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# ST. PATRICK

HIS LIFE, HIS HEROIC VIRTUES, HIS  
LABOURS, AND THE FRUITS OF  
HIS LABOURS

BY

VERY REV. DEAN KINANE, P.P., V.G.

CASHEL

*Author of "The Dove of the Tabernacle," "The Ansel of the Altar,"  
"Mary Immaculate, Mother of God ;"  
"St. Joseph, his Life, his Virtue  
his Power," etc.*

With a Preface

HIS GRACE THE MOST REV. DR. GROGAN  
ARCHBISHOP OF CASHEL AND EMLY

TWELFTH EDITION \*

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**Nihil Obstat**

**GULIELMUS DELANY, S.J.,**  
**CENSOR THEOLOG. DEPUT.**

**Imprimatur :**

**✠ GULIELMUS J. WALSH,**  
**ARCHIEPISCOPUS DUBLINENSIS,**  
**HIBERNIÆ PRIMAS.**

**Imprimatur :**

**✠ THOMAS W. CROKE,**  
**ARCHIEPISCOPUS CASSLIENSIS.**

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

---

**THE DOVE OF THE TABERNACLE;** or  
the Love of Jesus in the Most Holy Eucharist.  
(32nd Edition.)

**THE ANGEL OF THE ALTAR;** or the  
Love of the Most Adorable Heart of Jesus. (18th  
Edition.)

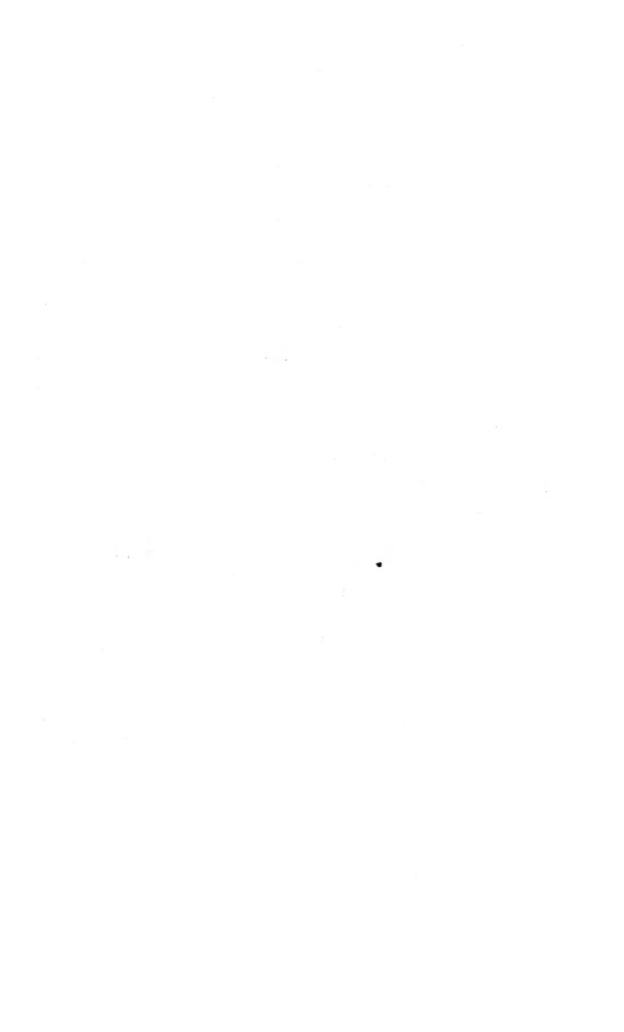
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**THE LAMB OF GOD;** or, Reflections on the  
Life of Our Divine Lord and Saviour Jesus  
Christ. (11th Edition.)

**ST. JOSEPH.** His Life, his Virtues, his Pri-  
vileges, his Power. A Month of March in his  
Honour (9th Edition).

---

*All the above works have been reprinted in America and  
translated into French, German, and Italian. The  
"Dove" is also translated into Spanish.*





## DEDICATION.

---

To St. Patrick, a model of resignation to God's holy will, for six years a captive slave, under a cruel master, on the hills of Antrim;

To St. Patrick, obedient to the call of God, "the voice of the Irish," to evangelize the Irish nation;

To St. Patrick, absorbed for years in prayer and study, "the science of the Saints," in the great schools on the Continent, preparing for his heavenly mission;

To St. Patrick, sent by Pope St. Celestine, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, to spread the light of the Gospel to the Irish nation;

To St. Patrick, the perfect model of the most exalted spirit of prayer and penance;

To St. Patrick, whose firm faith was like St. Peter's, and whose burning zeal was like St. Paul's;

To St. Patrick, whose unique privilege was, that alone and single-handed, he converted a whole nation, not only to Christianity, but to the highest practices of the Evangelical counsels.

To St. Patrick, who watched over and preserved the purity of the faith of the Irish race, at home and abroad ;

To St. Patrick, the glorious and ever-beloved Apostle of Ireland ;

On our own, and on behalf of our dear race at home and beyond the seas ;

In thanksgiving for all graces received through his intercession ;

In reparation for all sins committed, and graces abused ;

In petition for the preservation of the purity of faith and morals until the Day of Judgment ;

This little book is most humbly, most reverentially, and most affectionately dedicated.

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## P R E F A C E.

---

“GOOD WINE,” they say, “needs no bush;” and a life of the great Apostle of Ireland, from the pen of Dean Kinane of Cashel, may well pass into the hands of the Irish Catholic public, without a word of praise or of preface from me.

Like all the other works that have emanated from the same source, it is characterised by two most remarkable features, and possesses them in a very eminent degree. That is to say, it is full to overflowing of instructive matter lucidly arranged, and it breathes forth a spirit of what may be aptly styled irrepressible piety and prayerfulness throughout every paragraph, and, indeed, every line. One has but to run his eye over the headings of the chapters, and the various subsections into which the book

is divided, to satisfy himself abundantly that such is in reality the case.

But, at the same time, no analysis at all compressible into the short space at my disposal, could give anything like an adequate idea of its singularly varied and edifying contents.

Opening with the well-known words of the Psalmist—"Wonderful is God in his Saints"—it proceeds to illustrate the sacred text, by describing the glories of our Blessed Lady, and the exalted goodness of her holy spouse St. Joseph; and passing on then, in due course, to St. Patrick, whose striking personality it is specially meant to portray, it deals exhaustively with his life, his labours, his travels, his heroic virtues, his exceptionally fruitful mission, the persecution of his spiritual children, both by Dane and Saxon, their unbroken fidelity, and their present thorough devotedness to every interest of the Church.

In bulk and form, the "Life of St.

Patrick" is like the other well-known books that from time to time have been published by the Dean. The letterpress is good, the paper excellent, the style pleasing, without being pretentious; and I shall be greatly mistaken, indeed, if this, the latest, but I trust not the last production of the pious author's pen, be not as popular, ere long, and as widely circulated as any work of his that has preceded it.

✠ T. W. CROKE,

*Archbishop of Cashel.*

THE PALACE, THURLES,

*Feast of Our Lady of  
Good Counsel, 1888.*



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## APPROBATIONS.

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*Archbishop's House, Westminster, S. W.*  
*September 15th, 1888.*

VERY REV. AND DEAR DEAN,

I cannot hope for absolution from you for my long omission to thank you for the book you so kindly sent me. Your letter was always before me, looking at me reproachfully ; but I went on hoping for a quiet moment that never came. I wished to read your book through before I wrote to you, but I have not been able. Yet a glance through it convinces me, that "The Life of St. Patrick" is worthy of "The Life of St. Joseph. Nobody who has not lived under this roof can understand how wholly my time is taken from me. You must therefore be merciful, and still believe me that my heart is with you and with Ireland.

Believe me always

Yours very faithfully,

✠ HENRY G.,

Cardinal Archbishop.

---

*4 Rutland-square, E.,  
Dublin.*

MY DEAR DEAN,

I wish every success to your admirable little work on the Life of our National Apostle, St. Patrick. A popular Life was wanted for our Irish people at home and abroad ; you have splendidly supplied the want

Very faithfully yours,

✠ PATRICK F. CARDINAL MORAN,

Archbishop of Sydney.

Very Rev. Dean Kinane.

*Armagh,*

*September 12th, 1888.*

MY DEAR DEAN KINANE,

I beg to thank you most sincerely for your beautiful little volume on St. Patrick which I have read with great interest and pleasure. The lightest praise I can bestow upon it is to state that it is, in every respect, worthy of the previous publications by which you have contributed so much to promote sound religious knowledge and solid piety among our Catholic people.

I can confidently recommend it as a book admirably suited for spiritual reading by simplicity of style, clear and judicious arrangement of matter, and the solid lessons of piety which it inculcates. While it possesses these good qualities in common with your other works, there is added the interest of a lucid narrative of events which awaken the most tender feelings of the Irish Catholic heart.

I have no doubt it will contribute to extend and intensify the devotion of the faithful to our great National Apostle, a result for which I, in a special manner, should feel grateful to you.

Wishing you every blessing and success in your zealous and edifying labours, I am

Dear Dean Kinane,

Yours most faithfully,

✠ MICHAEL LOGUE.

✠ *Rutland-square, E., Dublin,*  
*September 26th, 1888.*

MY DEAR DEAN,

I have to thank you for kindly sending me a copy of your latest work.

It is, I can see, well worthy of taking rank with those other admirable volumes, by the publication of which you have done so much to instruct and to edify our people. I very cordially join in every word of



praise bestowed by your Archbishop upon this new proof of your learning, piety, and zeal.

I remain, my dear Dean,

Most faithfully and sincerely yours,

WILLIAM J. WALSH,

Archbishop of Dublin.

---

*The Irish College, Rome,  
June 22nd, 1888.*

**VERY REV. AND DEAR DEAN,**

I thank you most sincerely for your precious life of our great Apostle, St. Patrick. It is calculated to do much, not only in making more known the apostolic labours of the saint, but also in exciting in the hearts of its readers a love for the faith which he planted in his beloved Erin, and a desire to imitate the Christian and apostolic virtues which adorned his great soul. To this end the pious reflections, resolutions, and prayers, with which you have so opportunely interspersed the historical narrative of his missionary labours, greatly contribute. They raise the mind up from the consideration of the material aspect of those labours to a participation of the divine spirit of the love of God and of our neighbour, which inflamed the heart of our saint. I hope your valuable work will be widely diffused, and that we will see its happy fruits in the increased piety and Catholic fervour in many of the children of St. Patrick, which would be the noblest and most acceptable tribute they could pay to his memory, and the sure way to obtain true honour for themselves before God and man: "For the glory of a man is from the honour of his Father."

Wishing you many years to honour our saint and edify your flock and the faithful generally by your valuable writings and sacerdotal zeal,

I remain, Very Rev. and dear Dean,

Your most obliged and devoted servant,

✦ T. KIRBY,

Archbishop of Ephesus, &c.

*Tuam,*  
*September 10th, 1888.*

MY DEAR DEAN,

Owing to continuous absence from home for a lengthened period, I could not acknowledge your kind letter and thank you for your gift earlier.

By your latest work on St. Patrick, which you have brought out in a convenient, readable form, you have laid the reading Public of these countries, and, indeed, of every country where the English language is used, under the deepest obligation to you. Your preceding works were eagerly seized on by a discerning Public, and I make no doubt your present, on "The Life of St. Patrick," so full of interesting knowledge and fervid piety, will meet with the same success. I would wish to see it in the hands of all our people.

Believe me, my dear Dean,

Very truly yours,

✠ JOHN MACEVILLY.

Very Rev. Dean Kinane.

---

*Edinburgh,*  
*September 1st, 1888.*

VERY REV. DEAN,

It is time that I should thank you for your handsome little book on St. Patrick. I have been so busily engaged since your letter of 1st June came to hand that I could only open the volume here and there, till very lately. I have since tried to run cursorily through the whole of it; and I feel that the simplicity of its style, its moral lessons, its fervent spirit of prayer and piety are calculated to do much good among those for whom it is intended; while the grand character of St. Patrick himself, of the sanctity, zeal, and learning of his children in and beyond "The Isle of Saints," should make Ireland proud of its many incomparable heroes. The book will get a welcome reception among all classes in Scotland.

Yours truly,

✠ M. SMITH.

158 *Renfrew-street, Glasgow.*  
*August 25th, 1888.*

MY DEAR DEAN KINANE,

I write to thank you very much for having sent me a copy of your book, "St. Patrick." Since it came here I have been much from home and had not the opportunity of writing to you until to-day. You have done for St. Patrick what you had previously done for St. Joseph, i.e., you have put within the reach of all a little book, written in a very popular and attractive style, containing the history of the wonderful life of the Apostle of Ireland. To this you have added an interesting sequel in a recapitulation of the immediate and the remote and abiding fruits of the labours of St. Patrick. For your book I wish, and augur, a large circulation: for it will encourage the faithful to endeavour to imitate the virtues of the saint, especially his faith and confidence in God, his zeal, and his spirit of prayer.

That St. Patrick may obtain many graces and blessings for one who has written with such zeal and love his life and history is the sincere wish of one who is

Very faithfully yours,

✠ CHARLES,  
 Archbishop of Glasgow.

---

*Tullow, Co. Carlow.*  
*September 4th, 1888.*

MY DEAR FATHER KINANE,

You asked me to give my opinion on your "Life of St. Patrick, Apostle of Ireland." I feel I could not do so honestly until I had read it. . . . I am engaged in my visitations, so you will forgive my delay in replying to acknowledge the receipt of your last though not the least of your pious works. Taking it

up from time to time, I have, during my visitation in Maryboro, finished the Life. From my heart I congratulate you in what I will call the complete success of your labours, as you justly call it, of love. It fully satisfies me. It is short, full, clear, intelligible to all. Abounding in piety, unction, and holy patriotism, calculated to do immense good in kindling in the hearts of our countrymen all over the world an intensified love of our, as you so often call him, Beloved Apostle. Your labour of love is not yet finished. Your mind and heart are now well toned to publish the praises of our more than beloved Mary of Erin. After St. Patrick she is the greatest benefactor and glory of our dear old country. I know you cannot refuse this, the last labour of love I will put upon your pen, as the unworthy Bishop of the diocese which more than any other diocese claims Blessed Brigid as her own.

Your ever dearest friend in Christ,

✠ J. LYNCH.

Very Rev. Dean Kinane.

---

*Queenstown,*  
*September 4th, 1888.*

MY DEAR DEAN,

I beg to thank you very sincerely for the advance copy of your latest, but not your least, useful or interesting book, which you have been kind enough to send me, and which circumstances prevented me from acknowledging before this. I have read it all through with pleasure and profit, and found it, as I expected, distinguished by those same qualities of conscientious research, solid piety, and unction, as well as of that fervour of thought and language which have characterised those previous books of yours for which the Catholic reading public of this country are your debtors. To these qualities, especially the latter, are

attributable the wonderful success they have achieved, as shown by the numerous editions they have passed through since their publication. They were written from the heart, and have thus gone straight to the hearts of their readers. This is equally true of the present work—"The Life of St. Patrick"—perhaps in a certain sense the most useful and instructive book you have yet written, for it supplies in a small compass, and at a trifling cost, and in language intelligible to all, a history of the life and actions of our patron saint not otherwise accessible to a very large class of readers. It is true other lives of our saint have been written—lives, too, remarkable for their learning and research, and the Catholic spirit which pervades them; and amongst these I would specially mention his Life by F. Morris, of the Oratory, to which you often refer; but they were written for a more cultured and learned class of readers than those you intended to reach, and devote a large portion of their space to the vindication of our saint's character and mission, and the refutation of that destructive criticism by which the Protestant biographers, since the days of Ussher, seek to cast a doubt on his Catholicity and his mission from the Holy See, and to relegate his supernatural virtues and miracles to the regions of legend. Avoiding, as I think wisely, controversial topics of this kind, which possess no interest for those whose faith is unshaken in the divine miracles and mission of our National Apostle, your object has been to present to the far larger reading portion of our fellow-countrymen of the humbler and middle class the grand personality of the saint, and to trace out for them those incidents in his early and subsequent career, which, under the guidance of divine grace, led up to and perfected that supereminent degree of heroic sanctity to which he attained, and which was, in the designs of Providence, the divinely constituted means by which he was enabled, unassisted by any human aid, to accomplish the stupendous work of the conversion of a

pagan nation during the short space of a single life—a miracle in the moral order far transcending those in the physical order, which his Protestant critics deride and reject. The miraculous character of his work is, if possible, enhanced by the almost insurmountable obstacles thrown in his way by the religion and character of the people to whom he preached.

The Irish nation of that date was wedded, as few others were, to the mysterious nature worship of the Druids, who, in addition to the reverence attached to their priestly character (a reverence as characteristic of our pagan forefathers as it is of their descendants of the present day), were looked up to and honoured by the people as their lawgivers and bards, and exercised over them an influence, even in temporal matters, only second to that of the “Ard Righ.” To overcome this influence, at once religious and secular, rooted as it was in the immemorial traditions and customs and habits of their followers, was in itself a superhuman task; and to transfer it to the ministers of an alien creed, utterly opposed to their most cherished usages and feelings, was a work which could only be effected by the hand of the Most High; and yet this St. Patrick accomplished in his own lifetime. That it could be achieved without miracles of a striking character is a greater tax on our credulity than the acceptance of those miracles in the physical order wrought by our Saint. That legends may have grown round the grand central figure of St. Patrick, and helped to swell the number and enhance the supernatural character of those miracles, no Catholic will refuse to admit. But to reject them *in globo*, without sifting or weighing the evidence on which they rest, as Protestant writers do, is as unwarranted as it is unphilosophical. This you have clearly shown in your present work; but its great merit in my eyes is, that it brings out, in strong relief, the life and character of our Saint, and portrays for the great mass of your fellow-countrymen in simple and natural, but strong and vigorous language, his

supernatural virtues and labours, and the influence they exercised on his contemporaries, and continued to exercise on their descendants up to the present time, securing for them, I agree with you in thinking, that inviolable fidelity to the Faith he preached, which has withstood the cruelest and the bitterest persecution which History records since the earliest ages of Christianity.

Another merit of your book, and one which entitles it to be classed in the devotional works, is the moral you draw for the instruction and edification of your readers, from the virtues and actions of the Saint; and the reflections and prayers, breathing the warmest and most fervent spirit of true piety with which it is interspersed. I auger for it, therefore, the same widespread and enthusiastic appreciation and acceptance with which your preceding books have been hailed; the more so, as it breathes in every page that genuine and well-ordered love of country which, next to the love of God, is the deepest and holiest feeling of the Irish heart.

