

different times, and who, having been descended from the great Scythian swarm, gave the name of Scuits or Scots to the inhabitants of the country at a comparatively modern period;* and hence the island was afterwards called Scotia.

Perhaps this diversity of race, taken in connexion with the subsequent ramifications into which the families of different chieftains naturally extended themselves, may in some measure account for the incredible number of kingdoms into which the island was divided at a very early period. This practice, however, of multiplying regal districts was not peculiar to Ireland, but seems to have been prevalent in most countries in the infancy of society. There were no less than ten kings in Thessaly, according to Homer, at the time of the Trojan war; six, in Peloponnesus; and almost every portion of ancient Greece was parcelled out into regal districts. It is therefore by no means surprising that so many of the petty toparchs of Ireland assumed the title of kings, notwithstanding the very limited nature of their respective territories. The province of Munster alone contained in it, at one time, no less than eighteen kingdoms. Six of these were in the present county of Cork; four, in the county of Limerick; and the remaining eight, in Kerry, Waterford, Ossory, and part of Tipperary.†

The princes who governed these regal districts respectively were all subject to the Ard-Righ, or provincial dynast of Munster; for, besides the arrangement to which we have now adverted, the whole island was divided into five prov-

* See Littleton's Hen. II, Vol. III, pp. 15, 16, Dub. ed.

† Ledwich's Antiquities of Ireland.