



Excerpt from Page 69 to Page 74 re north Co. Down
from Harris, Walter and Smith, Charles. *The Antient and
Present State of the County of Down ...* Dublin, 1744.

Transcriber's note: the spelling of a few words has been modernised and some clarifications have been added within square brackets; however, many other words have been deemed reasonably obvious without any modernising! The original italicisations have been retained.

At the Northern End of this Barony [Castle-Reagh], not far from *Newtown*, are several Gentlemen's Seats, as *Ballyleddy*, Mr. *Robert Blackwood's*; *Crawford's-Burn*, Mr. *John Crawford's*; *Coltra* [Cultra], Mr. *Hugh Kennedy's*; *Dunlady* [near Dundonald], the Seat of **Robert Lambert*, Esq; remarkable for a good Slate Quarry; and *Castle-Hill*, of the Lord *Ikerrin* [created Earl of Carrick in 1748 – Carrick-on-Suir, not Carrickfergus!] and Mrs. *Ward*; add to these the Houses and Plantations of Mr. [Simon] *Isaack* [of Holywood House] and Mr. *Pottinger*. Nor must we omit to mention *Orangefield*, a new and elegant House and Improvement of *David Hunter* Esq; a Mile and half S. E, of *Belfast*, begun the last Year, and brought already to a considerable Degree of Perfection. The House is an oblong Square of 60 Feet by 40, consists of four Rooms on a Floor, and is four Stories high, coined with Freestone, and belted with the same at each Story, besides the Windows and Door-Cases: And as this Gentleman has travelled in the East-Indies, he has followed the Fashion of that Country in covering his House with a flat Roof, without arching, which is laid on strong Burghers or Joists, and secured from the Weather by a Cement made of Brickdust, Lime, and Blood. A little Time will shew whether this sort of roofing will answer the purpose in this moist Climate. Mr. *Hunter* has laid out also Gardens, Orchards, Lawns and other Improvements suitable to the House, which perhaps is one of the best in the County.

* Robert Lambert's daughter and sole heir, the wealthy Anne (sometimes given as Ann) Lambert, married Richard, Second Earl of Annesley in 1771.

Gray point shoots itself a good way into the Bay of *Carrickfergus* [Belfast Lough], forming a safe little Harbour for Boats, and is reckoned the extreme Point of Land in this County to the North. West of it on the Bay stands *Hollywood*, where was antiently a Friery of the Third Order of St. *Francis*, possessed at the Time of the Suppression of five Town-Lands, afterwards granted in Fee-Farm to *James* Viscount *Claneboys*, at the Rent of £1. 3s. 4d. *Irish* Money. There is now near it a good Parish Church, and a Presbyterian Meeting-House; and it is said, that only one reputed Papist lives in the Parish.

On the Shores about *Hollywood* are found vast Quantities of Muscles, (but not of the sort that breed Pearls) on which the poor Inhabitants feed much without feeling any Inconvenience, dressing them when shelled with Butter, Pepper and Onions.

The Hill of *Scraba* [Scrabo] begins to rise about half a Mile South of *Newtown*, and from its Top affords a vast extended Prospect. It is a fruitful Hill, and the Plowmen's Furrows are carried up very near the Summit of it, where was a fine Spring-Well, but of late Years fill'd up with Stones by idle Boys. The Freestone Quarries here will be taken Notice of under another Head. About two Miles North of *Scraba* is another Hill much higher, though in Appearance lower, because it rises more gradually, called *Karn-Gavr*, or the *Goats-Mount*. Under the Hill of *Scraba*, and between that and the Lake, is a large and noted Salt-Marsh.

Cumber [Comber], or *Comerer*, near three Miles S. W. of *Newtown*, stands pleasantly on a Branch of the Lake of *Strangford*, and near it is a pretty Seat belonging to the *Mount Alexander* Family, now possessed by the Honourable *Thomas Mountgomery*, Esq;. *Cumber* is but a mean Village, and has no Trade; yet seems by its Situation to be capable of it, on account of the Advantages of the Tide. There is here at low Water a pleasant Strand of some thousands of Acres, and near the Town a Horse-course of a noted fine Sod two Miles in Circuit. It was antiently remarkable for an Abby of *Cistercian Monks*, founded in the Year 1199, by whom is not certain; though some ascribe it to the *Whites*, who were settled early in this Country under the famous *John de Curcey*. *Jocelyn* calls the Place where this Abby was built, *Domnach Combuir*, and *Flaherty*, *Commurensse Caenobium*. But it was a more antient Abby of Regular Canons founded here by St. *Patrick*, which these Writers hint at. The Site and Possessions of this House were granted to *James Hamilton*, Lord *Claneboys*, at the Rent of £2. 2s. 2d. *Irish Money*, and from him came by Assignment to the Lord Viscount *Ardes*. There is now in the Town a large Meeting-House, and a decent Church, with a Vicarage House.