I cannot conclude this notice of your book more appropriately than by quoting, in reference to this twofold love, the following beautiful passage from the works of the great Bishop of Orleans:—

“Let us not think that these two loves are antagonistic. No, no; religion points the way to heaven, but it does not make us forget the dear native land here. Religion is only the harmonious concord of duties.”

With sincerest congratulations on the successful accomplishment of your “self-imposed” labour of love, and heartily praying for it a circulation coextensive with its merits I am,

My dear Dean,

Yours most truly,

✠ JOHN MACCARTHY.

The Very Rev. Dean Kinane, P.P., V.G.,  
Cashel.

*Sligo,*  
*August 25th, 1888*

**MY DEAR ARCHDEACON,**

Very Rev. and dear Sir,

Many thanks for the copy of the Life of St. Patrick, with which you have so kindly favoured me. What I have read of it pleases me exceedingly. It contains a large amount of reliable information on the life and labours of our glorious Apostle, and it so blends history with prayer and asceticism as to move and purify the heart. whilst it informs the mind and captivates the imagination. It is, like your other Lives, and even to a larger extent, the work of a warm Irish heart and a bright Irish mind. Like them, it will be eagerly read by Irishmen in all parts of the globe, with the happy result of inspiring them with an enthusiastic love for the faith of Patrick and a faithful observance of its holy and saving precepts.

Most cordially do I congratulate you on the completion of this new work, and on the abundant spiritual fruits it is sure to produce.

Believe me, my dear Archdeacon,

Very sincerely yours,

✠ L. GILLOOLY,  
 Bishop of Elphin.

---

*The Palace, Thurles.*  
*June 16th, 1888.*

**VERY REV DEAN KINANE,**

I received a copy of your Life of St. Patrick, for which please accept my sincere thanks. I hope that it will have the circulation it deserves. No one can read it without profit and an increased devotion towards the great Apostle of Ireland. I am sure it will get a wide circulation, like your other well-known books, in America.

Sincerely yours,

✠ R. RIORDAN,  
 Archbishop of San Francisco.



*Bishop's House, Waterford,  
September 21st, 1888.*

MY DEAR ARCHDEACON,

I have read your "St. Patrick" with great pleasure and edification; and whilst congratulating you on the valuable service you have rendered to the cause of religion and country in adding this gem to your other charming works, I sincerely wish for it a very widespread circulation.

Yours very faithfully,

✠ P. POWER.

Very Rev. Archdeacon Kinane.

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*Bishop's House, Salford,*

*August 5th, 1888.*

MY DEAR FATHER KINANE,

So many contradictions have been advanced of late years as to the birthplace of St. Patrick that I am beginning to doubt as to whether he was ever born at all. I have therefore skipt over your disquisition on this subject, and have been interesting myself in all that you have to say on other matters.

You have so interspersed devout reflections and touching prayers with your narrative that you will not fail to increase piety in the hearts of your readers. A saint's life ought to move the soul to the love and service of God. It ought not to be a mere biography if it is to serve the purpose of meditation and prayer. There are plenty of biographies of St. Patrick, but there is no Life of the Saint, so far as I know, which is carried into the sanctuary of the soul as yours is, with the direct aim of purifying and sanctifying the soul of the reader by inducing him to pray for a practice of the virtues which are illustrated by St. Patrick's life. Like your other exquisite works, "St. Patrick's Life" will find a wide circulation in England.

Wishing you every blessing,

I am, my dear Dean, yours faithfully,

✠ HERBERT, Bishop of Salford.

*Galway, September 5th. 1888.*

MY DEAR DEAN,

I thank you for the copy of "St. Patrick" which you kindly sent me during my absence from Ireland.

Since my return home I have read a good deal of the little volume; and I have the pleasure of congratulating you once again in giving us another useful specimen of your continued literary labours. It seems to me that you have admirably succeeded in producing a valuable Manual Life of our National Apostle. It combines history with piety, blends the spirit of the saint with the traditional sentiments of his children in the faith—their happily entwining the shamrock with the cross. And your work has all the advantages of a Manual—as to size, substance, and price. Everybody felt the want of a popular Life of our great Apostle.

Hence, it will, I trust, find its way into the hands of St. Patrick's household—at home and abroad.

With sincerest esteem,

I remain, my dear Dean, very faithfully yours,

✠ F. J. MACCORMAC,

Bishop of Galway, &c.

Very Rev. Dean Kinane, V.G., P.P., Cashel.

*Bishop's House, Skibbereen, October 1st, 1888.*

MY DEAR DEAN KINANE,

In your new, and certainly not least important work, you have made another and strong claim upon the gratitude of the Irish Catholic people at home and abroad. The care, the learning, the deeply religious spirit, betrayed in almost every page of your admirable work on "the Life, Virtue, and Labours" of the great Apostle of Ireland, tell once again of the safe and pious hands into which have been entrusted such a mission, such virtues, and such results as you, with such patience and devotedness, so edifyingly and loving record.

I am, my dear Dean,

Your ever faithful friend in Christ,

✠ WM. FITZGERALD, Bishop of Ross.

*St. Mel's, Longford,  
August 12th, 1888.*

**MY DEAR DEAN KINANE,**

Allow me to congratulate you on your new contribution to the holy work of spreading good books among our people. Your "Life of St. Patrick" is worthy to follow your admirable little works on the Blessed Sacrament, Sacred Heart, Blessed Virgin, and St. Joseph, and is calculated to effect great good. May St. Columbkille and the other great children of St. Patrick, unite with our holy Apostle in obtaining their blessing for it; and for you, its worthy author, the bright reward promised to those *who instruct others unto justice.*

Believe me to be, my dear Dean Kinane,

With sincere respect and esteem,

Very faithfully yours,

✠ BARTH. WOODLOCK,

Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise.

Very Rev. Dean Kinane.

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*Letterkenny,*

*August 25th, 1888.*

**MY DEAR DEAN,**

In the hurry of the times I could read but little of your beautiful work since it came into my hands. Enough, however, I have seen of it to know that in this nice volume you have given the life of our National Apostle in a form that is at once interesting to the reader, and perfectly true to the Saint and his works.

The way you turn this biography into a book of practical piety, by adding prayers, resolutions, and reflections at the end of certain chapters, fully accords with the religious character of a people whose history always exhibits the supreme control of faith and supernatural

motives in every concern of life. The concluding pages on the outcome of St. Patrick's labours and the work done by his followers, are peculiarly attractive.

I remain, dear Dean, with many thanks for your welcome volume,

Your faithful servant,

✠ PATRICK O'DONNELL

*Loughrea,*  
*August 1st, 1888.*

MY DEAR DEAN KINANE,

Very many thanks for your instructive and interesting book on "St. Patrick." It is surprising how you contrived to compress into such a small compass the main features—even in detail—of the marvellous life of our great National Apostle. I hope—indeed, I feel certain—it will command a wide circulation amongst the Irish Catholic race at home and abroad. The book supplies a want long felt.

With best wishes,

Very sincerely yours,

✠ PATRICK DUGGAN

Very Rev. Dean Kinane. P.P., V.G.,  
Cashel, Co. Tipperary.

*Newry Parochial House,*  
*July 25th, 1888.*

VERY REV. DEAN KINANE,

I thank you for the "Life of St. Patrick," written by you, of which you have sent me a copy. I have been reading it with pleasure and profit. It shows

great diligence and research, on your part, is orderly and replete with information concerning the labours and success of the mission of our great Apostle. Thus, in small compass, opening to the mind of the reader the entire life of St. Patrick among his Irish children.

Believe me yours very sincerely,

✠ T. McGIVERN,  
Coadjutor Bishop of Dromora.

Very Rev. Dean Kinane, P.P., V.G.

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*Wexford, July 30th, 1888.*

DEAR DEAN KINANE,

I have read your new book, "St. Patrick," with very great pleasure, indeed. I consider it is well worthy of the high praise bestowed upon it by the illustrious Archbishop of Cashel. I trust it may have a very wide circulation among English-speaking Catholics. It cannot fail to be the means of diffusing among the faithful a great love and veneration for our National Apostle. In style and matter it is everything that could be desired.

Yours faithfully,

✠ JAMES BROWNE.

Very Rev. Dean Kinane.

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*Cork, October 3rd, 1888.*

MY DEAR DEAN,

My attention has lately been called to your "Life of St. Patrick," and I wish to congratulate you most heartily. It is in all respects deserving the praise that has been lavishly bestowed on your other works by all classes of Catholic society. It gives me pleasure to recommend it, and it will, I trust, find its way into the hands of very many of our pious people.

Your very sincerely,

✠ T. A. O'CALLAGHAN, Bishop of Cork.

50 Rathgar-roaa. Dublin,  
September 25th, 1888.

MY DEAR DEAN.

I ask a thousand pardons for leaving your communication so long unanswered, and the copy of "St. Patrick" you were good enough to forward me, so long without acknowledgment. Pray accept my tardy thanks, and best wishes for the success of a work that combines historical and antiquarian interest with an edifying and beautiful picture of our great Apostle's life and labours, that cannot fail to instruct and improve those who read it.

Believe me faithfully yours,

✠ N. DONNELLY

Very Rev Dean Kinane. P.P.

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# ST. PATRICK.

## HIS LIFE, HEROIC VIRTUES, AND THE FRUITS OF HIS LABOURS.



### CHAPTER I.

#### THE SAINTS.

“WONDERFUL is God in His saints” (Ps. lxvii. 36). God is wonderful in all His works. The swells of the mighty deep tell His Majesty. The lofty mountains, capped by virgin snow, preach His Omnipotence. Systems and countless planets, cast by His hand into boundless space, and revolving in perfect harmony, proclaim His Wisdom and Power. “The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of His hands” (Ps. xviii. 2). Far more wonderful is God in the sanctification of souls. We see the mighty works of nature, but the supernatural is hidden from our eyes.

## SECTION I.

*The Blessed Virgin Mary.*

If we except the Human Soul of our Divine Lord, the most sublime and noble, the grandest spiritual edifice that ever issued from omnipotent wisdom and power, is Mary Immaculate, Mother of God. God well-nigh exhausted His spiritual treasures on this unique and peerless figure, our Blessed Lady.

Seeing Mary in her transcendent beauty, in her perfect loveliness, in her immaculate purity; seeing her exalted in dignity and sanctity above the Saints and Angels, Cherubim and Seraphim; nay, surpassing the sanctity of all the Saints, angels, and blessed Spirits put together; God, so to speak, was pleased at the work of His hands, and saluted her, "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is no spot in thee" (Can. iv. 7); "Thou art beautiful, O my love, sweet and comely as Jerusalem. . . . . One is my dove, my perfect one is but one. She is the only one" (Can. vi. 8).

If the Prophet Jeremiah was sanctified, as he was, in his mother's womb, because his heavenly mission was to announce to the world the mysteries and revelations of the



Almighty ; if St. John the Baptist was sanctified, as he was, before he was born, because he was destined to baptize the Saviour of the world, to point out the Redeemer in person, "Behold the Lamb of God ;" if these Saints were holy because they approached near God, and were destined to fulfil a high and holy mission ; what special unique privileges, graces, and favours must not the Almighty have reserved for our Blessed Lady, whose heavenly mission was unspeakably higher and holier ; who countless times carried in her arms the Saviour of the world, and felt the throbbings of His Sacred Heart ; whose relation was so intimate as mother and son, who, in reality, gave to mankind the Redeemer of the world ; and from whose Immaculate Heart was taken the very Precious Blood that washed away the sins of the human race on Calvary's Hill.

No wonder then the Old Testament, as applied by the Fathers, styles our Blessed Lady "the glory of Jerusalem," "the joy of Israel," "the honour of our people" (Jud. xv. 10), "the enclosed garden," "the sealed up fountain," "all fair," "without spot," "beautiful, sweet, comely as Jerusalem ;" the "only one," the "perfect one." The New Testament pronounces her "full of

grace," having "found grace with God;" and in no fewer than four places, styles her "blessed," and proclaims that all generations shall call her blessed (Luke, i. 39). Mary Immaculate, as Mother of God, is amongst pure creatures the most holy, the most perfect, the purest, the most sinless and sanctified soul that God has ever created or ever will create. "Wonderful is God" in the "Queen of all Saints." "When we speak of Mary, we speak of Jesus; speaking of her grandeur, we speak of God's own grandeur. After God, nothing in earth or in heaven is greater than Mary," writes the devout Cardinal de Berule.

## SECTION II.

### *St. Joseph.*

After the Lily of Israel, the next most exquisite flower in the Garden of God's Church is St. Joseph. After the moon, shedding her pale, silvery light upon the world, the figure and emblem of Mary Immaculate, the next brightest and most brilliant star in the celestial firmament is St. Joseph. After the Mother of God, the next purest, most holy, most sanctified soul ever created by the Al-

mighty is St. Joseph, "the husband of Mary," and reputed father of Jesus.

St. Joseph was more holy than the Prophets, the Apostles; nay, than the Baptist; because his heavenly mission was of a higher order, and his relation with God more intimate and familiar. Twofold was his mission, and hence twofold is the source and reason of his sanctity. First, Mary Immaculate, Mother of God, was the choicest, the most precious jewel in heaven or on earth; from among the sons of men God chose St. Joseph, and by his richest graces made him worthy to be her Spouse and Guardian. A celebrated writer exclaims, "O sublime elevation, O admirable dignity of Joseph, whom the Mother of God, Queen of Heaven, deemed worthy to call her Spouse." "The Evangelists," writes St. Leonard of Port-Maurice, "say but very little of the life and virtues of St. Joseph; but when they call him the Spouse of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, they give him the most glorious title possible, for he was, nearest to Mary, the purest creature ever made by God Almighty."

St. John Damascene writes, "Husband of Mary! ineffable expression, which leaves naught to say." The learned and pious Gerson thus addressed the Fathers, at the

Council of Constance: "Let me here exclaim, O Joseph, how wonderful thy sublimity! O incomparable dignity, that the Mother of God, the Mistress of the world, should not disdain, O great St. Joseph, to call thee lord. Truly, I know not, O orthodox Fathers, which is most admirable here—the humility of Mary or the dignity of St. Joseph."

Higher and holier was his heavenly mission as Guardian and Protector of Jesus, the Saviour of the world. The Gospel says, "And Jesus Himself was beginning about the age of thirty years, being (as it was supposed) the Son of Joseph" (Luke, iii. 23). Again, "his father and mother were wondering at these things which were spoken concerning them. . . . . And his parents went every year to Jerusalem. . . . . Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing" (Luke, ii.) St. Joseph, first after Mary, learned the Mystery of the Incarnation, and *adored the WORD MADE FLESH*. St. Joseph watched over the Mother and the Child from Nazareth to Bethlehem. St. Joseph, first after Mary, adored and loved the Divine Infant in the crib at Bethlehem. St. Joseph saved the life of the Saviour of the world, by flying at the bidding of an Angel into Egypt from the cruel Herod.

Countless times did St. Joseph carry in his arms and press to his bosom the Divine Babe. For thirty years St. Joseph was privileged to supply, by the labour of his hands, the wants and comforts of Mary and Jesus. For thirty years St. Joseph lived in the school, and in perpetual presence of Jesus, and saw infinite intelligence, wisdom, and sanctity beaming in His divine eyes. Lastly, our Patriarch died in the arms of Jesus and Mary.

By his heavenly mission, therefore, St. Joseph was exalted in dignity and sanctity above all the sons of men, and, like the Baptist, was sanctified in his mother's womb, and confirmed in grace.

"We cannot doubt," writes St. Alphonsus Liguori, "that whilst St. Joseph lived with Jesus, he received such superabundance of grace that he surpasses in sanctity and merit all other saints." "We boldly affirm," concludes Father Segneri, "that no man on this earth was ever holier than St. Joseph.

The devout Clients will glory in the unique dignity, sanctity, and privileges of Mary Immaculate, Mother of God, and of our great Patriarch, St. Joseph.

Though Saints are not jealous of one another, yet we shall not go further contrast-

ing Saint with Saint. In the Old Law we have the great Patriarchs and Prophets. We have the Precursor of our Blessed Saviour, of whom Jesus Himself attests. "Amen, I say to you, there hath not risen among them that are born of woman greater than John the Baptist" (Matt. ii. 11). We have the Apostles, the founders of the Church of Jesus. We have St. Stephen the first martyr, canonized by the Holy Ghost Himself. "And when he had said this he fell asleep in the Lord" (Acts, viii. 59). We have the countless host of Confessors who wore chains for Jesus. We have the millions of martyrs who sealed their faith with their blood; who in Paradise bear in their hands a palm branch, the emblem of their martyrdom, having washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. We have, higher and holier still, the band of virgins, whose chaste souls were whiter than the virgin snow and purer than the sunbeam, who in Paradise are privileged to sing "a new song, and which none else can sing," and "to follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes" (Apoc. xiv. 1-3).

Like the beauteous moon and twinkling planets, shedding their pale, silvery light upon the world, and revolving round the sun, their centre and the source of their neat,

light, and beauty ; so in Paradise, the Saints, and Mary, the Queen of all Saints, are so many luminaries round the throne of God, their centre, and the source of their dignity, sanctity, power, and beauty. “Wonderful is God in his saints.”

Of these countless millions of Saints, who stand before the throne of God, one alone is the object of our theme—St. Patrick, the glorious Apostle of Ireland !

### SECTION III.

#### *St. Patrick.*

When we pause and contemplate this majestic figure, when we reflect on the prodigies of his life, and the results of his labour, we confess we feel nervous to attempt the task. When writers of profound learning and great eloquence, such as the famous Count Montalembert, hesitated and confessed themselves unequal to the work, it seems presumption on our part even to venture ; yet we feel some consolation in the reflection that our simple effort is purely for the greater glory of God, to make our great national Saint, of whom we are so proud, better known and hence better loved among

the simple and uncultured, for whose instruction and edification we chiefly write.

St. Patrick is a unique figure in the Catholic Church. His faith as strong as that of St. Peter's, his burning zeal for souls like that of St. Paul's, his awful austerities equal to St. Anthony's of the desert, his spirit of prayer not surpassed by St. Francis of Assisium, and the success of his labours unequalled in Church history! What other Apostle but our great St. Patrick, converted a whole nation from Paganism to the most fervent practices of Christianity?

