Bishop of Down, and became a "Presbyter" for the nonce at his ordination.<sup>2</sup> In this way the Presbyterian Church of Ireland was founded by the very stoutest of Calvinists.

Meanwhile the tide of colonists flowed on. Of course there are no accurate statistics of the annual immigration, but all the records of the time speak of the West of Scotland and the North of Ireland as being united closely by daily intercourse. For instance, in 1616 there is a return among the State Papers "showing what impost was paid for wines brought into Ireland in Scottish bottoms for the year ending March 1616, more than is paid for the like

<sup>1</sup> Reid, vol. i. p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

quantity imported in English and Irish bottoms." <sup>1</sup> Another proof is found in the fact that the country people were in the habit of crossing from Stranraer to Donaghadee, attending Newtown market, selling their wares, and crossing to Scotland again the same night. <sup>2</sup> Some years afterwards, too, when Strafford's tyranny had driven many favourite ministers out of Ulster, the northern Presbyterians were accustomed to cross over to the Ayrshire and Galloway churches. "On one occasion, five hundred persons, principally from the county of Down, visited Stranraer to receive the Communion from the hands of Mr Livingston." <sup>3</sup>

The most exact account of the emigration is contained in a very curious book of travels in Scotland and Ireland, by Sir William Brereton, a Cheshire man, well known afterwards in the Civil War. He states that he came to Irvine, in Ayrshire, on the 1st July 1635, and was hospitably entertained by Mr James Blair, and that his host informed him that "above ten thousand persons have within two years last past left this country wherein they lived, which was betwixt Aberdine and Enuerness, and are gone for Ireland; they have come by one hundred in company through this town, and three hundred have gone hence together shipped for Ireland at one tide. None of them can give a reason why they leave the country; only some of them who make a better use of God's hand upon them have acknowledged to

<sup>1</sup> Calendar of State Papers, Ireland, 1615-26, p. 139.

<sup>2</sup> Montgomery MSS., p. 60.

<sup>3</sup> Reid, vol. i. p. 226.

*Some hypocrisy*

mine host in these words, 'that it was a just judgment of God to spew them out of the land for their unthankfulness!' One of them I met withal and discoursed with at large, who could give no good reason, but pretended the landlords increasing their rents; but their swarming in Ireland is so much taken notice of and disliked, as that the Deputy has sent out a warrant to stay the landing of any of these Scotch that come without a certification."<sup>1</sup>

Thus was Ulster filled with Scotsmen, and the simple forms of the Scottish Church established in the North of Ireland. But the "golden peaceable age" of Archbishop Ussher could not last long. In 1633, Thomas Wentworth, afterwards Earl of Strafford, began his celebrated term of office as Lord-Deputy of Ireland, and with him came Laud's polity in matters ecclesiastic. The Calvinistic Confession of Faith was altered; the bishops tinged with Puritanism were deposed, and High Churchmen placed in their stead; a High Commission Court was established in Dublin; and conformity to the Established Church was enforced by pains and penalties. Then Wentworth's hand fell heavily on the Presbyterians, laity and clergy. Many of the latter had to flee and take refuge in Scotland, where they again found churches, after that country revolted against Episcopacy in 1637. Many of the laity, too, returned to the West of Scotland, helping in this way to bind the two countries together—Irvine, in Ayrshire, becom-

<sup>1</sup> Travels by Sir William Brereton (Chetham Society), p. 119.

*This part of Ayrshire was unincorporated with Galloway, the land of the "Stranger Gals." The Gals were the old Irish*

ing a regular place of rendezvous for the Ulstermen, both lay and clerical.<sup>1</sup> Wentworth viewed this intimacy with a jealous eye, especially after Scotland had risen against Charles and placed an army in the field. Then the Deputy's hand fell yet heavier on the Scots of Ulster. He imposed on every Presbyterian an oath of passive obedience, long remembered as the Black Oath; he disarmed the Ulster Scots as far as he could, and raised an army of 9000 men, largely Roman Catholics, to overawe Ulster. Wentworth seems to have feared a rising of the Scots; for in a letter to Coke, the English Secretary of State, he states that there are 13,092 British men between sixteen and sixty in Ulster, but congratulates himself on the fact that they are badly armed.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Reid, vol. i. p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> Strafford's Letters, vol. i. p. 199.