The Country South and South-west of *Cumber* for several Miles is coarse and hilly, and all to be seen in it are a few scattered ordinary Villages, till you come to *Saintfield*; however by Drains and good Husbandry it affords store of Tillage, plenty of Rye and Oats, and some Pasture for Sheep and Black Cattle. Necessity obliges the Plowmen to carry their Furrows to the Tops of the Hills, and the Morass Grounds in the Bottoms, where they can be tilled, yield a plentiful Increase. *Saintfield*, called in Irish, *Tullach-na-neve* (*Tullach* signifies a Hill in the Irish Language, *na*, of, and *Naove*, a Saint, i.e. *Saint-hill*, now *Saint-field*), in much the same Sense, is the Seat of *Francis Price* Esq;, and stands about six Miles S. W. of *Cumber*. It was not many Years ago made a Town by the Care and Industry of the late *General Price*, who began to improve here, opened and made the Roads passable from *Belfast* to *Down* through it, encouraged Linen Manufacturers and other Tradesmen to settle there, had a Barrack fixed for a Troop of Horse, and promoted the Repair of a ruinous, now decent, Parish Church, to which he gave Plate and other Ornaments. The Glebe House, where the Vicar resides, stands near the Church, and a Presbyterian Meeting-House not far from it. Nothing south-ward in this Barony is worth mentioning except *Reddemin*, the House and Improvement of the late Mr. *Johnson*.

Northward of *St. Field* the Country is but thinly inhabited, until you approach near the River *Lagan*, where it opens into a fairer Prospect, and there you meet with several Gentlemen's Seats, as with the Castle of *Hill-Hall* near *Drumbo*, a square Fortification with four Flankers; *Ballylasson*, the Seat of *Hugh Willoughby* Esq;, *Purdysburn*, a House and pretty Improvements of *Hill Willson* Esq;. *Drum*, the House of *James Hamilton Maxwell* Esq;, stands on a small rising Hill in View of the River, which here runs in Meanders down to *Drum Bridge* on the Road from *Lisburn* to *Belfast*, and the Place is adorned with good Plantations.

Belvoir, an agreeable Seat of the Honourable *Arthur Hill* Esq;, stands about two Miles south of *Belfast* pleasantly seated on the River *Lagan*, which by the Help of the Tide is navigable for Boats to the Foot of the Garden, the Water there being from two to three Feet and a half deep. The Avenue is large, handsome, and well planted; the Gardens are formed out of an irregular Glyn into regular Walks, beautified with Canals, Slopes, Terrasses, and other Ornaments. The Demesne is judiciously disposed, planted and formed into proper Inclosures, round a Variety of Meadow and Tillage Ground. The Produce of Wheat here by the Means of Lime Manure has been considerable, and the Lands thereby highly advanced in Value; although Limestone is not the Produce of the Soil, but is conveyed six Miles by Water to it.

About half a Mile East of *Belvoir*, on an Eminence commanding a Prospect of *Belfast*, the Bay and Town of *Carrickfergus* and the Country round it, appears the Parish Church of *Breda*, a Building the neatest and most compleat perhaps of this Kind in the Kingdom. It is, exclusive of the Chancel, 50 Feet by 25, and 25 in Height. From the middle of the Church on each side springs a Semicircle of 18 Feet Diameter, which, besides enlarging the Room, adds greatly to the Beauty of the Building. The Steeple, with the Spire, built according to the exact Proportions of Architecture, catches the Eyes of all Travellers. This Church was executed under the Direction of Mr. *Castell*, at the sole Expense of the Right Honourable the Lady Viscountess Dowager *Middleton*, whose Charities, both publick and private, have been very extensive. This Parish, together with those of *Knock* and *Kirkdonell*, are at present Episcopally united.

Not much more than two Miles East of *Belvoir*, and about as much S. E. of *Belfast* Bridge, are the Ruins of an ancient Castle, called *Castle-Reagh*, from whence the Barony of that Name is denominatd. It is situated on the Top of a Hill, and in one of those Forts, the Erection of which is usually ascribed to the Danes. This Fort has a Fosse which encompasses three Fourths of it, and once probably surrounded the whole. In the midst of the Fort stood the Castle, formerly the Seat of *Con O-Neille*, Proprietor of that large Tract of Country, which was afterwards divided among the Lords *Claneboys*, *Ardes*, and the Ancestors of the present Lord *Hillsborough*. *Con O-Neille* seems to have been not only one of the great Irish Lords, but also a Petty Prince, as the Name of his Castle imports, the Word *Reagh* or *Righ* in Irish signifying a King; and though he was not owned by *Hugh O-Neille*, Earl of *Tirone*, who affected this Title, to be of his Family, yet his Territory was not contemptible, consisting of the entire Parishes of *Knock*, *Breda*, *Kirkdonell*, *Hollywood*, *Bangor*, *Donaghadee*, *Gray-Abby*, *St. Andrews*; and a great part of the Parish of *Drum*. *Castle-Reagh* is now the Estate of the Right Honourable the Lord Viscount *Hillsborough*, and though made up of a few scattered Houses, yet it is the Head of a Mannor, where his Seneschal holds Courts.

Three Miles south of *Belvoir*, on the Hill of *Drumboe*, are the Ruins of a Church, 45 Feet in length, and 20 broad; and at the N. W. Corner of the Church, 24 Feet distant from it, stands an old round Tower, about 35 Feet high, 47 in Circumference, and 9 in the Diameter in the clear, the Entrance into which is on the East, 6 Feet from the Ground. It is the Opinion of some, that there has been a small fortified Town on the Hill of *Drumboe*, and that the Foundation of the Wall of it is at this Day easy to be seen; and it is observed, that the Spot of Ground, whereon the Town seems to have stood, is more fertile than any other round about it, which is imagined to have proceeded from the Lime and Rubbish of the Houses. Close to this Church there has been a Presbyterian Meeting-House erected.