At the preaching of our Apostle idols fell to the ground, the whole nation embraced Christianity, practised the most sublime of the Evangelical counsels, and the praises of the true God ascended from virgin lips from hill and dale, before the Most High. Our Saint writes; "Wherefore behold how in Ireland, they who never had the knowledge of God, and hitherto worshipped only unclean idols, have now become the people of the Lord, and are called the sons of God. The sons of the Scotti, and the daughters of princes, are seen to be monks and virgins of Christ" (Confessions).

Apostles usually water and fertilize the garden of the Church by their blood; St.



Patrick is the exception. Prayers, tears, and penances were the sacrifices offered to God for the conversion of the Irish nation. Nations were converted, and at the touch of persecution have lost the faith; to-day, after centuries of unparalleled suffering and trials, Erin professes the same holy faith which St. Patrick, nigh fifteen hundred years ago, preached to the Kings at Tara; she professes the same faith as pure and holy as it fell from the divine lips of Jesus Christ Himself. Under God, thanks to the prayers of our glorious Apostle, St. Patrick.

Not only has the Irish nation preserved the faith pure and unsullied at home, but in the early ages of her history, her scholars, her apostles, her missionaries spread the light of the Gospel abroad, and evangelized most countries in Europe. To-day, under the Providence of God, Ireland is a missionary nation; and her chaste daughters, worthy of "Mary of Erin," and brave sons, bidding an eternal adieu to their fertile plains and native hills, so dear and cherished to their heart of hearts, carry over the deep, in their souls, a treasure more precious than silver and gold—the faith of St. Patrick; and in England—perfidious Albion—Scotland, America, Australia, and India, have built

churches, schools, and convents, and have planted the cross, where the holy names of Jesus and Mary were never heard before. Such is the fruit of the labours of our great Apostle, St. Patrick.

The learned but rigid critic, Tillemont, writes: "St. Patrick has ever been regarded in Ireland as her Apostle; because, as we shall see, he was sent there by the special command of God, and with that overflowing plenitude of the apostolic spirit which wrought the complete conversion of the nation, and infused such a spirit of piety, that the title of 'Island of Saints' is said to have been given to it from that time. It is certain that there is not in our days any nation, subject to heretical rulers, which has upheld the faith with such courage. . . . Who can be surprised if in an enterprize altogether apostolic, God should have led, in the way of the Prophets and Apostles, a Saint who appears to have borne a greater resemblance to them than to those Saints who have succeeded them. . . . In one word we see in St. Patrick much of the spirit of St. Paul."

Father Morris, the learned Oratorian, writes: "St. Patrick fills up the first age of the Church in Ireland—the fifth century

belongs to him. The sixth and seventh are those in which Ireland was known as the 'Island of Saints and Doctors,' when the country was like one great sanctuary, where religion and science found a home amid the universal desolation which followed the inroad of the barbarians. . . . .

"In our own times millions have gone forth from Ireland to plant the faith in the New World, or to revive it in the Old. We may estimate the Episcopal sees, Apostolic delegates, vicariates, and Prefectures of the Catholic Church at something over a thousand; at least two hundred of these are found in nations using the English language. No hierarchy of any race or language is so numerous, or increases with such rapidity. Pius the IX. has created thirty new bishoprics in the United States of America alone; and when we count the number of prelates in that country, and in others as well, who have received either their faith itself or their flocks from St. Patrick, we can realise the place held by the Apostle of Ireland in the Church of the nineteenth century."\*

"No Saint," writes Cardinal Manning, "had so many mitred sons in the Vatican Council as St. Patrick."

\* St. Patrick, p. 14, 38

Of the fruits of the labours of St. Patrick, Count Montalembert, the great orator and academician, writes: "From the fifth to the eighth century Ireland became one of the great centres of Christianity in the world; and not only of Christian holiness and virtue but also of knowledge, literature, and that intellectual life with which the new faith was about to endow Europe."\*

Another learned writer says: "While the vigour of Christianity in Italy, Gaul, and Spain was exhausted in the bare struggle for life, Ireland, which remained unscourged by the invaders, drew from its conversion an energy which it has never known since. Christianity had been received with a burst of popular enthusiasm, and letters and arts sprang up rapidly in its train. The science and biblical knowledge which fled from the Continent, took refuge in the famous schools which made Durrow and Armagh the universities of the West."†

Gorres, a learned German, writes: "When we look into the ecclesiastical life of this people, we are almost tempted to believe that some potent spirit had transplanted over the sea the cells of the valley of the Nile

\* *Monks of the West*, Vol. iii., p. 84.

† *Green Sketches*.

with all their hermits, its monasteries with all their inmates, and had settled them down in the Western Isle.”\*

We have said that we hesitated and felt timid to attempt to write the life and virtues of our great Saint. Eminent ecclesiastics have assured us that a popular life of St. Patrick is a want long felt and a work anxiously looked for. After centuries of unparalleled sufferings and persecutions, the Irish people are at length being educated. The spirit of free inquiry is now abroad. The love for faith and fatherland is, if possible, more than ever intensified. The Irish boy and girl, at home and abroad, love to know the deeds and exploits of their famous saints and heroes. Though Ireland is the fruitful mother of legions of illustrious sons, renowned for sanctity, arts, and arms, yet the most glorious and noble figure in Irish history is St. Patrick, her great Apostle. We need hardly, therefore, apologise to the brave sons and virtuous daughters of Erin in the Green Isle, and those “beyond the waves,” for our attempt, feeble though it be, to put into their hand a Popular Life of our great, beloved, and dear St. Patrick.

\* Ec. Record, April, 1885.

## PIOUS REFLECTION.

My soul! reflect on the sweet and tender mercy and goodness of Jesus to thee. To save thee and sanctify thee, O my soul, our Blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, has given His Life and Death, and all the merits of His Precious Blood. To win paradise for thee the Saviour of the world has instituted the most adorable Sacrifice of the Altar, and the holy Sacraments of His Church. A most tender touch of the mercy of Jesus for thy salvation is in having given thee as advocates Mary, His Mother, the Queen of heaven; St. Joseph, His reputed father, and next to Mary in power and glory; and all the Saints and Spirits of God, who, before the throne of the Most High, sing day and night: "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, who is, and who is to come. . . . Thou art worthy, O Lord our God to receive glory, and honour, and power" (Apoc. iv. 11).

## RESOLUTIONS.

My sweetest Jesus! Thy mercy to me has been boundless. Thy mercy has so often

saved me from hell, and from countless miseries of soul and body. In Thy mercy, I live, and Thy mercy alone is my only hope of salvation. Thy mercy, dearest Jesus, has surrounded me, not only every day, but every moment of my life. I resolve, therefore, every day of my life, to thank the bountiful mercy of God to me, and pray Jesus to continue His mercy to me every moment of life, and especially at the hour of death ; secondly, in all dangers and temptations, to invoke the aid of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, my Angel Guardian, St. Patrick, and all the Saints and blessed Spirits of God in paradise. May Jesus, in His infinite mercy, grant me, a poor sinner, the grace to keep my resolutions.

## PRAYERS.

“O God, be merciful to me a sinner.”  
“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.”  
“Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy, and according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my iniquities.” “Wash me yet more from my iniquities, and cleanse me from my sins.”  
“From my hidden sins cleanse me, O Lord, and from those of others spare Thy servant.”

“The sins of my youth and my ignorance remember not, O Lord.” “Divine mercy, incarnate in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, inundate the world, and diffuse Thyself upon us.”

THE PRAYER OF ST. BERNARD TO THE  
BLESSED VIRGIN.

“Remember, O most glorious Virgin Mary, that it was never known that any one who fled to thy protection, implored thy aid, and sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly to thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother, to thee I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions; but in thy clemency hear and answer me. Amen.”

St. Joseph, pray for me, and obtain for me the grace of a happy death.

“Angels, Archangels, Thrones, and Dominations, Principalities and Virtues, Cherubim and Seraphim, Patriarchs and Prophets, Holy Doctors of the Law, Apostles, all the Martyrs of Christ, Holy Confessors, Virgins of the Lord, Anchorites, all Saints, intercede for us.”—(Brev.)



## CHAPTER II.

## SECTION I.

*The Birthplace of St. Patrick.*

FROM the beginning of history, nations and cities glory in having given birth to great men—patriots, saints, scholars, poets, warriors; men of renown; men famous for sanctity, arts, or arms. Singular enough, the birthplace of many of the greatest men is uncertain, is disputed, and likely ever shall be a matter of question among the learned. The birthplace of Homer, the greatest of all the poets, as well as the birthplace of St. Joseph, the greatest of all the Saints, after the Blessed Virgin, is quite uncertain. We cannot tell for certain where St. Augustine, the Apostle of England, nor St. Boniface, the Apostle of Germany, was born. So it is with St. Patrick. No wonder that nations would covet the pride and glory of having given birth to an Apostle; hence there are few facts in history so disputed, and likely will ever be a matter of dispute among the learned, as the birthplace of the great Apostle of the Irish nation.

Passing over as unworthy of serious notice the claims put forward by some historians in favour of Cornwall, Pembrokeshire in Wales, and of Ireland herself, the glory and the controversy lie between France and Scotland.

Having carefully read all the available authors on the subject, we hesitate not to declare, that the birthplace of our Saint is, and will remain, a matter of uncertainty. Notwithstanding that Cardinal Moran, in his able and learned paper on the subject in the *Dublin Review*, April, 1880, has thrown the great weight of his authority in the scales in favour of the "land of the storm and the flood," yet we incline to give the honour and glory to "Sunny France."

Dr. Lanigan, a native of Cashel, "the City of the Kings," and one of the most learned ecclesiastical historians that Ireland can boast of, has gone in for Boulogne-sur-Mer, in France; and so vast is the amount of learning and research, both ancient and modern, which his great ability and industry have exhausted on the subject, that to many his arguments are quite conclusive; and hence his opinion has been adopted by almost all modern writers since his time.

Many ancient authorities have been ap-

pealed to by both sides. The first great authority on the subject is—St. Patrick's Confession.

All critics admit the Confession to be genuine, written by the Saint's own hand. It begins thus :

“I, Patrick, a sinner, the most unlearned and the last of all the faithful, and held in contempt by very many, had Calphurnius, a Deacon, for my father, the son of Potitus, a priest, who lived in Bennaven Taberniæ. He had, close by, a small villa, where I was taken captive when I was nearly sixteen years of age.”

Now, to our mind, nothing conclusive can be deduced from the above passage. The identification of the name and place is quite obscure, and hence disputed. Let it also be observed that our Saint does not say he was born at Bennaven Taberniæ, but there taken captive. Those who go in for France thus interpret it:—Bannavan, or Bonavam, latinized Bononia, was a small town in Armoric Gaul, now called Boulogne. Taberniæ, the name of a celebrated city quite near, was added, in order to designate it from Bononia, now Bologna, in Italy.\*

\* Lanigan, p. 94.

The next ancient authority produced in favour of Dumbarton, in Scotland, is the *Vita Prima*, or Life of St. Patrick in verse, by St. Fiace, Bishop of Sletty, a disciple of our Saint. "Patrick was born in Nemthur: thus it is that history relates to us. A child of sixteen years (was he) when he was taken into bondage. Succat was his name, it is said who was his father is thus told. He was son of Calphurn, son of Potitus, a grandson of Deochian Odissus."

The whole value of the above passage centres in the identification of the place Nemthur. The most erudite glosses, which we do not think necessary for our purpose to enter on in detail, have been produced on either side—those who go in for Scotland or France. Some ancient authors write Nemthur, more Emptor, and others Nemthor and Nemtur. So that in one word the very orthography or spelling of the word Nemthur, and for greater reason the identification of the place is quite obscure and disputed, and hence the passage proves nothing for certain on either side.

We now come to more decided work, and in our future quotations we go in straight for France as the birthplace of our great and beloved Apostle, St. Patrick.

The *Vita Quinta*, written by Probus, in the ninth century, begins thus:\*

“St. Patrick, who was called Socket, was a Briton by birth, and having suffered many things in his youth, he became unto all his people and country a source of salvation. He was born in Britain, his father being Calpurnius, a deacon, the son of Potitus, a priest.”

The *Tripartite Life*, written by St. Evin in the sixth century, says:

“Patrick was born of the Britons of Aleluaind by origin. Calpurnius was his father’s name; Poted was his grandfather’s name, whose title was a deacon. Coneeis was his mother’s name; she was of the Franks, and a sister to Martin.”

Here we have no uncertain sound. St. Patrick is called a Briton “by birth,” and “was born of the Britons.” The question now arises—does Britain in the above quotation mean Great Britain? or was any part of the North of France called at that time Britain? If the latter be true, which we hold it is, the great arguments put forward, with such flourish of trumpets, from the

\* O’Curry, *Mas. Irish His.*, p. 390. Colgan refers it to the sixth century.

above passages in favour of Great Britain, fall to the ground. Now we have the authority of Pliny, Bede, and other ancient writers, that all the country round the present Boulogne-Sur-Mers as far as Amiens, was anciently called Britain and the natives Britons.\*

Furthermore, these ancient writers state that colonists from this Britain in Gaul settled down in Albion, and that from them the island received the name of Britannia, and the natives Britons. This fact is of the greatest moment, for it completely demolishes the strongest arguments of those writers who favour Scotland, from the fact that St. Patrick called himself, and was styled a Briton and born in Britain.

We now return to the Confession to substantiate, we won't say demonstrate, our arguments in favour of France. "After six years' captivity in Antrim," St. Patrick writes, "I heard a voice in my sleep saying . . . . thou shalt soon go to thine own country . . . . Behold thy ship is ready. And the place was not near, but perhaps at the distance of two hundred miles" (Confession). Now Scotland is visible from the hills of

\* Lanigan, p. 103, O'Hanlon, p. 445.

Antrim ; hence, if Scotland was his “own country,” he could not have to travel “two hundred miles” to get to the seashore, which was only a few miles distant from where he was captive. The journey was southward, towards Bantry Bay, the natural harbour of sailing from Ireland to France. “This part of the narrative,” writes Father Morris, the learned Oratorian, “confirms the opinion that France, and not Scotland, was the Saint’s ‘own country.’” St. Patrick adds: “After three days, we reached the land” (Confession). Now, in these ancient times, three days’ sail would be about the due time for a voyage from the South of Ireland to the North of Gaul.

These two passages tell clearly in favour of France against Scotland.

We shall give one more quotation from the Confession.

The Saint writes :—“Therefore, though I have wished to leave them . . . . to go even to Gallia, to visit my brethren, and to see the face of my Lord’s Saints ; and he who witnesseth will account me guilty, if I do it, and I fear to lose the labour which I have commenced ; not I, but the Lord Jesus Christ who commanded me to come, and be with them for the rest of my life.” (Confession.)

In the above passage St. Patrick tells us he was anxious to visit his relatives and friends in his native country, and yet he could not absent himself from Ireland, lest he might lose the fruit of his labour, and hence be guilty in the sight of God. Now, if Scotland was his native country, it would not take much time to cross the channel to visit his relatives; but it falls in well with the Continent, for at this time there was but little communication between France and Ireland; and besides, the seas were infested with pirates. In the same passage he speaks of the Irish "as his children, which his preaching won to God in the extremity of the world." A person born in Great Britain could scarcely call Ireland the extremity of the world.

St. Patrick's famous Epistle to Coroticus is admitted to be as genuine as his Confession, and in this we find the very same strain of thought. "Among barbarians I dwell a stranger and exile . . . . . for them I have given up my country and my kindred . . . . Who is it that compelled me, constrained by the spirit that I should not see any of my relations." Here we find the same complaint, that he was forbidden ever to see any of his kindred. Surely, if his family lived in



Scotland, it would take but little time to cross the narrow channel to visit them; or we may expect that they would travel that short distance to see their great and beloved relative, the Apostle and idol of a whole nation; whilst in those days the voyage to France was both difficult and dangerous, as much through fear of pirates as the length of the sail.

Adopting the opinion of the Bollandists, Tillemont, Langan, Moore, Brennan, Wells, O'Farrell, and Walsh, St. Patrick was born in the year 377, hence the date of his captivity was 393. St. Patrick's father was Roman Decurio or a Governor.

Now, at the date of his captivity a single Roman legion was not to be found north of the great wall of Severus, nor likely in Britain itself. After years of desperate fight with the barbarians, finally, in the year 410, Rome was taken and sacked by the Goths, and all the troops were called home from the distant provinces, like Britain, to defend the stronghold on the Continent.

Gibbon writes: "Whilst Italy was ravaged by the Goths, and a succession of feeble tyrants oppressed the provinces beyond the Alps, the British island separated itself from the body of the Roman Empire. The re-

gular forces which guarded the remote provinces had been gradually withdrawn, and Britain was abandoned without defence to the Saxon pirates and savages from Ireland and Caledonia.”\*

Bede writes to the same effect.

“Rome was sacked,” he says, “by the Goths in the ten hundred and sixty-fourth year of its foundation, and from that time the Romans ceased to rule in Britain. From that time the part of Britain belonging to the Britons was entirely deprived of armed soldiers, military stores, and the flower of its youth, who, being drawn away by the rashness of the tyrants, never returned home; and was exposed to rapine, being ignorant of the art of war; hence for many years they groaned under the ravages of two fierce nations from across the sea, the Scots from the west, and the Picts from the north.”†

“It would be difficult,” writes Dr. Lanigan, “for the sticklers for St. Patrick’s birth in North Britain, to find a Curio or Decurions in Kilpatrick, or any place near it, in the fourth century.”‡

\* Decline and Fall, vol. v., c. 31.

† Bede’s Ecc. His. 1, c. xi. Cusack, Life of St. Patrick, p. 76, 74.

‡ Ecc. His., c. iii.

We are of opinion that the above historical argument in favour of France is of considerable weight, though not much noticed, or brought into due prominence by most historians.

St. Patrick's mother, Concessa, being a niece or near relative of St. Martin of Tours, also points towards France; and, finally, the ancient tradition of the North of France, the many churches, both ancient and modern, dedicated to God under his invocation, go in to confirm the opinion that the Apostle of Ireland was the child of Catholic France.

