

Presbyterian Church, and finally, after most barbarous torture, was executed at Edinburgh in December, 1666. In 1749 another John Neilson of Corsock died in South Carolina, whither he had removed in the vain hope of restoring the fortunes of his family. The arms of the Corsock Neilsons differed slightly from those of Craiggaffie, being: Argent, three left hands, bend sinister, two in chief, and one in base, holding a dagger azure, with a crescent in the centre for the difference. Crest, a dexter hand, holding a lance erect, proper. Motto—*Hic Regi servitium*.¹

These arms are obviously derived from those of the founder of the Neil family, known as Red O'Neil, or O'Neil of the Red Hand, whose arms were: Argent, a sinister hand, couped at the wrist, gules, proper. This was said to commemorate a fierce contest between some of those wild chieftains of the olden time to reach first the shore of an enemy, and so to lead in the attack. Neil was outstripped by some of his companions in arms, but not to be outdone drew his sword, cut off his left hand, and with the shout, "O Neil!" hurled the ghastly, bloody member to land, before any of the other chieftains had gained the shore. Hence, according to the fanciful Irish legend, the name, "O'Neill," and the arms of the family. The *three* bloody hands on the shield of the Scottish Neilsons signify the three sons of him whose shield bore the Red Hand.

The proximity of Scotland to the North of Ireland, and the religious and political influences invoked in the early years of the seventeenth century, brought about a large emigration from Galloway, and among those thus interested in the "Plantation of Ulster" were many Neilsons. There was a certain poetic fitness in this settlement of the Irish province by the Neilsons of Scotland, who all unwittingly were made the instruments for the dispossession of the great Earl Neil of Ulster, and thus, after four centuries spent in Scotland, were brought to their own again, after a fashion, they being, with the dispossessed Earl, descended from a common ancestor, Earl Neil of Carrick.

Another stream of emigration from the Lowlands of Scotland poured over the English border into Yorkshire, and from the Neilsons who thus came into England the Virginia Nelsons trace their origin.

It is but natural to suppose that the Nelsons of Lancashire, England, are similarly of Scottish origin; but some of this family claim that their lands have been in their possession for eight centuries. The records of the Hundred of Leyland seem to bear out this statement. If this is true it would preclude the theory of a descent from the Neilsons of Scotland, and would point more directly to the Scan-

¹ See Nos. 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, pages 2-10, 52-56, post.