

CHAPTER V

House of Tudor - Henry VIII – Rebellion – English Pale – Conn O'Neill – Destruction of Gaelic world - Hugh O'Neill - The Connacht & Munster Councils – Presidencies in Munster - Down Survey – English migration to Ireland – Act of Plantation – Shane - Downfall of the last Gaelic lordships.

Ireland had been a 'lordship' of the Norman English crown now Hugh O'Neill 1540–1616, became second Earl of Tyrone in 1585 leading an uprising with Spanish help, which was defeated in 1601. After this set back Ui Neill, rather than submit to English influence, chose exile, as did O'Donnell and ninety of his followers. Amongst those to leave were O'Ciardha henchmen who chose the Netherlands. Dermot O'Ciardha of Offaley stayed to create an opposition movement and to oversee the scattered clan families. The establishment in 1570 of presidencies in Munster and Connacht saw a push by the English to take a grip of the land north of the river Shannon. It had been a hard task to subdue the lords of Munster, who excommunicated the queen.

The lands of O'Carroll and O'Kennedy to the east of Lough Derg above Cashel – encompassing ancient O'Ciardha clan land, were not within the English marches until, The Connacht and Munster Councils of 1569-71. There was rebellion in 1579, which ended in the defeat of Tyrone, who surrendered four years later. Ireland was now a conquered land. Queen Elizabeth had succeeded where others had failed.

Another vast emigration to continental Europe followed. The English administration did everything in their power to Anglicize the customs of the few remaining native Irish. The few Gaelic adherents that survived the Tudor and Stuart Plantations were eventually ruined by the anti-Catholic legislation enacted by the Dublin Parliament after the victory of William III. These laws stopped estates being handed down to the eldest son instead they had to divide them between all the children which resulted, over-time, to estates being whittled down to that of just small freeholders. The chiefs were unable to maintain patronage within their clans, which eroded the social systems - developed over many years. From that time, the clan system gradually wilted away even though the local peasantry continued to support the old ways.

The process known as plantation began in the Tudor period, but mainly by James I, in Ulster and Munster, and led to the settlement of 40,000 Scottish and English immigrants by 1641. There was much more to come...both plantation and unrest!

In the Down Survey of 1646, the O'Kennedy, the O'Mera and the McGrath families, owned the land of Toomevara parish. Many of the O'Ciardha clan were integrated into the O'Kennedys' for protection assuming their name and customs. The ancient ecclesiastical foundation for women established by St Ciardha was still a recognised site, although a ruin.

Migration from Britain into Ireland continued apace throughout the pre-Protestant years mainly to areas, mainly eastern, which were fertile – had access to natural resources and the sea. This influx greatly improved social and material benefit from the skilled workers and farmers passing through. This movement had the additional effect of enlarging the knowledge and horizons of those who were involved. This caused a split in the society – both religious and social. The clans were always at odds with each other - trying to gain more power and space. It was an age-old way of life, which not only sapped the strength of family groupings but also did nothing to advance society. Many families were being pushed out by the aggressive and vibrant newcomers – those given plantation lands. Many moved into Tipperary from neighbouring Leinster gradually easing out the inhabitants...

Colonel Owen Roe O'Neill, a nephew of the great Hugh O'Neill, spent his entire career in the Spanish army of the Netherlands – he was not the only one. At this time, there was an almost greater alliance between the Irish nobility and the Spanish, particularly in the Netherlands, than

towards the English and Anglo-Irish. Certainly, this existed with 'the old order'. Colonel O'Neill and Colonel Thomas Preston attempted to expel the Scottish Covenanters, who unbeknown to him at the time, had connections with Cromwell's army...needlesstosay, he failed.

The population of Ireland in the 1650s now divided into those who were actively disloyal – the original native Irish; the old English subjects who were now through intermarriage and assimilation Gaelic and Catholic and the newer loyal English who were Protestant landowners and titleholders who included the latest Scots settlers in Ulster. The Act of August 1652 declared that all the Irish and Anglo-Irish, who could not prove "Constant Good Affections", to the Cromwellian cause should lose one-third of their estates, the remaining two-thirds made over as 'new areas for transportation'. The settlements changed the character of Ireland forever and with that the landowning aristocracy as well.

In Ireland's Natural History, published in 1652 and jointly dedicated to Cromwell and Fleetwood, debated the possibility that Protestants from Europe induced to settle the island. Cromwell's concern was that there might be either an uprising in Ireland or incursions from abroad by Catholics. In this, history proved him right. There needed to be a new start in colonising Ireland by settlement - by reliable people - educated Protestants.

September 1653 saw a new Act of Plantation. This time grants were given to English towns - to entice skilled tradesmen to immigrate. Adventurers were apportioned estates and the Army paid for in gifts of land. Whole areas made over in this way to the English. Two thirds of all Ireland were distributed and within those areas was all of Leinster, Kilkenny, Kildare, Kerry and Carlow; Kilkeary was not included coming within the County of Tipperary. Other than a small strip made over to the English, Clare and Connaught were left to the Irish. Whereas this action may have been sensible as a way to control the population and prevent an uprising, it was undoubtedly immoral and caused great resentment. A quarter of Wicklow, Wexford, Kildare, Kilkenny and Carlow were very English and had been for generations since Henry. Everybody else being forcibly removed - from towns and villages, compatriots, and children included. Some people could stay but they had to declare themselves Protestants. People with prefixes O, M, or Mac were banned and their land forfeited. However, these Gaelic prefixes could still be used in Irish areas. In this manner great estates were built up by the English moneyed classes who were in the main the ruling Protestant aristocrats and gentry.

In Upper and Lower Ormond, and throughout much of Ireland, some of the old established catholic, landowning families, the O'Ciardha amongst them, took refuge in the hills and other outlying places to escape domination and subjugation to the Protestant forces. This broke up many of the clan families after losing their land. Eventually their legal rights were forgotten - and thereby forfeited - by lack of use, neglect and absence. The descendants of the old order took their dead to ancestral graveyards in Ballinacloagh and Kilkeary – perpetuating their ancient rights...