The following extract is to our point, and will interest and edify the pious reader:

“The traditions of the Church of Tours are in harmony with those of Ireland in recording the relations of our Saint with its great bishop. The old Church of S<sup>t</sup>. Patrick, on the north bank of the Loire, near Tours, which was built certainly not later than the tenth century, and possibly in the ninth, bears witness to the antiquity of the devotion to him in those parts; but nature does even more than art in perpetuating the tradition of St. Patrick's connection with St. Martin.

“The writer has to thank Lord Emly for the first account of the extraordinary phenomenon known as ‘*Les Fleurs de St. Patrice.*’

Year after year, and from time immemorial, in defiance of the seasons, in the depth of winter, and always at the same time of the year, that is, at Christmas, the 'Flowers of St. Patrick' appear on a blackthorn tree, near the ancient church dedicated to that Saint, which stands on the bank of the river. The tree flowers, then bears fruit, and is seen covered with snow and flowers at the same time. Tradition records how, at the holy season of Christmas, St. Patrick reached this spot on his way from Ireland to join his kinsman, St Martin; and how, while he rested beneath the tree, all at once, out of reverence for the Saint, it shook off the snow which covered its branches, and burst out in flowers, which were white as the surrounding snow, and that after this the Saint arose, and after having laid his cloak upon the waters, crossed the river upon it."\*

All arguments weighed, we could not put it stronger than the above learned writer, who concludes: "As to St. Patrick's birthplace, the weight of authority gives to France the glory of being his native land."†

\* Morris, p. 34. *Les Annales de la Société d'Agriculture, Science and du Département d'Indre et Loire.*

† Morris, p. 26.

## SECTION II.

*St. Patrick's Parents and Nationality.*

In his Confession St. Patrick tells us the names of his father and grandfather. "I, Patrick, a sinner, the most unlearned, and the least of all the faithful, and held in contempt by very many, had Calpurnius, a deacon for my father, the son of Potitus, a priest." His mother's name was Conches, or Conchessa, and she was, according to many writers, a sister or near relative of St. Martin of Tours.

The Tripartite Life, by St. Evin, says: "Calpurun was his father's name. He was a noble priest. Potia was his grandfather's name, whose title was a deacon. Conceis was his mother's name. She was of the Franks and a sister to Martin."

In his Epistle to Caroticus, the Saint writes: "According to the flesh I am of noble birth, my father being a decurio. I have bartered my nobility for the good of others, and for this I have neither shame or regret. I have become a slave in Christ to a foreign nation, for the ineffable glory of

that eternal life which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.”

In the first place, we see that his father and his grandfather were in Holy Orders. In all ages the Church has allowed married men, being separated from their wives by death or mutual consent, to become priests and bishops. In the early ages we find the two great Saints, Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory Nazianzen, as well as St. Hilary and St. Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, were married. So it was with the father and grandfather of our Apostle.

From the weight of authority we are of opinion that his father's family were of Roman origin, and had settled in Armoric Gaul.

Conchessa, like her uncle or brother, St. Martin of Tours, was born in Pannonia, Modern Hungary. Her father was a pagan, and an officer in the Imperial army, but removed, when his family were still young, from Hungary to Pavia, in Italy. She, too, had to drink of the bitter chalice of captivity, and in the school of adversity she learned those lessons which fitted her to be the mother of an Apostle. We are told she was taken captive by pirates, and sold as a slave at a high price to Potitus. The youth,

beauty, and grace of the high-born slave-scion won the admiration of her master, and the heart of his son, Calpurnius, who married her, and of this holy union was born the Apostle of Ireland.

Allowing the theory or opinion which, we confess, has cogent arguments, both intrinsic and extensive, in its favour, that our Saint was born or made captive in Dumbarton, in Scotland, it does not affect the nationality of his parents or his own. For, even in that case, it is quite probable that St. Patrick might have been made captive or even born in Scotland whilst his father was there temporarily engaged as decurio or magistrate in the service of the Roman Empire. So in any case one thing is pretty certain, that a single drop of Scotch or English blood never flowed in his veins.

### SECTION III.

#### *Miracles Narrated in the Life of St. Patrick.*

In the Life of our great Saint we will often have to record miracles and prodigies wrought by our Apostle. These are received

by Protestants with sneers and contempt; and, unfortunately, many Catholics treat them, if not with contempt, at least with disedifying irreverence. Hence, a few words on the subject may not be out of place, and may be instructive to some of our readers.

Now, in the first place, the Catholic is bound to believe as of faith, the miracles, and these only, recorded in the Sacred Scriptures. Our Divine Lord preached a new Gospel, and confirmed His mission and teaching by stupendous miracles, viz., curing the sick, giving light to the blind, nay, frequently raising the very dead to life.

The Catholic Church, established by Jesus Christ, is to last to the end of time, and to bring into its fold all nations. The Redeemer, after His Resurrection, thus commissioned His Disciples: "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 19).

And again our Blessed Lord said to His Disciples: "Go ye into the whole world,



and preach the Gospel to every creature. . . And these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands upon the sick, and they shall recover. . . . But they going forth, preached everywhere, the Lord working withal and confirming the word with signs that followed" (Mark, xvi. 15).

Obedying the divine mandate, and armed with the power of God, the Apostles preached the Gospel, and confirmed their teaching by miracles and prodigies. Many of these miracles are narrated in the Sacred Text; and hence cannot be called into question or doubted by a Catholic without suffering a shipwreck of faith. During their lifetime the Apostles converted but few nations, and yet the Gospel was to be preached to every creature, and all nations were to be brought into the fold of the Church. Hence it is evident that the successors of the Apostles had the same divine commission from Jesus Christ to spread the Gospel, to convert the pagan and infidel; and therefore came in for the same promises, and ex-

pected the same support from their Divine Lord.

For the last eighteen hundred years the Church of Christ, carrying out her divine commissions, has been extending her tents, and bringing in new nations into her fold. Year after year, she has sent out new missionaries, new Apostles, who with the crucifix on their breast, and the breviary in their hand, yet armed with the power of Jesus Christ, go to convert fierce savage nations, and, as in the days of the first Apostles, we read that miracles and prodigies follow in their path.

Let us give one example out of many. God conferred the gift of tongues upon St. Francis Xavier, the great Apostle of the Indies. In the cause of his canonization it is stated, "Xavier was illustrious for the gift of tongues, for he spoke the languages of different nations, which he had never learned, with fluency and eloquence." St. Francis preached, and each of the multitude heard his own tongue, precisely as with the Apostles after the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost.

Add to this, that between God and his Saints there is a secret intimacy, there is a mutual love, there is a correspondence, there

is what words cannot express, and what Saints only know. Witness the stupendous prodigiés we read of in the lives of St. Antony, St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, St. Joseph Cupertino, St. Francis of Assisium, St. Philip Neri, St. Gertrude, St. Teresa, St. Catherine of Siena, and thousands of other great Servants of God, both ancient and modern. We are also to bear in mind that many of those Saints, whose life was a perpetual miracle, so to speak, and upon whom God showered down in such profusion His choicest graces and treasures, had no special mission before the world; but, hidden in the cloister, sanctified themselves; and by the odour of their virtues shed a lustre on the Church. “Wonderful,” says the Sacred Text, “is God in his saints” (Ps. lxxvii. 36).

Now, keeping before our minds the following two great principles or truths—First, that God raised up St. Patrick to be the Apostle of a whole nation; and that God destined that nation, through the prayers of St. Patrick, by her missionaries in early times and by her race in modern times, to spread the light of the Gospel through many nations. Secondly, that in St. Patrick himself we find sanctity and virtue practised in the most heroic degree, equalling, if not

surpassing, the greatest Saints in God's Church.

With these two great truths before his mind, will the intelligent reader be surprised to find miracles narrated in the life of our glorious Apostle and great Saint? Far from it. We declare the surprise would be, if supernatural wonders did not follow him from the cradle to the grave. It would be contrary to the ordinary working of God's Providence in His Church. The miracles of St. Patrick are just what any Catholic would expect to find in the life of a great Apostle and great Saint. In modern Saints the rigid process of canonization proves to conviction the miracles recorded in their lives; for St. Patrick, the authority of all his old biographers, and the constant tradition of the nation take its place. Let us also add this important fact, that there is not a single miracle recorded in the Life of St. Patrick but for which we can show a like one or parallel in the life of some other Saint. To write the Life of St. Patrick, without recording the supernatural events of his mission, would be simply to write the history of the *man*, Patrick, omitting that of the *Apostle* and *Saint*.

To the Protestant, who *does* not believe in

the supernatural, we have nothing to say ; we have only to pity the Catholic who can afford to ridicule or sneer at the miracles recorded in the Life of our illustrious Apostle. He is simply half educated ; or, may be, the graduate of an infidel or Protestant University ; or if not a sceptic himself, takes his tone from irreligious society.

Once, then, for all, the miracles recorded in the Life of St. Patrick are not of faith ; like all true facts they depend upon human testimony, which in the supernatural order, as well as in the natural, will bring persuasion to most unbiassed minds ; in any case, they are to be received with reverence and respect on account of the authority and tradition on which they rest ; and because they are the very things to be expected to be found in the Life of a great Apostle and eminent Saint.

Cardinal Newman writes : “ Did I hear of any great feat of valour, I should believe it, if imputed to Alexander or Cœur de Lion. Did I hear of any act of baseness, I should disbelieve it, if imputed to a friend whom I knew and loved. And so, in like manner, were a miracle reported to me as wrought by a Member of Parliament, or a Bishop of the Establishment, or a Wesleyan Preacher,

I should repudiate the notion. Were it referred to a Saint, or the relic of a Saint, or the intercession of a Saint, I should not be startled at it, though I might not at first believe it."\*

"The extraordinary gift of miracles," says a distinguished writer, "has been almost always the appanage of those Saints whom God has sent to convert heathen nations" (Morris, p. 8).†

#### SECTION IV.

##### *St. Patrick's Birth and Baptism.*

The date, as well as the place of our Saint's birth is disputed by historians. As it is a matter of mere chronology, which, we fear, will never be set at rest, we shall not occupy our space with a dissertation on the subject. The learned have at their disposal volumes to satisfy their doubts or curiosity,

\* "Present Position of Catholics," p. 308.

† It is greatly to be regretted that Dr. Lanigan, an historian of such great learning, research, and ornament of the Irish Church, should have rejected, with such scant reverence, many miracles now well authenticated in the Life of St. Patrick.

and for the multitude it is not a matter of the greatest moment.

The only important point in this controversy is, that the date of our Saint's birth once fixed, establishes the date of his captivity, studies, mission, and death.

According to Father Colgan, the great Franciscan historian, and, beyond doubt, the greatest Irish hagiographer, St. Patrick was born in the year 373.\* St. Fiacc, Bishop of Sletty, who wrote the Life of St. Patrick in verse, in the sixth century, tells us that at his baptism he was called Succat. Further on we shall see that the name Patricius or Patrick was given to him by Pope St. Celestine.

St. Fiacc writes: "Patrick was born at Emptur; that is what history relates to us. . . . ."

"Succat was his name." . . . .

Before his birth, the mother of St. Dominic dreamt that she brought forth a whelp, which carried in his mouth a burning torch, with which he set the whole world on fire; thereby signifying the light of faith and charity

\* Morris Villanueva agrees with the above date, 373. Ussher writes 372; Jocelyn and Pills, 370; The Bollandists, 377. Lanigan, Moore, Tillemont, Brennan, Wills, O'Farrel, Walsh, 387.

which this great saint was destined by God to shed upon the world. Angels were heard singing hymns of love round the mother of St. Francis of Assisium before his birth; and by the command of an unknown pilgrim the mother gave birth to her son upon a bed of straw; God thereby foreshadowing the burning charity and awful austerity of the future Seraphic Saint. A swarm of bees clustering round the mouth of St. John, a babe in the cradle, presaged the future eloquence of the great Chrysostom. It is of faith, for we find it narrated in the Sacred Text, that the unborn Baptist leaped for joy in his mother's womb.

With these and similar facts before our mind, we are prepared for some manifestation on the part of God at the birth or baptism of the future Apostle of Ireland. And so it happened.

“Many miracles and prodigies,” writes St. Evin, author of the “Tripartite Life,” “were wrought through Patrick in his youth; but we shall relate only a few out of the many.”

The priest, whose name was Gormias, to whom the child was brought for baptism, was blind; and no water was at hand. By a heavenly inspiration the priest made the sign of



the cross on the ground with the hand of the infant; forthwith a fountain gushed forth, in which the child was baptised, and the blind priest washing his eyes in the miraculous stream, received his sight;\* God thereby foreshadowing the light of faith which this infant was destined to shed upon a heathen nation, sitting in darkness and the shades of death.

\* “How can the Babe baptised be  
When font is none and water none?’  
Thus wept the nurse on bended knee,  
And swayed the infant in the sun.

The blind priest took that infant’s hand :  
With that small hand, above the ground,  
He signed the Cross. At God’s command  
A fountain rose with brimming bound.

In that pure wave from Adam’s sin  
The blind priest cleansed the Babe with awe  
Then, reverently, he washed therein  
His old, unseeing face, and saw.

He saw the earth, he saw the skies,  
And that all-wondrous child, decreed  
A Pagan nation to baptise,  
And give the Gentiles light indeed.”

Many miracles are recorded as wrought by our Saint in his youth. An inundation threatened the house in which he was living; the child dipped his fingers in the torrent, and making the sign of the cross in the name of the Holy Trinity over the waters, the flood receded, and the house and all were saved. At one time, playing in the fields with his little sister, Lupita, she fell heavily upon a stone, and appeared upon the point of death. Patrick wept aloud over his sister, and raising her from the ground, made the sign of the cross over the wound, which at once healed, and a white seam alone remained to bear evidence to the miracle.

We give one miracle more in the words of the "Tripartite Life," from which we have taken the above.

"There was a great assembly held by the Britons. He went to the assembly with his nurse and his guardian. It happened that his guardian died in the assembly. All were hushed into silence thereat; and his relatives cried and his friends wept; and they said: 'Why, thou *gilla*, didst thou let the man who was carrying thee die?' As regards the *gilla*, moreover, he ran to his guardian and placed h's hands about his neck, and said to him: 'Arise, and let us go

home.' He arose forthwith at St. Patrick's word, and they went home safe afterwards.

## SECTION V.

*St. Patrick's Captivity.*

*St. Patrick is taken captive at the age of sixteen.*

During his childhood and boyhood, God had showered down upon our Saint the choicest graces of heaven, and had prepared our holy youth for the trials that now awaited him. His mother had drunk of the cup of captivity, and in the same school the Apostle of Ireland was to be trained. At an age when youth, play, innocence, and bright dreams of a happy future make life a paradise, our Saint was a veteran soldier, and prepared for the heaviest Cross of Christ. He begins his confession with an account of his captivity.

"I, Patrick, a sinner, the most unlearned and the least of all the faithful, and held in contempt by very many, had for my father Calpurnius, a deacon, the son of Potitus, a priest, who lived in Banavem Taberniæ. He

had close by a small villa, where I was taken captive when I was nearly sixteen years of age." Our Saint, in his profound humility, attributes his captivity and all the misfortune that had befallen him to his sins. He continues: "I knew not the true God, and I was brought captive to Ireland with many thousands of men, as we deserved, for we had forsaken God, and had not kept his commandments, and were disobedient to our priests, who admonished us for our salvation. And the Lord brought down upon us the anger of His Spirit, and scattered us among many nations, even to the ends of the earth, where now my littleness may be seen among strangers. And there the Lord showed me my unbelief, that at length I may remember my iniquities, and strengthen my whole heart towards the Lord my God, who looked down upon my humility and had pity upon my youth and ignorance, and kept me before I knew him, and before I had wisdom, or could distinguish between good and evil, and strengthened and comforted me as a father would a son" (Confession).

At this time the Irish princes, and particularly the famous Nial of the Nine Hostages, ravished the coasts of Gaul in search of plunder of all sorts, but especially of slaves.

Armed bands of marauders landed on the coast, and laid waste the country. In one of these expeditions our Saint's parents, we are told, were slain; himself, his two sisters, and "many thousands" were carried into slavery. The two sisters—one named Tigris, and the other Lupita "of the white wound," whom, as we have already narrated, the holy youth miraculously cured—were separated from their brother and sold as slaves in Louth.

Our holy youth was sold to four masters, some say four brothers: one of them, perceiving, no doubt, the good dispositions and value of the high-born slave, purchased him from his partners. His name was Milcho, a prince or chieftain in the county of Antrim.

The circumstances of his servitude are thus narrated in the Preface to St. Sechnall's Hymn:—

"Four persons purchased Patrick, and Milmi (Milcho) was one of them, and from this he had the name of Coëthrighe. Afterwards he did not serve four houses; but when Milmi saw that he was a faithful servant he purchased him from the other three; so that he served him alone to the end of seven years. . . . He suffered much hardship in the wilderness tending swine."

Already the reader must have been struck at the humility of our Saint. "Learn of me," says the Redeemer, "for I am meek and humble of heart" (Matt. xi. 29). Humility is the foundation of all virtue; hence, the higher the structure of sanctity ascends, the deeper must be the foundation of humility. We have seen how our great Apostle calls himself a "sinner," "the least of all the faithful," that he knew not the true God," "had not kept his commandments, was disobedient to the priests, and that his sins brought upon him all the calamities of his captivity." These are the exaggerated self-accusations of a great Saint.

Reared up in a pious household, his father being a deacon and his grandfather a priest, it is certain that the holy youth knew the true God.

His holy training, and progress in the science of the Saints, before his captivity, are best shown from the fruits which the following passage alone demonstrates.

Our beloved Saint writes: "After I had come to Ireland, I was daily tending sheep, and many times in the day I prayed, and more and more the love of God and his faith and fear grew in me, and the spirit was

stirred ; so that in a single day I have said so many as a hundred prayers, and in the night nearly the same, so that I remained in the woods and upon the mountains, and before the dawn I was called to prayer by the snow, the ice, and the rain ; and I did not suffer from them, nor was there any sloth in me, as I see now, because then the spirit was burning within me" (Confession).

Such the exalted sanctity, such the spirit of prayer of the holy captive at the age of sixteen.

On the hills of Antrim, amid ice and frost, snow and rain, the holy youth spent his days and nights in fervent prayer, absorbed in communing with his God.

Thus in the captive youth we find the germ of that exalted spirit of prayer and penance, as well as unbounded confidence in God, which in after years so characterised our great Saint's Apostolate.

After the example of our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ, His Holy Mother, and His great Servants in every age, prayer and penance mark the road to Paradise.

