
CHAPTER XI

THE GLENGARRY SETTLEMENTS

THE COMING OF THE FENCIBLE REGIMENT FROM SCOTLAND

*Hearts of Scotland who inherit,
As of old, her martial blood;—
Rouse, once more, the hero spirit
Of her ancient island brood!!*

OVER one hundred and sixty years after Sir William Alexander sent his first shipload of Scottish colonists across the Atlantic, there laboured on the borders of the counties of Perth and Inverness in the Highland mountains of Scotland a devoted missionary of the old Celtic blood, whose name was Macdonell. He was of the same race as the Earl of Stirling, those descendants of the renowned Somerled. He was a practical man as well as a dreamer, and was, no doubt, a poet at heart as all his race are. But unlike Alexander—the poet, courtier, colonist, and psalm-writer—this man was a priest of the Roman Church, whose chief interest was the spiritual welfare of that great mass of Catholic Celts who, since the decay of

The Glengarry Settlements

the clan system, were out of place in the Highlands, which were then being turned into sheep-walks and agricultural experiments on a large scale.

Of this great man I will speak at length later. But here his work as a successful coloniser of one of the most important Canadian communities will alone be dealt with. Affected by the distress of his countrymen, who, as he said, had been driven out of their glens to turn the latter into sheep-walks, he was debating what to do to alleviate their condition, when he heard of an emigrant ship which, sailing from Barra, had been wrecked and had put into Greenock, leaving her passengers in a destitute and helpless condition. He at once went to Glasgow in the spring of 1792, and by interest with the University authorities and merchants, strove to get the evicted farmers and shipwrecked people into the local manufactories. For this vocation, however, these poor people were ill-fitted both by inclination, ability, and knowledge. They preferred the wild life of the open, and made splendid soldiers and deer-stalkers. Then they spoke only the Gaelic and were Catholics in religion, so that a double barrier separated them from the factory people of Lowland English-speaking Protestant Glasgow. But the College professors and merchants appreciated his efforts, and in spite of all the difficulties enumerated, in two months he had procured employment for fully six hundred Highlanders.

The faithful and energetic priest became the