## SECTION VI.

*St. Patrick's Six Years' Captivity in Ireland.*

God's Providence directs everything; and hence nothing happens by accident in the lives of His great Servants. God had destined our Saint to be the Apostle of the Irish nation; and hence the captivity was designed, that our holy youth might learn the Irish language; know the good dispositions of the Irish heart; and by fatigues, trials, and hardships, be fitted for his future high mission.

In the first place our holy youth accepted his servitude from the hands of God, and was resigned to His holy Will.

What holy unction and humility are in the words of the great saint: "I was brought captive to Ireland," writes St. Patrick, "with many thousand men, as we deserved, for we had forsaken God, and had not kept His commandments, and were disobedient to our priests, who admonished us for our salvation. And the Lord brought down upon us the anger of His Spirit, and scattered us among many nations, even to the end of the earth" (Confession).



Nights and days were passed in the woods and on mountains. In the summer he was exposed to the burning heat of the sun ; and in the winter to the bitter cold. By prayer he sanctified his sufferings ; and the fire of divine love burned and increased daily more and more in his soul.

After he had come to Ireland, he writes : “ I was daily tending sheep, and many times in the day I prayed, and more and more the love of God and his faith, and fear grew in me, and the spirit was stirred ; so that in a single day I have said as many as a hundred prayers, and in the night nearly the same, so that I remained in the woods and upon the mountains ; and before the dawn I was called to prayer by the snow, the ice, and the rain, and I did not suffer from them, nor was there any sloth in me, as I see now, because then the spirit was burning within me ” (Confession).

How like are the lives of Apostles. The above beautiful passage reads like what we find in the life of St. Francis Xavier. When under the burning sun of India ; and worn out by fatigue and hardships, hungry and half-naked, God so inundated his soul with a flood of consolation and spiritual delights that he often went to the cold brook to

bathe his breast, to cool the heat of the burning love that consumed his soul.

Let us give the unctuous beautiful words of St. Francis Xavier, in his letter to St. Ignatius: "I am accustomed," he says, "often to hear one labouring in this vineyard cry out to God: 'O my Lord! give me not so much joy and comfort in this life; or if by an excess of mercy Thou wilt heap it upon me, take me to Thyself, and make me partaker of Thy glory. For he who has once in his interior feeling tasted Thy sweetness must necessarily find life too bitter as long as he is deprived of the sight of Thee.'"

In another place the Apostle of the Indies writes: "The dangers to which I am exposed, and the pains I take for the interests of God alone are the inexhaustible springs of spiritual joy, insomuch that in these islands, bare of all worldly necessaries, are the places in the world for a man to lose his sight with the excess of weeping; but they are tears of joy. I remember not ever to have tasted such interior delights; and these consolations of the soul are so pure, so exquisite, and so constant, that they take from me all sense of my corporal sufferings."

We know that St. Vincent de Paul, when

a young priest, was taken captive by African pirates, and sold as a slave; for years he served most faithfully a cruel master. He found consolation in prayer, and in captivity learned the spirit of the Saint. So it was with St. Patrick. For six years our saintly youth served most faithfully his hard master, Milcho, learned the language of the people, became acquainted with their manners and customs, found peace of soul in secret communing with his Maker, and laid deep the foundations of his future Apostolate.

“Therefore,” continues our Saint, “I cannot, and ought not, be silent concerning the great benefits and graces which the Lord has bestowed upon me in the land of my captivity, since the only return we can make for such benefits is, after God has reproved us, to extol and confess His wonders before every nation under heaven” (Confession).

## SECTION VII.

*St. Patrick escapes from captivity and returns to his native country.*

God's designs are accomplished, the work is done, the captive has proved his fidelity, and freedom is about to dawn upon the high-born slave.

One night, in a vision or dream, Milcho

saw his slave Patrick enter his house, and flames issuing from his mouth, eyes, nostrils, and ears. Milcho repelled the slave, and the flames did him no harm. The flames now appeared to envelope and consume his two little daughters, who were sleeping with him in the same bed, and a mighty wind arose and scattered their ashes all over Erin.

Milcho awoke in a fright, sent for Patrick, and asked if he could interpret the vision. Patrick replied: "The fire which thou sawest coming forth from me is the faith of the Holy Trinity, which burns within me, and which I will hereafter preach to thee, but which thou wilt not believe; but at my preaching your two daughters will believe in the true God, and serve Him in holiness and justice during their lives, and when dying the death of the just, their ashes, that is their relics, shall be carried to many parts of Ireland, and will bring health and blessings to many." Thus already did God begin to reveal to our Saint the secrets of his future mission.

Probus, the author of the "Vita Quinta," relates that the Angel Victor now became the constant guide and adviser of our Saint, and visited him every seventh day, and "spoke to him as man is wont to speak to man."

St. Patrick thus narrates in the "Confession" his escape: "One night I heard a voice in my sleep saying to me: 'Thou fastest well, thou shalt soon go to thy country.' And after a short time I heard a response saying to me: 'Behold thy ship is ready.' And it was not near, but perhaps two hundred miles off; and I had never been there, nor did I know any one of the people who lived there. And immediately after this I fled; and having left the man with whom I had been for six years in the power of the Lord, who directed my way for good, I feared nothing until I arrived at the ship; and on the day of my arrival the ship had left her place, and I spoke to them and asked that I might go with them. And the master was displeased, and replied sharply with anger: 'Do not think that you can go with us.' When I heard this, I left them, and went to a cottage, where I had received hospitality, and I began to pray as I went along; and before I had finished my prayer, I heard one of them calling out loudly after me: 'Come quickly, for these men are calling thee;' and immediately I returned to them, and they began to say to me: 'Come, we receive you in good faith; be friends with us, as you may wish.' So on that day I

ceased to fly for the fear of God. However, I hoped of them that they might say to me: 'Come, in the faith of Jesus Christ,' for they were Gentiles."

The holy captive had to travel about two hundred miles; God's holy Angel guided him on his journey. Bantry Bay, which is about two hundred miles from Antrim, is put down as the port of his embarkation. This confirms our opinion that France, not Scotland, was the saint's "own country." Scotland is visible from the shores of Antrim; and hence it would be incredible that he should travel two hundred miles on land to gain the coast.

We here admire the faith of the holy youth. God told him to leave his master, and to travel miles over an unknown country; he instantly obeyed. God told him he would find a ship ready to take him on board; he comes to the ship, and the captain sternly refused him a passage. Our Saint, disappointed, murmurs not, but has recourse to prayer, his usual help, which is speedily heard, and the passage quickly granted.

The youthful Saint now begins his Apostolate. He preaches the true faith to the sailors, and converts them to Christianity. St. Patrick thus narrates it:

“ After three days we reached the land, and for twenty-eight days journeyed through a desert, and their provisions failed, and they suffered greatly from hunger, and one day the master began to say to me : ‘ What sayest thou, O Christian ! Thy God is great and all powerful ; why canst thou not then pray for us, since we are perishing of hunger, and may never see the face of man again ? ’ And I said to them plainly : ‘ Turn sincerely to the Lord, my God, to whom nothing is impossible, that He may send us food on our way until ye are satisfied, for it abounds everywhere for Him. ’ And with God’s help it was soon done ; for behold a herd of swine appeared on the way before our eyes ; and they killed many of them, and remained there two nights greatly refreshed, for many of them had been left half dead by the road side. After this they gave the greatest thanks to God, and I was honoured in their eyes ” (Confession).

The new converts did not long persevere, for finding in the desert wild honey, they offered it in sacrifice to the false gods ; and the true God appeared to punish the spiritual father for the sins of his faithless children.

We give it in the words of our Saint :

“They also found wild honey, and offered me some of it, and one of them said: ‘This is offered in sacrifice, thanks be to God;’ after this I tasted no more. But the same night, whilst I was sleeping, I was fiercely tempted by Satan (of which I will be mindful as long as I shall remain in this body). There fell a great stone upon me, and there was no strength in my limbs. And then it came into my mind, I know not how, to call upon Elias, and at the same moment I saw the sun rise in the heavens, and whilst I called upon Elias with all my strength, behold the splendour of the sun was shed upon me, and at once shook off the weight. And I believe that Christ my God cried out for me, and I hope that so it will be in the day of my distress.” (Confession).

Our Saint mentions a second captivity of two months, thus:—“Some time after that I was taken captive, and on the first night I remained with them, I heard a divine response, saying: ‘You shall be two months with them,’ and, so it was. On the sixtieth night the Lord delivered me out of their hands, and, on the road, He provided for us food and fire and dry weather daily, until on the fourteenth day we all came” (Confession).



The facts of this second captivity are very obscure, and are not found in several copies of the "Confession." Hence the date, details, and even the very existence of this captivity, is a matter of dispute among the learned; and, as it is of little importance, we shall not enter into the controversy.

This part of our great Saint's life is full of useful instruction. The finger of God's Providence is manifest in his captivity; in the number of years of his hard but holy servitude; and in his miraculous delivery to prepare for his future mission. For six years, without priest, sacrament, or sacrifice, and that, in Pagan land, our holy youth, under the influence of divine grace, attained a high spirit of prayer and penance, and advanced rapidly on the road to perfection.

#### PIOUS REFLECTION.

My soul! Admire and praise the wonderful ways of God and His divine Providence. Nothing happens by accident in the lives of God's servants. God's Providence directs everything. By God's special Providence, St. Patrick was taken captive to Ireland, and there sold a slave. God

watched over, with zealous care, his future Apostle, who accepted his captivity, his pains, and sufferings, from the hands of the Almighty, in atonement for his sins. Without priest, or sacrifice, or sacrament, the captive youth advanced daily on the road to perfection; and, under the action of grace, attained an eminent spirit of prayer. My soul! profit by his words:—

“I was daily tending sheep, and many times in the day I prayed, and more and more the love of God and His faith and fear grew in me, and the spirit was stirred, so that, in a single day, I have said as many as a hundred prayers, and in the night nearly the same; so that I remained in the woods, and upon the mountains, and before the dawn I was called to prayer by the snow, the ice, and the rain, and I did not suffer from them” (Confession).

#### RESOLUTIONS.

Nothing is higher, or holier, on earth or in heaven than to do the will of God. God's holy Providence directs everything. Perfect resignation to God's holy will in all things—pains, sickness, trials, sufferings, and death, transforms dull earth into a

Paradise. I resolve, therefore, by the aid of divine grace, to accept all things from God's hands, and to be resigned to His holy will, and to say, with holy Job: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, as it hath pleased the Lord, so be it done: blessed be the name of the Lord." —

## PRAYER.

"Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." "Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God." "Let not my will, O Lord, but Thine be done." "What, O Lord, wilt Thou have me to do." "For what have I in heaven? and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth. . . . Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever." "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, as it hath pleased the Lord, so be it done; blessed be the name of the Lord." "May the most just, the most high, and the most amiable will of God be done, praised, and eternally exalted in all things."

In trials, pains, disappointments; in sickness and in death, may God's holy will be ever done in me. May I be where God wills and nowhere else; and may I do what

God wills, and nothing else. In spite of all human combinations and human motives, even against my own will, may God's holy will be ever done in me and by me.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### SECTION I.

*The holy youth, Patrick, is called by God to be the Apostle of the Irish Nation.*

AFTER a long voyage over the perils of the deep, the sight of land gladdens the sailor's heart. After years, in the darksome dungeon, the heart and soul of the prisoner expands in the air of freedom. To the forced exile the sound, but infinitely more the sight of home, sweet home, has a magic spell. We can well conceive the feelings of our Saint at this happy period of his life. The six years of bondage are over. The hard master can no longer treat with severity the captive slave. The woods and mountains, the ice and snow of Antrim are exchanged for the smiles of sunny France.

His native land, his family home clasps to her bosom the returned exile.

Such were the happy natural consolations and joys of our holy youth on his return home after his captivity; yet, we doubt not, but higher, holier, and supernatural thoughts occupied the mind of our future Apostle. He, himself, had long tasted of the sweets of the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. He had seen a nation, who never heard the sweet sound of the name of Jesus, and who adored the creature for the great Creator. His heart and soul yearned and burned within him to teach them the knowledge of the true God and the secrets of Redemption.

His family soon found out the secret, and with all the fond love and pleadings of flesh and blood, entreated the youth never again to expose himself to hardships or to leave his own dear home.

He thus narrates:—"And, again, after a few years, I was in Britain with my relations, who received me as a son, and earnestly besought me that then, at least, after I had gone through so many tribulations, I would go nowhere from them" (Confession).

As we have seen, on good authority, his parents were killed at the time of his cap-

tivity, so that diminished, to a certain extent, his hard struggle between flesh and blood, home and country, and the calls of God. That the struggle was a hard one we doubt not, for God came to his aid by a supernatural vision, which he thus describes:—

“ I saw, in the bosom of the night, a man who appeared to come from Ireland, and whose name was Victoricus, and he had innumerable letters with him, one which he gave to me, and I read the beginning of the letter, containing the voice of the Irish, and, as I read aloud the beginning of the letter, I thought I heard, in my mind, the voices of those who were in the wood of Fochlut, which borders on the western sea, and they cried out: ‘ We entreat thee, holy youth, to come and walk still among us; ’ and my heart was greatly touched, so that I could read no more, and so I awoke. Thanks be to God that, after very many years, the Lord hath granted them their desire ” (Confession).

The struggle is over, the victory is won, grace triumphs, and the call of God is obeyed. St. Paul’s obedience to the call of Jesus was instantaneous. The Sacred Text thus narrates it:—

“And Saul, as yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest. And asked of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any men and women of this way he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. And as he went on his journey it came to pass that he drew nigh to Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shined round about him. And falling on the ground he heard a voice saying to him : Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ? And he, trembling and astonished, said : Lord what wilt thou have me to do” (Acts, ix. 1, &c.). Here the call of Jesus is instantly obeyed. St Paul is a vessel of election, and the Apostle of the Gentiles. In like manner the holy young man heard the call of God to evangelize a Pagan nation—to be the Apostle of the Irish people. St. Paul goes to the holy man, Ananias, for instruction. St Patrick seeks St. Martin of Tours to prepare himself for his mission.

Of St. Patrick, the severe critic, Tillemont, says : “In one word, we see in him much of the character of St. Paul.”

## SECTION II.

*St. Patrick prepares for his Mission of the Apostle of Ireland, and studies to become a Priest.*

At this time the mighty Roman Empire was tottering to ruin. The City of Rome itself was sacked and set on fire by Alaric and his Goths. Hordes of barbarians swept over the provinces, devastating everything on their paths by fire and sword. The sanctuaries of the Church, and the cities of the empire, shared the same fate. The great works of the Christian Emperors, in Church and state, met common destruction. Add to this, heresy and schism followed in the wake of the barbarians. God, who knows the "times and the seasons" is ever with His Church, and supports her in every trial and peril. At one time the Providence of God raises up great Saints, another time great scholars, and sometimes Religious Orders to fight the battles, and win the victories of His Church.

At the period of which we write, heresy and schism were vanquished, and hordes of savage barbarians converted into tame lambs,



by men of great sanctity and learning and by schools of great virtue.

St. John Chrysostom, by his eloquence and learning, stamped out heresy in the East; St. Ambrose shone in Italy; St. Jerome was the glory of the Latin Church; St. Augustin was the oracle of the Universal Church; St. Martin and St. Germanus shone in France; and the great schools of Auxerre, Lerins, and Marmontier were the famous sanctuaries of learning and sanctity.

Not only this near relationship of St. Martin, but far more, his exalted sanctity and learning, as well as the fame of the celebrated school founded at Marmontier, near Tours, attracted the attention of our Saint, and thither he repaired to prepare himself for his priesthood and his future mission.

During four years in the school of St. Martin, our Saint drank of learning and sanctity at its purest source. The Tripartite Life written by St. Evin, says: "He set out for Tours to visit St. Martin, that he might receive the monastic tonsure, for hitherto he had only the tonsure of servitude; and receiving then the monastic tonsure from St. Martin, he abandoned all the cares and pleasures of the world, and devoted himself

entirely to prayer and abstinence, so that he made the resolution never more to taste flesh meat."

In this century, Lerins, an island in the Mediterranean, near Toulon, was probably the most famous sanctuary in Christendom for learning and sanctity. None but the most Apostolic men were able to stem the wild torrent of heresy and paganism which swept over Europe in this age. Lerins, as a University and Monastery, was the nursery of Saints, Doctors, and Holy Missionaries, trained and fitted to cope with the errors and difficulties of the times. The fame and learning of St. Hilary of Arles, St. Eucherius of Lyons, St. Lopus of Troyes, St. Honoratus, and the illustrious St. Vincent, have shed a lustre on and immortalized the schools of Lerins.

Our holy youth, desirous to sanctify himself more and more, and to profit by the example and instruction of these learned and apostolic men, betook himself to Lerins; and there spent years in prayer, penance, and study, preparing for the priesthood and his sacred mission.

Of the great men, renowned for learning, sanctity, and austerity of life, perhaps the most famous in this age was St. Germanus,

Bishop of Auxerre. Born in the year 378, of a noble family, educated under the best masters of the empire, and holding the high position of Governor of Armorica, he resigned all worldly honours, to learn in hidden obscurity the science of the Saints. Soon the fame of his austerity, which rivalled the fathers of the desert, as well as his learning and sanctity, and also of the numerous miracles wrought through his intercession, was spread through Europe, and St. Germanus became the first figure in the Latin Church.

The same heavenly inspiration, which conducted St. Patrick to St. Martin of Tours, to the many Saints at Lerins, now places him under the spiritual direction of St. Germanus, "with whom," says an ancient biographer, "he spent many years in patience, obedience, charity, and chastity, in sanctity of heart and soul, preserving his virginity in the fear of the Lord, and living in goodness and simplicity during the whole period of his mortal career."\*

We are told how many years St. Patrick spent in this school, in the exercises of the Saints. And surely there was no living

\* *Probus.*

saint so well suited to give the last touch to the austere training of the future Apostle, as St. Germanus, the light and glory of the Catholic Church in this age.

### SECTION III.

*St. Patrick accompanies St. Germanus to Britain, to combat the Pelagian heresy.*

It is not our province to describe here the Pelagian heresy, and the ravages it spread in the Church, to the loss of innumerable souls. Almost crushed on the Continent by the Bulls of Popes, and Edicts of Emperors, it took a firm hold of the Church in Britain, and was diffusing far and wide its withering errors. To combat this heresy, and support the faith in this distant province, St. Celestine, the reigning Pope, sent Palladius, Archdeacon of Rome, whose mission met with but little success. The Bishops of Britain again implored the aid of the Holy See, through Palladius, now returned to Rome; and also their brethren in France, to resist the new errors. The Pope now sent St. Germanus as legate, accompanied by St. Lupus of Troyes, and Patrick, to extinguish this new heresy. This mission proved tho-

roughly successful in extirpating the Pelagian heresy; and here our saint tasted the first fruit of his Apostolic mission.

That St. Lupus of Troyes, should be chosen as a fitting companion for the Apostolic legate, nobody will be surprised; for at this time he was one of the first figures in the Church of France; but we must admire the discerning eye of St. Germanus, who selected the hidden and unknown cleric, our great St. Patrick, for this, one of the most important missions in the Church of God.

The following fact is narrated in the history of the mission. At one city the preaching of the holy men produced no effect upon the heretics; St. Patrick thus addressed his companion, "Let us observe a rigorous fast for three days, at the city gates, and then leave the issue in the hands of God." The advice was taken, and the result was the abjuration of heresy by all the people. Here, as well as on the hills of Antrim, when a youth, and later on as an Apostle of Ireland, prayer and penance were the arms of our Saint.

One of the oldest biographers of our Saint, expressly mentions this mission to England. "It happened," he writes, "that St. Germanus came to Britain to root out the

Pelagian heresy, and he came accompanied by Patrick, and many others; and he unceasingly laboured to root out that heresy until intelligence was brought to him that his own city had begun to be infected with it. He and Patrick returned to France, and they applied themselves to combat the same pestilential errors" (St. Fiacce).

#### SECTION IV.

*Pope Celestine sends St. Palladius to Evangelize the Irish Nation.*

When the Legate, St. Germanus, returned to Gaul, he sent to the Pope an account of his work and the success of his mission in Britain; and most likely drew the attention of his Holiness to the state of Ireland. Be that as it may, it is certain, that at this time the Vicar of Christ, whose mission is to teach all nations, turned his eyes towards Ireland; and resolved to make known to her the Gospel of salvation. St. Prosper in his chronicle, published in the year, 434, writes thus: "Palladius was consecrated by Pope Celestine, and sent as first Bishop to the Irish believing in Christ."

At this time there were scattered here and there along the coast of Ireland, some few

Christians, who had emigrated from Britain, who had no bishop, and who most likely were infested with the Pelagian heresy.

God had not destined Palladius to be the Apostle of Ireland; and hence his mission, like that to Britain, ended in complete failure. A writer of the seventh century thus relates it :

“Palladius, Archdeacon of Pope Celestine, bishop of Rome, and 45th successor of St. Peter in the Apostolic See, was ordained and sent to convert this island, lying under wintry cold. But he was unsuccessful; for no one can receive anything from earth, unless it be given to him from heaven; and neither did these fierce barbarians receive his doctrine readily, nor did he himself wish to remain long in a land not his own; therefore, he returned to him that sent him. On his way, however, after passing the first sea he died in the territory of the Britons.”\*

We have more details in another very ancient record. “The most blessed Pope, Celestine, ordained Bishop the Archdeacon of the Roman Church, named Palladius, and sent him into the island of Hibernia, giving to him relics of the blessed Peter and Paul,

\* Book of Armagh.

and other Saints; and, moreover, the volumes of the Old and New Testament. Palladius, entering the land of the Scots, arrived at the territory of the men of Leinster, where Nathi Mac Garrchon was chief, who was opposed to him. Others, however, whom the divine mercy had disposed towards the worship of God, having been baptised in the name of the sacred Trinity, the blessed Palladius built three churches in the same district—one which is called *Kill-fine* (i.e., church of Finte: perhaps the present Dunlavin), in which, even to the present day, he left his books received from St. Celestine, and the box of the relics of SS. Peter and Paul and other Saints, and the tablets on which he used to write, which, in Irish, are called from his name, *Pallere*—that is, the burden of Palladius, and are held in veneration; another was called *Teach-na-Roman*, the house of the Romans; and the third, *Donnach-ardech* (Donard near Dunlavin), in which repose the holy companions of Palladius, viz., Sylvester and Salonius, who are still honoured there. After a short time Palladius died at Fordun, but others say that he was crowned with martyrdom there.”\*

• Cardinal Moran, *Essays, &c.*, page 9.



## SECTION V.

*St. Patrick receives his Mission, and is sent by Pope St. Celestine, Vicar of Jesus Christ, to Evangelize the Irish Nation.*

That St. Patrick got his mission from Rome; and was sent by Pope St. Celestine, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, and successor of St. Peter, to preach the Gospel to the Irish nation, is proved to demonstration by the most authentic historical documents, albeit, about the details and dates there is some confusion and contradictory statements among the ancient writers. The following appears to be the true thread of the history.

St. Germanus thirsting for the salvation of souls, having heard of the efforts of St. Celestine to spread the light of the Gospel among the Irish people, fixed his eyes upon his own pupil, St. Patrick. Patrick was trained up in his own school; he knew his sanctity, his zeal for the salvation of souls, the success of his labours in Britain; and calling to mind his six years in captivity in Ireland, where he learned the language, manners and customs of the Irish people, he believed that God raised him up and marked

him out to be the Apostle of the Irish nation. The time was now come; St. Germanus sent Patrick to Rome, and with him a holy priest named Segetius, bearing letters of recommendation to the Sovereign Pontiff.

Before he set out on his new mission, "Patrick," writes Probus, "thus prayed to God:

"O Lord Jesus Christ, lead me, I beseech Thee, to the seat of the holy Roman Church, that receiving there authority to preach with confidence Thy sacred truths, the Irish nation may, through my ministry, be gathered to the fold of Christ. And soon after being about to proceed to Ireland, the man of God, Patrick, went as he had wished to Rome, the head of all churches, and having asked and received the Apostolic blessing, he returned pursuing the road by which he had journeyed thither."\*

St. Firechan, who published his work before the death of his master, St. Ultan, who died in the year 657, states the same in the most express terms.

"In the thirteenth year of the emperor Theodosius, the bishop Patrick was sent by Celestine, Bishop and Pope of Rome, to in-

\* Moran. Lectures, p. 11.

struct the Irish. This Celestine was the forty-fifth successor of St. Peter in the City of Rome.

“Bishop Palladius was first sent, who was also called Patrick by a second name, and he was martyred among the Irish as the old Saints have said.

“Then the second Patrick was sent by the Angel of God, Victor, and by Pope Celestine: all Ireland received his teaching, and nearly all of it was regenerated by him in Baptism.”

St. Eileran, who wrote the Life of our Saint; and who died in the year 664 writes as follows:

“St. Germanus sent the blessed Patrick to Rome that thus he might receive the sanction of the Bishop of the Apostolic See to go forth and preach, for order so requireth . . . . . And Patrick having come to Rome, was most honourably received by the holy Pope Celestine, and the relics of the Saints were given to him, and he was sent into Ireland by that Pontiff.”\*

We have before us passages, which would fill pages, from the most ancient and authentic writers; but we shall content ourselves

\* *Idem*, p. 27.

with a few more quotations. St. Eric of Auxerre, a contemporary of our Saint, in his biography of St. Germanus, writes thus :

“ And as Germanus saw him magnanimous in religion, eminent for virtue, strenuous in the sacred ministry, and thinking it unfit that so strong a husbandman should be inactive in the culture of the harvest of the Lord, sent him to holy Celestine the Pope of the City of Rome, accompanied by his own priest Segetius who might bear testimony of his ecclesiastical probity at the Apostolic See. Being thus approved by its judgment, supported by its authority, and strengthened by its blessing, he journeyed to Ireland, and being given to that people as their chosen apostle, he enlightened the whole nation by his preaching and miracles, as he continues to do at the present day, and will so continue for ever to do by the wonderful privileges of his Apostolate.”\*

Bishop Marcus in his *Historia Brittonum*, written in the year 822, gives a short sketch of the Life of our Saint, in which he says :

“ Under divine guidance, Patrick was instructed in the Sacred Scriptures, and then he went to Rome and remained there a long

\* Cardinal Moran. Lectures, p. 30.

time studying, and being filled with the Holy Ghost, learning the Holy Scriptures, and Sacred Mysteries. And while he was there applying himself to these pursuits, Palladius was sent by Pope Celestine to convert the Irish to Christ; but God by some storms and signs, prevented his success, and no one can receive ought on earth unless it be given to him from above. This Palladius returning from Ireland to Britain died there in the land of Picts. The death of Bishop Palladius being known, the patricians Theodosius and Valentinian being the Roman Rulers, Patrick was sent by Pope Celestine, the Angel-victor accompanying, guiding and assisting him, and by Bishop Germanus to convert the Irish to the belief in the Holy Trinity."\*

The Four Masters write: "St. Patrick was ordained to the Episcopacy by the holy Pope Celestine, the first who commissioned him to come to Ireland and preach and give to the Irish the precepts of faith and religion." †

Here we admire the beauty of the Catholic faith, immutable as God Himself, "yesterday and to-day and the same for ever." (Heb. xiii. 8.)

St. Patrick went to Rome to the Vicar of

\* Moran, Essays, p. 31. † Four Masters, p. 143.

Jesus Christ, the successor of St. Peter, the source and centre of all ecclesiastical jurisdiction; and from Pope St. Celestine he got his mission to evangelize the Irish Nation.

To-day, as fifteen hundred years ago, when a missionary or bishop goes to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to China, India, Japan, Tonquin, Corea, Africa, or any other pagan or even Christian country, like St. Patrick he repairs to Rome, and gets his mission from, and the blessing of the Pope, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, and successor of St. Peter. Hence the success that in all ages has crowned the labours of Catholic Missionaries, in bringing pagan nations into the fold of Jesus Christ; whilst the Protestant Missions, cut off from the sap and current of divine grace, are cursed with sterility.

#### SECTION VI.

*St. Patrick was Consecrated Bishop at Eboria, now called Ivrea, a small town at the foot of the Alps in Italy, by St. Maximus, Bishop of Turin.*

Whilst all the ancient writers concur in stating that our Apostle received his mission from Pope St. Celestine, the Vicar of Jesus

Christ ; there is much difference of opinion as to the place, and by whom he was consecrated bishop. The *Tripartite Life* distinctly states that he was consecrated by Pope Celestine himself. We give the words of the narrative.

“The death of Palladius being made known, the Mission pre-ordained by God and the conversion of the nation of the Irish, often promised by the angelic oracle, were given by the Apostolic authority to St. Patrick ; so that Pope Celestine, in the presence of St. Germanus and Amatorex the Roman, ordained him bishop, and gave him the name of Patrick.”

St. Fiacc bishop of Sletty, writes :—

“St. Patrick was consecrated in the presence of Celestine and Theodosius the younger, who was king of the world. It was Amatorex who consecrated him.”

Probus, in his Life of the Saint, writes :—

“As yet, however Patrick had not received the episcopal decree . . . . . Therefore his (Palladius) disciples, who were in Britain, that is, Augustine, Benedict and others, hearing of the death of the chief deacon Palladius, came to Patrick to Euberia, and announced to him the death of Palladius. But Patrick, and those who were with him, turned aside

from their journey to a certain man of wonderful sanctity, a chief bishop named Amator, living in a neighbouring place, and there St. Patrick, knowing what things were destined for him, was exalted to the episcopal degree, by the same Archbishop Amator. Also some other clerics were ordained to the office of minor orders. But on the same day on which St. Patrick was consecrated by sacred blessings, the canticle of the Psalmist was appropriately sung by the choir of the clericals chanter : ‘ Thou art a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedech.’ ”

The author of the *Vita Secunda* writes :—

“ Patrick turned aside from his journey to a certain wonderful man by name Amator ; and from him St. Patrick received episcopal consecration.”

Here we find four names mentioned in the most ancient annals in connection with the consecration of St. Patrick ; viz : Pope St. Celestine, bishop Amator, St. Germanus, and the emperor Theodosius.

Cardinal Moran, whose opinion we adopt on this point, reconciles the discrepancies in a most plausible and credible manner.

The following is the substance of the Cardinal’s most learned paper on the point.

Our Apostle, having got his mission from



Pope Celestine, set out on his journey to Gaul. On his way he heard of the death of St. Palladius, and knowing that episcopal Consecration was now essential for his apostolate in Ireland, our Saint stopped at Eboria, the modern town of Ivrea at the foot of the Alps. This town on the highway between Italy and Gaul was not far from Turin, where the emperor Theodosius often kept Court; nor from Ravenna, which was frequently visited by the Popes, and at the time most probably the actual residence of St. Germanus. It is quite credible, therefore, that the Pope Celestine, Theodosius, and St. Germanus, being on or near the spot, graced by their presence the ceremony of the Consecration of the Apostle of the Irish nation.

We now come to account for the “certain wonderful man, a chief bishop named Amator, from whom St. Patrick received episcopal consecration.”

At this time the great doctor, St. Maximus, was bishop of Turin, the light of the Latin Church, and hence most aptly styled a “wonderful man,” and an intimate friend of the Pope, the Emperor, and St. Germanus. The name Maximus in the old Celtic form would be Amaher, and the translation from:

Amahor to the Latinised name Amator is easily explained.

In his Confession, St. Patrick tells us of the following vision relating to his episcopal consecration :

“ On another night, whether within me, or near me, God knows, I heard profound words, and I had no intelligence of them until the end, when it was said : ‘ He who gave His life for thee is He who speaks within thee,’ and so I awoke filled with joy. And again I saw one praying within me, and I was, as it were within my body, and I heard that is above the inner man, and therefore he prayed earnestly with groanings. And I was stupefied and filled with wonder, and considered who this could be who prayed in me. But at the end of the prayer it came to pass that it was a bishop, and I awoke and remembered that the Apostle said : ‘ Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know for what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings,’ and again, ‘ The Lord is our Advocate, who also maketh intercession for us.’ ”

We have on purpose avoided entering into dissertations on the dates of important events of our great Saint’s life. Almost all historians

agree that he was consecrated bishop in the year 432, or "towards the latter end of 431." Our Saint's age at his Consecration depends upon the date assigned to his birth. We agree with those writers, who hold that St. Patrick was born in the year 373; taken captive in 389, in his sixteenth years of his age; returned to his native country in 395; and after 38 years spent in study, prayer, penance, and the science of the Saints, under the greatest masters in Christendom, was Consecrated bishop in 432 in the sixtieth year of his age. Dr. Langan and many learned writers assign 387 for the date of our Saint's birth, and his consecration in 432, in the 45th year of his age.\*

## SECTION VII.

*St. Patrick lands in Ireland.*

After long years spent in solitude and prayer; years devoted to the acquisition of learning and the science of the Saints; years spent in the schools of the best Masters in Christendom; having received his heavenly mission from the Vicar of Christ; and episcopal consecration in his presence, or from

\* Ecc. His. p. 137.

his hands, our Saint turns his eyes and steps to the Isle of the West, to realise the visions and yearnings of his life long. Nothing was wanted to fit our Apostle for his glorious mission to evangelise a pagan nation. That the Spirit of God inflamed his soul with burning zeal for the salvation of souls, we have from his own words.

“Did I come to Ireland,” he writes, “according to God, or according to the flesh? Who compelled me? I was led by the Spirit that I should see my relations no more.” The blessings of the Church, the Vicar of Christ, the living Saints were showered upon the Apostle, wishing God speed to his mission.

“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach goodness and preach peace.”

Probus writes: “Then (after he had obtained the mission from the Holy See,) Patrick the venerable priest of the Lord, took ship and came into Britain, and avoiding any delay with the utmost speed and prosperous passage he entered our sea in the name of the Holy Trinity.”

According to the best authorities, St. Patrick and his companions, landed at the mouth of the river Vartry in Wicklow, in the year 432. The native chieftain Nathi, who before had expelled St. Palladius from his

territory, resisted our Apostle, and obliged him to re-embark.

The *Tripartite Life*, says: "When Patrick came from Rome, where he arrived was Inber Dea in Leinster. Nathison, Garrahan came also against him." Notwithstanding the opposition of Nathi, some ancient writers assert that our Saint made one convert at Wicklow, viz. : the famous Sinell of the race of the kings of Leinster.

Nothing daunted by this first failure, our Saint's faith and confidence in God were only intensified, and entering his bark he sailed northward; and put in for some days at a small island, now called Halm-patrick, near Skerries in Dublin Bay. How long our Saint stayed at this island we are not told; but continuing his course towards Ulster, the seat of his captivity, St. Patrick and his companions finally landed in Strangford Lough in the County Down. Here our Apostle, according to the best authors, made his first Convert in the person and family of Dichu or Dieho, lord of the district.

A servant, seeing the strange appearance of St. Patrick and his companions, and taking them to be robbers, gave word to his master, who came with an armed force to put them to the sword. Struck by the majesty and

heavenly appearance of the Apostle, and touched by the grace of God, the fierce pagan became like a lamb; reverently saluted the strangers and invited them to his house. In the language of Erin, St. Patrick preached the Gospel of salvation, and had the happiness to baptize with his own hand Dicho, his family and household.

#### SECTION VIII.

*St. Patrick tries, but fails to convert Milcho, his former cruel master.*

Our glorious Apostle, trained for years in the science of the saints, yearns to practise the teaching of fraternal charity. "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of God" (St. Matt. v. 10). "I say to you," says our Blessed Saviour, "love your enemies, do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you" (St. Matt. v. 41).

Animated with this holy zeal of fraternal charity, our Saint soon left the Co. Down, and faced Antrim, as well to convert his old master as to begin the glories of his heavenly mission in the place and among the people

whom he had so well known from his six years' captivity.

Milcho would not be converted : having heard of the return and the glories of his former slave, and calling to mind the vision of impenitence of which we have before spoken, his proud soul swelled within him at the thought of being conquered by his former slave ; and in a fit of wild despair, he gathered all his treasures into his house, and setting it on fire perished in the flames.

The *Tripartite Life* says : "Then it was that St. Patrick proceeded past the northern side of Sleabhmis (there is a cross in that place), and he saw the fire afar off. He remained silent for the space of three or four hours, thinking what it could be, and then said, 'That is the fire of Milcho's house, after his burning himself in the middle of his house, that he might not believe in God in the end of his life.'"

The *Tripartite Life* says : "Patrick went to preach to Milcho, and took with him gold to prevail on him to believe, for he knew he was covetous regarding gold ; but when Milcho heard that Patrick had arrived, he wished not to believe for him, and to abandon the pagan religion. He thought it unbecoming to believe for his servant, and to

submit to him. . . . . He went into his royal house with his gold and silver; and he set the house on fire, and was burned with all his treasures, and his soul went into hell.”

Milcho was cruel and harsh to his docile, holy, and high-born slave; and hence he appeared unworthy of the grace of God and the Kingdom of Heaven. His heart was hardened to the feelings of humanity, and to the grace of God. He lived and died in impenitence. Here we are taught the salutary lesson never to be cruel or harsh to our fellow being, and especially to those under our care; but to be just and kind to all. With nations and individuals human virtues obtain from God temporal blessings and prosperity; and in the case of individuals, predispose the soul to receive the grace of God and light of heaven.

## SECTION IX.

*St. Patrick returns to Strangford Lough, Co. Down, the territory of his first faithful convert Dicho, Evangelizes and Baptises the whole population of the district.*

Our glorious Apostle, having practised the hard lesson of fraternal charity, of loving



our enemies, of doing good to those that persecute and calumniate us ; having failed to convert his former cruel master Milcho, immediately returned to his first loving convert Dicho ; and spent the Winter in the neighbouring district, preaching with all the zeal and success of an Apostle. The *Tripartite Life*, says : “ He turned and went back again into the territory of Uladh until he arrived at Magh-inis to Dicho, and he remained there a long time disseminating faith, so that he brought all the Ulidians with the net of the Gospel to the harbour of life.”

The Bishop of Sletty in his life of St. Patrick tells us how our Apostle now began to storm heaven by prayer and austerities for the conversion of Ireland. Each night he sang a hundred psalms to adore the King of Angels ; his bed was on stone or the cold earth ; a rock his pillow ; and wet sackcloth his covering.

As might be expected from such a Saint and an Apostle to a heathen nation, several miracles are recorded in this part of our Saint's Life. The following two are taken from *Jocelyn Vita Sexta*.

Rius, brother to Dicho, obstinately opposed the preaching of St. Patrick, and refused baptism. He was lame and sick. Our Saint

asked him would he believe in Christ if he restored to him health and vigour. The man replied, "If thou canst, through Christ, perform on me such, I will believe in Him." St. Patrick lifted his eyes to heaven, prayed, and laying his hands upon the sick man blessed him. Immediately Rius was restored to health and vigour; believed in Christ and was baptized.

St. Patrick now asked his new convert whether he would still wish to remain on earth or depart straight to the true God, the first sweets of whose love he had just tasted. Rius preferred heaven to earth, received the Sacrament of the Church from the Apostle of Erin, recommended his spirit to the Lord and was taken to his eternal rest.

Journeying through the country, like St. Paul, in search of souls, St. Patrick beheld an attractive youth herding cattle. The youth at the preaching of our Saint quickly embraced the faith; was baptized, in due time ordained priest, consecrated bishop; and St. Mocha, for that was his name, became a famous preacher of the Gospel.

#### THE BELOVED DISCIPLE, ST. BENIGNUS.

Among the first and most interesting converts to the Gospel of salvation was the holy

youth Benignus, who like St. John the Evangelist became the beloved disciple of St. Patrick, and who played an important part in the conversion of the Irish nation. We are told that on his way to Tara, St. Patrick exhausted after a long journey, took rest on the bare ground near the banks of a river. Under the inspiration of grace, the youth collected all the fragrant flowers he could, and placed them in the bosom of the sleeping saint; St. Patrick awoke, and caught by the innocence, and guileless simplicity of the boy, foretold his future sanctity and greatness and said: "He will be the heir of my kingdom." St. Benignus was his first or second successor in the See of Armagh.\*

Another writer completing the touching record relates, how when St. Patrick passed the night in the house of the parents of Benignus, the child would rest no where but at his feet, which he tenderly kissed; and how when the morning came and the Saint rose to depart, Benignus again embraced his feet, and with many tears implored permission to follow him; and that the Saint blessing him lifted him up, and that from that hour he became the companion of the Apostle in his labours

\* Tripartite Life.

and triumphs. It was because of his gentle and affectionate disposition that the other disciples gave him the name of Benignus, or Benign. He became the beloved disciple of our Saint and his successor in the see of Armagh." \*

## SECTION X.

*St. Patrick meets King Laeghaire, his chieftains and Druids at Slane, and confounds the magicians. St. Patrick and his companions are miraculously protected at Slane and on their way to Tara. The famous prayer—Lorica, or, St. Patrick's Breast-plate.*

Our illustrious Apostle landed in Ireland in the Autumn of 432. He spent the Winter evangelizing the districts near his faithful convert, Dicho. The Spring is now come, the greatest event of his mission is at hand, and St. Patrick determined, by some decisive blow, to storm paganism in its centre and stronghold, on the royal plains of Tara.

The history of St. Patrick's visit to Tara, though differing in details, is substantially

\* Moris, p. 82.

the same in all the old lives of the Saint. Our Saint, taking leave of his old friend, Dicho, entered his frail bark, and sailing southward arrived at the mouth of the river Boyne, where he landed; and he and his companions set out on foot for the plains of Tara, to celebrate the great feast of Easter. On Easter Eve, or Holy Saturday, our Saint arrived at a place, now called Slane, pitched his tent, and in preparation for the morning feast lighted the Paschal fire a little before nightfall. It happened that at this very time King Leaghair, his princes, priests, and druids, were celebrating at Tara a religious festival, of which fire-worship formed a part. It was one of the standing laws of this festival, that the fires should be extinguished in every hearth of Erin, and death was the penalty upon anyone who durst kindle his fire before that of Tara was seen shining in the stillness of the dark night.

The *Tripartite Life* says: "The fire of every hearth in Erin was extinguished on that night, and it was commanded by the king that no fire should be lighted in Erin before the fire of Tara; and neither gold nor silver should be accepted from anyone who would light it, but he should suffer death for it.

The King Laeghaire saw the sacred fire afar off, and inquired who had dared violate the law. The Druids told him that if the fire was not immediately put out it would extinguish all their fires, and bring about the downfall of his kingdom. The king, enraged at this information, set out for Slane with his armed chieftains, to put to the sword the audacious violaters of the law.

The king soon arrived at Slane, but was warned by the priests not to approach the fire, but to summon the stranger; and strict orders were given that no one should stand up or salute the Saint.

Quickly our Saint obeyed the summons, and approaching the infuriated king, sang: "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we call upon the name of the Lord our God" (Ps.) Immediately, Herc, son of Dego, disobeyed the king's command, and standing up, saluted St. Patrick, and receiving the Saint's blessing, believed in Christ, was baptized, and afterwards became Bishop of Slane and renowned for his sanctity. St. Evin thus describes the meeting: "They were before him (St. Patrick), and the rims of their shields against their chins, and none of them rose up to him except one man alone, in whom was a figure from God, *i.e.*, Herc,

son of Degeo. . . . Patrick blessed him, and he believed in God, and confessed the Catholic faith and was baptised, and Patrick said to him: 'Your chair on earth shall be noble.' "

In the old Lives of our Saint some extraordinary scenes are recorded to have taken place between St. Patrick and the heathen magicians.

His two famous antagonists were the Druids, Luchru and Lucat Mael, skilled in magic and the black arts. Luchru by the power of the devil, ascended into the air before the spectators; our Saint prayed, and the impostor immediately fell dashing out his brains upon a huge stone. The king and his companions, maddened at the sight drew their swords upon the Saint, who in defence entoned the Psalm: "Let God arise and let his enemies be scattered, and let them that hate him fly before his face." Now an earthquake shook the ground, and a furious tempest swept across the plain; and the pagans, panic-stricken and surrounded by darkness, turned their spears against each other, and fifty of their number were slain. The queen was won to the faith, and knelt and received the Apostle's blessing.

We will give the words of St. Evin, *Tri-*

*partite Life:* “The king was much infuriated against Patrick, and he determined to kill him. He told his people to slay the clerics. When St. Patrick observed this thing, the rising up of the pagans against him, he cried out with a loud voice and said: ‘Let God arise and let his enemies be scattered, and let them that hate him fly before his face.’ Immediately darkness went over the sun, and great shaking and trembling of the earth occurred. They thought it was heaven that fell upon the earth, and the horses started off frightened and the wind blew the chariots across the plains, and all rose against each other in the assembly, and they were all attacking each other, so that fifty of them fell in this commotion through Patrick’s malediction.”

The king dissimulated, invited our Saint to meet him next day at Tara, meditated treachery, and posted armed men between Slane and Tara to assassinate St. Patrick and his companions on the way.

“Come,” said the king to Patrick, “after me, O Cleric, to Tara, that I may believe in thee before the men of Erin;” he then placed men in ambush that they might kill him.

Our great Saint, taking with him eight clerics and the boy Benignus, set out on his journey;



and God, says the Annalists, "Cast a garment of invisibility round them, so that not one of them was seen." The soldiers waiting in ambush saw nothing but eight deer followed by a fawn flying towards the mountains. Thus our beloved Apostle spends his first Easter-Eve in Erin, and thus victoriously ends the first great spiritual skirmish the night before the battle.

On his journey from Slane to Tara, our Saint composed and sang the beautiful hymn, known as St. Patrick's Lorica or Breastplate. We have seen how king Laeghaire posted in ambush a body of armed men to murder St. Patrick and his companions. Our Saint composed the Lorica as a breastplate or protection for soul and body against all enemies, men as well as demons. It is well known that in many parts of Ireland portions of this Lorica are still used by the peasantry.

#### ST. PATRICK'S LORICA OR BREASTPLATE.

"I bind to myself this day

"The strong virtue of the Invocation of the  
Trinity,

"The Faith of the Trinity in Unity

"The Creator of the Elements.

"I bind to myself to-day

- “The virtue of the Incarnation of Christ  
with His Baptism,
- “The virtue of His Crucifixion with His  
Burial,
- “The virtue of His Resurrection with His  
Ascension,
- “The virtue of His coming to the sentence  
of the Judgment.
  
- “I bind to myself to-day
- “The virtue of the love of Seraphim,
- “In the obedience of Angels,
- “In the hope of Resurrection into reward,
- “In prayers of Patriarchs,
- “In predictions of Prophets,
- “In preaching of Apostles,
- “In faith of Confessors,
- “In purity of Virgins.
- “In deeds of righteous men.
  
- “I bind to myself to-day
- “The power of Heaven,
- “The light of the sun,
- “The whiteness of snow,
- “The force of fire,
- “The flashing of lightning,
- “The swiftness of wind,
- “The depth of sea,
- “The stability of earth,
- “The hardness of rocks.

- “ I bind to myself to-day  
“ The Power of God to guide me,  
“ The Might of God to uphold me,  
“ The Wisdom of God to teach me,  
“ The Eye of God to watch over me,  
“ The Ear of God to hear me,  
“ The Word of God to give me speech,  
“ The Hand of God to protect me,  
“ The way of God to lie before me,  
“ The Shield of God to shelter me,  
“ The Host of God to defend me,  
“ Against the snares of demons,  
“ Against the temptations of vices,  
“ Against the lusts of nature,  
“ Against every man who meditates injury  
to me,  
    “ Whether far or near,  
    “ Whether few or many.  
“ I have invoked all these virtues  
“ Against every hostile savage power  
“ Directed against my body and my soul,  
“ Against the incantations of false prophets,  
“ Against the black laws of heathenism,  
“ Against the false laws of heresy,  
“ Against the deceits of idolatry,  
“ Against the spells of women, and magicians  
and druids,  
“ Against all knowledge which blinds the  
soul of man.

- “ Christ protect me to-day  
“ Against poison, against burning,  
“ Against drowning, against wound  
“ That I may receive abundant reward,  
“ Christ with me, Christ before me,  
“ Christ behind me, Christ within me,  
“ Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
“ Christ at my right, Christ at my left,  
“ Christ at the fort,  
“ Christ in the chariot seat,  
“ Christ in the poop,  
“ Christ in the heart of every man who  
    thinks of me,  
“ Christ in the mouth of every man who  
    speaks to me,  
“ Christ in every eye that sees me,  
“ Christ in every ear that hears me,  
“ I bind to myself to-day  
“ The strong virtue of an invocation of the  
    Trinity,  
“ The Faith of the Trinity in Unity,  
“ The Creator of the elements.”

## SECTION XI

*St. Patrick at Tara announces the Gospel before King Laeghaire; miracles; conversion of Princes, Chieftains, Druids, and people.*

EARLY ON Easter Sunday, our Apostle, robed in white, with his mitre on his brow, his crozier, "the Staff of Jesus,"\* in hand, and all the sublime dignity and sanctity of God's ambassador beaming in his countenance; and followed by his companions, vested in their sacerdotal robes, arrived at Tara, and appeared before the King and his Court. As on the

\*During his preparation for his great mission at Lerins, St. Patrick is said to have received a crozier, called the "Staff of Jesus," from a holy hermit, who lived in an island in the Etruscan Sea. The hermit received the crozier from the hands of Jesus Christ Himself, hence called the "Staff of Jesus," with orders to have it given to the future Apostle, when he would visit the island. The Tripartite Life records that St. Patrick received the "Staff of Jesus" from the hands of our Blessed Lord Himself on Mount Hermon in the island. The fact need not surprise us, when we consider the great future mission of our Apostle—the conversion of a whole

previous evening, Laeghaire, his royal party, Chieftains, and Druids, through disrespect, remained seated, and only two stood up and saluted our Saint. One was Dubhach the royal bard or poet; the other a graceful youth Fiacc, who afterwards became the famous Bishop of Stelly, and wrote our Saint's life in verse. We may here add that the chief bard, having received the faith, turned all his poetic talents to the praises of the true God.

St. Patrick was now invited to table and was offered a goblet of poisoned ale. Like St. Benedict, our Saint made the sign of the cross over the vessel, and immediately the poison fell through in the presence of all assembled. The whole party adjourned to a

nation to the faith of Jesus Christ. In the destruction of idols, and in all his great victories over the powers of darkness, St. Patrick ever bore in his hand the "Staff of Jesus." In the ancient lives of our Saint, many extraordinary facts and fictions are narrated in connection with this famous crozier. St. Bernard in his Life of St Malachy describes it as "covered with gold and precious stones." It was ever held in the greatest veneration by the successors of our Saint. In the year 1180 it was removed from Armagh to Dublin by William Fitz-Adem de Burgo, and deposited in Christ's Church. After the Reformation, the "Staff," with several other relics, was publicly burned in High-street by the apostate Archbishop Browne.

vast plain outside Tara, and Luchat Mael, the chief magician, challenged St. Patrick to work wonders in proof of the truth of their respective religions. Our saint, trusting in the power of God, accepted the challenge.

By spells and incantations the magician brought snow upon the ground up to men's girdles; but was unable to remove it. Our Saint turning towards the four points of the heavens blessed the plains, and the snow disappeared—the first victory over the magician!

The Druid now brought darkness over the plains; but was unable to remove it. St. Patrick prayed to the Lord, and immediately a bright sun dispelled the darkness—second victory over the enemy. Several other trials of faith were proposed by St. Patrick but rejected by the magician, whose trust in false gods was now beginning to waver. St. Patrick, whose faith and confidence in God rose equal to the occasion, proposed a final test, which was accepted by the proud magician.

St. Patrick offered that the youth Benignus, whom he loved, and who was fresh from the waters of baptism, should be shut up in a house with the magician: that this

house should be made one half of dry faggots, and the other of green wood; and that Benignus, wearing the tunic of the magician, should be placed in the house of the dry faggots; and the magician, wearing the tunic of the Saint, be shut up in the house of green wood; the house then be set on fire, leaving it to the true God to protect his own. The magician, having all the chances on his side, entered the house of green wood; and the holy youth, with joy beaming in his countenance, stood among the dry faggots. The doors were fastened, the fire applied, and the multitude breathless and tremulous with excitement, watched the result. The triumph of faith was soon secured. In a few moments the magician and green wood were reduced to ashes, the flames leaving untouched the Saint's tunic. The flames of the faggots shone round the Christian boy, consuming only the Druid's tunic, and Benignus flushed, not by the flames, but with triumph, kneels and kisses the feet of his dear father St. Patrick, absorbed in prayer for his safety.

We shall give it in the words of the *Tripartite Life*. St. Patrick said to the Druid: "Go into a house apart and well closed, and a student of my people along with you; let



my tunic be about you, and your druidic tunic about my student; and fire will be applied to the house, that God may decide between you there. This counsel was agreed to by the men of Erin, including Laeghaire. The house was then made one half of dry faggots, and the other half of fresh materials. The Druid was put into the fresh part and Patrick's tunic about him. Benignus was put into the dry part, with the Druid's tunic about him. The house was afterwards closed and fastened on the outside, and fire was applied to it. A great prodigy secured there through Patrick's prayers. The fresh part of the house was burned, as well as the Druid under the tunic, and not a bit of the tunic was destroyed. The dry portion, in which was Benignus, was not burned, and God preserved Benignus under the Druid's tunic, and the tunic was burned, so that it was reduced to ashes."

Many of the chieftains, druids, and spectators, at the preaching and miracles of our Saint, embraced Christianity. The proud King Laeghaire, terrified and humbled at what he had seen and heard, offered no further opposition to the preaching of St. Patrick. Some writers state that, for political motives, he made a hypocritical profession of the

faith ; but it is beyond all doubt that he died as he lived—a pagan.

The magician is conquered. The powers of darkness give way before God's ambassador. The victory is won, the faith of the Apostle triumphs. Our Saint, now, with all the zeal and fervour of a St. Paul, expounds from the hill of Tara the Gospel of salvation. In their own Celtic accents, he unfolds before the multitude the majesty, the power, the glories, the mercies, and the love of the one true and living God, the great Creator of heaven and earth ; and who alone is worthy of the supreme homage, adoration and love of men and angels. Our Saint next explains the doctrine of the Adorable Trinity ; and to make it more intelligible, he plucks from the green sward, on which he was standing, a sprig of shamrock, and holds it up as an emblem of the Blessed Trinity—the three leaves issuing from the single stem ! Ever since, at home and abroad, the shamrock is revered and loved by every Irishman, as Erin's national emblem. We can well conceive with what unction our Saint preached the mercies of Jesus, and the glories of Mary.

There and then the vast multitude, charmed by the beauties of the new Gospel, embraced Christianity so natural to the warm Celtic

hearts; and the bards, who up to this sang only of the famous exploits of their chieftains in war and battle, strung their instruments, and upon the harp sang the glories of the one true and living God.

The *Vita Sexta* by Jocelyn, describes the last scene of this eventful day.

“The heart of King Laeghaire was hardened against the commands of God, like that of Pharaoh in the presence of Moses, for, in spite of all these miracles, he did not fear to arouse the wrath of the Most High God, or to irritate his servant Patrick.” We are told how he and his followers prepared to make another attack on the life of the Saint. “But the Omnipotent God, the supreme protector and defender of his own, armed the zeal of the creature against these senseless idolaters. For the earth opened in obedience to its avenging Lord, and engulfed them, with many of their supporters, from amongst the people of Teamhrach; as it is written, Hell opened its mouth, and they were taken down, as it were, in life. The survivors, and all that dwelt in that land, beholding and understanding these things, being aghast and stricken with a great fear, believed in Christ, and came without delay to receive Baptism, lest a like punishment

should fall upon themselves. The terrified King, falling at the feet of St. Patrick, implored his mercy, and promised obedience for the future to all his commands. The compassionate father mercifully forgave all the wrongs done to himself; but, although he spent a long time in teaching him the faith of the Lord Jesus, he never could bring him to baptism. So the Saint dismissed him, that, using his own free will, he might go according to the inventions of his own heart; lest he should seem to compel him to receive the faith. Nevertheless, by an interior revelation, he openly declared to him the things which were coming upon himself and his descendants. 'Because,' said he, 'you have ever resisted my teaching, continuing to cause me sorrow beyond all measure, scorning the faith of the Creator of all things thou art a son of death, and with, yea, more than, your adherents, you deserve even now to begin your eternal punishment; but as you have come to me humbly asking forgiveness, and, like the King Achab, you have humbled yourself before my God, the Lord will not bring upon you at once the evil things you have merited, but none of your seed after you shall ascend your throne; your younger brother shall believe in my God, his

seed shall rule for ages.' The queen believed in Christ, and receiving baptism, and the blessing of Patrick, made a holy death in the Lord. Then Patrick with his followers passed through the whole country baptizing the believers in the name of the Holy Trinity, and God was his helper, and confirmed the word by the signs which followed."\*

The proud old King, though unfortunately not a Christian, was a soldier to the last. His burial is thus described by the old writers. "The body of Laeghaire was afterwards brought from the South, and interred with his armour of valour in the South East, in the external rampart of the Royal Rath-Laeghaire at Tara, with his face turned southward upon the Lagenians as it were fighting with them, for he was the enemy of the Lagenians (men of Leinster) in his lifetime."†

\* Morris, *St. Patrick*, p. 95. † Petrie, *Tara*, p. 170.

## SECTION XII

*St. Patrick preaches and baptizes all the people at Teltown, Co. Meath, on Easter Monday.*

We have recorded the events of the eve before the battle at Slane; but the great battle fought and won on the plains of Tara laid the whole country at the feet of the conquering Christian hero. Our holy Apostle, under the influence of divine inspiration, attacked and stormed paganism in its centre and stronghold, and the fame of the conversion of Kings, princes, druids, poets, besides the vast multitude, was spread far and wide, and prepared an earnest and favourable reception for the preacher of the true Gospel through the length and breadth of Ireland.

An able general loses no time to follow up a brilliant victory by scattering or cutting to pieces, in complete rout, the forces of the enemy. So our skilled and holy Apostle, after the triumph of faith on Sunday, leaves Tara early on Easter Monday for Teltown, Co. Meath, a town situated mid-way between

Navan and Kells, where he expected to meet a vast multitude assembled at an annual fair, and where already the fame of his sanctity and successes at Tara had preceded him. The reader cannot fail to admire the heavenly wisdom of our Saint, who, in a thinly populated country, sought out large assemblies to preach the Gospel to the multitude.

At Teltown, St. Patrick found Cairbre and Conall, brothers of King Laeghaire, and sons of the famous Niall of the Nine Hostages. At the preaching of our Saint, Conall joyfully received the faith, was baptized, and granted a site for a church at Donagh-Patrick. Cairbre, like his brother, Laeghaire, would not be converted, and died as he lived, in paganism.

### SECTION XIII.

*St. Patrick, with the staff of Jesus, destroys the great pagan idol Crom Cruach, and twelve other idols, in the Plain of Adorations or genuflections, in the County Cavan.*

Not far from Tara, the seat of national government, was the great head and centre of superstition and idolatry. In the centre of a large plain, the Druids or pagan priests

erected a huge idol, made of stone, according to some, others say of gold and silver. To this idol supreme homage and sacrifices were offered, and was held in the greatest veneration by the people. As at Tara, our great Saint determined by one blow to crush paganism and idolatry in its head and centre.

The Tripartite Life thus describes it:—

“Patrick after that went over the water to Magh-Slecht, where stood the chief idol of Erin—*i.e.*, Cenn Cruaich—ornamented with gold and silver, and twelve other idols, ornamented with brass, round him. When Patrick saw the idol from the water which is named Guthara—(loud voice, *i.e.*, he elevated his voice)—and when he approached near the idol, he raised his arm to lay the “STAFF OF JESUS” on him, and it did not reach him, he went back from the attempt upon his right side, for it was to the South his face was, and the mark of the “STAFF” lives in his left side still, although the “STAFF” did not leave Patrick’s hand; and the earth swallowed up the other twelve idols to their heads, and they are in that condition in commemoration of the miracle, and he called upon all the people, cum rege Laeghaire—they it was that adored the idol—and all the people saw him (*i.e.*, the demon),



and they dreaded their dying if Patrick did not send him to hell.’\*’

The celebrated Irish scholar, Eugene O’Curry, identified the very spot where the miracle took place. He writes:—

“Magh-Slecht (that is, the Plain of adorations or genuflections), the situation and bearing of which are so minutely laid down here, was no other than the plain of Magh-Slecht in which stood Crom Crauch (called Cean Crauch in the Tripartite Life), the great idol of Milesian pagan worship, the Delphos of our Gadelian ancestors from the time of their coming into Erin until the destruction of the idol by St. Patrick in the early part of his apostleship among them. The precise situation of this historical locality has not been hitherto authoritatively ascertained by any of our antiquarian investigators; but it is pretty clear that if any man, fairly acquainted with our ancient native documents, and practised in the examination of the ruined monuments of antiquity so thickly scattered over the face of our country—if, I say, such a man, with this article in his hand, and an extract from the life of St. Patrick, should go to any of

\* O’Curry, *Mat., App.*, p. 539

the points here described in the route of the belligerent forces, he will have but little difficulty in reaching the actual scene of the battle, and will then stand with certainty in the veritable Magh-Slecht; nay, even may, perhaps, discover the identical Crom Cruach himself, with his twelve buried satellites, where they fell and were interred when struck down by St. Patrick with his crozier, the Bachall Josa, or Sacred Staff of Jesus.”\*

#### SECTION XIV.

*St. Patrick evangelized Connaught; the baptism at the fountain of the two princesses, daughters of King Laeghaire; his visit to the forest of Fochlut; restores to life the Princess Feidelm.*

After the two splendid victories of the true faith, one at Tara before kings, princes, druids, and people, the other in the Plain of Adorations over the false idols of pagan idolatry in its head and centre; and having erected numerous churches and ordained priests to follow up and perpetuate his

\* Materials, &c., p. 140.

preaching, our glorious Apostle crossed the Shannon to evangelize the people of Connaught.

Constant Tradition confirms ancient history, and identifies the very part of the lordly Shannon where our Saint crossed. The ford is quite near the modern Clonmacnoise. As in Ulster, St. Patrick proceeded straight to the ancient palace of the kings of Connaught, and on his way preached to the natives, who, with wonderful earnestness, cast away superstition, and embraced Christianity. Arrived at Cruachan, the palace of the king, which is near the present town of Roscommon, St. Patrick met two princesses, daughters of his old enemy, King Laeghaire. Near the royal palace was a fountain where women were accustomed to bathe before sunrise. Having come to the fountain one morning the princesses were amazed to find there our Saint with his priests, all robed in their white garments. We shall give the dialogue, which is so admired by all scholars, in the words of the Tripartite Life.

“Patrick went afterwards to the fountain—*i.e.*, Clibech—on the slopes of Cruachan, at sunrise. The clerics sat down at the fountain. Laeghaire M’Neill’s two daughters, Ethne the Fair, and Fieldelm the Red,

went early to the fountain to wash their hands as they were wont to do, when they found the synod of clerics at the well, with white garments, and their books before them. They wondered at the appearance of the clerics, and imagined they were fir-sidhe, or phantoms. They questioned Patrick, 'Whence are you, and whither (*sic*) have you come? Is it from the sidhe? Are you gods?' Patrick said to them, 'It would be better for you to believe in God than to ask regarding our race.' The elder daughter said, 'Who is your God, and in what place is He—in heaven or in earth? Is it under the earth, or on the earth, or in the seas, or in the streams, or in hills, or in valleys? Has He sons or daughters? Has He gold and silver? Is there a profusion of every good in His kingdom. Tell us plainly how we shall see Him, and how He is to be loved, and how He is to be found. Is He young or old, or is He ever-living? Is He beautiful, or have many fostered His son, or is His daughter handsome, and dear to men of the world?' St. Patrick, full of the Holy Spirit, responded: 'Our God is the God of all, the God of heaven and earth, the God of the seas and the rivers, the God of the sun and the moon, and of all the other planets;

the God of the high hills and the low valleys; God over heaven, in heaven, and under heaven; and He has a mansion—*i.e.*, heaven—and the earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them. He inspireth all things, He quickeneth all things, He enkindleth all things; He giveth light to the sun and to the moon. He created fountains in the dry land, and placed dry islands in the sea, and stars to minister to the greater lights. He hath a Son co-eternal and co-equal with Himself; and the Son is not younger than the Father, nor is the Father older than the Son. And the Holy Ghost are not divided. I desire moreover to unite you to the Son of the heavenly King, for ye are daughters of an earthly king.’ And the daughters said, as if with one mouth and heart, ‘How shall we come to believe in that King? Teach us duly that we may see the Lord face to face—teach us, and we will do as you will say to us.’ And St. Patrick said, ‘Do you believe that through baptism the sin of your mother and your father shall be put away from you?’ They answered, ‘We believe.’ ‘Do you believe in repentance after sin?’ ‘Yes.’ And they were baptized, and Patrick blessed a white veil upon their heads, and they desired to see Christ face to face. And

Patrick said to them, 'You cannot see Christ except that you first taste death, and unless you receive the body of Christ, and His blood.' And the daughters replied, saying, 'Give us the communion, that we may be able to see the Prophesied One.' And they after this received the communion, and fell asleep in death, and Patrick placed them under one covering and in one bed (grave), and their friends made great lamentations over them."

This beautiful passage delineates the faith and zeal of our Saint, as well as the grace and unction attached to his preaching, while on the other hand, it unfolds the beautiful simplicity of the youthful princesses, and the wondrous effect of God's efficacious grace upon their hearts and souls.

We cannot follow our glorious Saint step by step through Connaught. Day by day he was preaching, baptizing, and founding churches; and, when darkness covered the land, he spent the greater part of the night in prayer and penance.

His visit to the wood of Fochlut, near the present town of Killala, where many years ago, as we have narrated, the voice came to him--the vision to evangelize the Irish nation. How vivid the vision must now

come before his mind as he stood upon the spot, gloriously and successfully accomplishing the call of God. The reader will excuse the insertion of the vision.

“In the bosom of the night I saw a man, who seemed to come from Ireland, and he bore innumerable letters with him, one of which he gave to me. And I read the beginning of the letter in which was written, ‘The voice of the Irish,’ and as I read aloud the first words of the letter, I thought I heard in my mind the voices of those who were nigh to the forest of Fochlut, which borders the western sea; and they cried out, “We entreat thee, holy youth, to come and walk still among us.’”

With deep emotion our Saint approached the forest, and met at the place two virgins, daughters of the native Chieftain named Gleran, and who were among the very children whose voices reached him over the seas in distant Gaul. Needless to say the fair virgins received the faith, were baptized, consecrated their souls and bodies to the love and service of Jesus Christ, and received the veil from the hands of St. Patrick, who in due time placed them over a convent which he founded in the place.

Our Saint preached through Roscommon

Sligo, and Mayo, everywhere baptizing and erecting churches for his numerous converts. In this part of his life the following miracle is recorded. St. Patrick preached Christianity before a great assembly called the clan Amalgaidh. The prince Endeus promised to believe if St. Patrick restored to life his fond sister, named Feidelm, who was some days dead. The faith of our Saint, like that of the first Apostles, in the power, mercy, and goodness of God, never faltered. St. Patrick came to the bier, and in prayer lifted his eyes and soul to heaven. The dead woman rose from the coffin, and fell into the arms of her brother. Needless to say the prince and all present embraced Christianity, and at one well on the spot, called Aen-Adharrae, twelve thousand converts were regenerated in the saving waters of baptism. At his departure, St. Patrick gave charge of the district to his disciple, St. Manchen.\*

The reader need not be surprised, as we have before remarked, at the miracles wrought by St. Patrick. The power of working prodigies for the conversion of pagan nations is the ordinary grace of an

\* Lanigan, p. 252.



Apostle. The first Apostles wrought numerous miracles to convert both Jews and Gentiles. St. Francis Xavier, the Apostle of the Indies, is reported to have raised to life three dead men. Like examples are found in the lives of other great Saints and Apostles. No wonder then that Almighty God would confer this power on St. Patrick, who alone converted to the faith the whole Irish nation.

Maddened at the success of St. Patrick's preaching, the pagan priests plotted an attempt upon his life; but Enda, one of the converted princes, with his son Conall, saved him from their fury; and the sudden death of Recraid, the chief druid, deterred others from attempting the same wicked deed.

Our great Apostle's work was not yet finished. No martyr's blood was needed to fertilize the garden of the Church of Erin. God protects, as He loves His own; and hence in this, as on many other occasions, saved the life of our beloved St. Patrick.

## SECTION XV.

*St. Patrick fasts for the forty days and forty nights of Lent on Croagh Phadriuc, or Patrick's Hill, in Co. Mayo. The exquisite dialogue with the Angel; his extraordinary demands in favour of the salvation of the Irish race granted by the Almighty God.*

The extraordinary spirit of prayer and penance made St. Patrick the great Saint he was, and brought down the blessing of God upon his labours. He took heaven by violence, and we find him in conflict, wrestling, so to speak, with the Almighty Himself to obtain new favours for his children. Of this we have a most striking example in the Lent passed on Croagh Patrick in the Co. Mayo, in prayer, fasting, and wrestling with God. The narrative of this event by the ancient writers of his Life is substantially the same.

The Tripartite Life thus records it:—

“ Patrick went to Cruachan-Aighle on the Saturday of Whitsuntide. The Angel went to converse with him, and said to him, ‘ God

will not give thee what thou demandest, for He thinks the demand weighty and immense and great.' 'Is that His decision?' said Patrick. 'It is,' answered the Angel. 'This is my decision, then,' said Patrick, 'I shall not leave this Cruachan until I die, or all the demands shall be given.' Patrick was afterwards with illness of mind in Cruachan, without drink or food, from Shrove Saturday to Easter Saturday, just like Moses, son of Amra, for they were alike in many things. God accosted them both out of the fire; six score years was the age of each; the place of sepulture of both is uncertain. At the end of those forty nights and forty days, the mountain around him was filled with black birds, so that he could see neither heaven nor earth. He sang cursing psalms at them, but they went not away from him. He then became angry with them; he rang his bell at them, so that the men of Erin heard its sound. And he flung it at them, so that a gap was broken out of it, and that (bell) is Bernan-Brighte. Patrick afterwards cried until his face and the front of his *casula* (cowl) was wet. No demon came after this to Erin for the space of seven years and seven months and seven days and seven nights.

“The Angel subsequently went to protect Patrick, and he cleaned his *casula*, and brought white birds about Cruachan; and they used to chant sweet melodies for him. ‘I will bring so many souls from pain,’ said the Angel, ‘and as many as would cover as far as your eye could reach on the sea.’ ‘That is no great boon for me,’ said Patrick; ‘not far can my eye reach over the sea.’ ‘You shall have between sea and land then,’ added the Angel. ‘Is there anything more granted to me besides that?’ asked Patrick. ‘There is,’ said the Angel; ‘you can bring seven every Saturday from the pains of hell for ever.’\* ‘If anything be granted to me,’ observed Patrick, ‘let (me have) my twelve men.’ ‘You shall have it,’ said the Angel, ‘and depart from Cruachan.’ ‘I shall not depart,’ said Patrick, ‘because I have been tormented, until I am recompensed. Is there anything else then to be granted to me?’ asked Patrick. ‘Yes,’ said the Angel,

\* “Hell” here does not mean hell of the damned, out of which there is no redemption; but it means pardon for mortal sin which merits hell; it means the conversion of sinners. Holy Job in the same sense says, “Though I should be buried in the depths of hell my God would deliver me from it.” And King David says. “Thou hast brought forth my soul from hell”

‘you shall have seven every Thursday, and twelve every Saturday from pains, and depart from Cruachan.’ ‘I will not depart,’ answered Patrick, ‘because I have been tormented, until I am recompensed. Is there anything else granted to me?’ asked Patrick. ‘There is,’ answered the Angel; ‘the great sea to come over Erinn seven years before the Judgment; and depart from the Cruachan.’

“I will not depart,” said Patrick, ‘since I have been tormented, until I am gratified.’ ‘Is there anything more you demand?’ asked the Angel. ‘There is,’ answered Patrick, ‘that Saxons may not occupy Erinn by consent or force whilst I shall be in heaven.’ ‘It shall be granted thee,’ said the Angel, ‘and depart from Cruachan.’ ‘I will not depart,’ said Patrick, ‘since I have been tormented, until I am gratified. Is there anything more granted to me?’ asked Patrick. ‘There is,’ said the Angel; ‘every one who repeats thy hymn from one day to the other shall not suffer pains.’ ‘The hymn is long and difficult,’ said Patrick. ‘Every one who repeats from *Crist illum* (recte *Cristlim*, “Christ with me”) to the end, and every one who repeats the name, and every one who observes penitence in

Erinn, their souls shall not go to hell; and depart from Cruachan,' said the Angel.

“‘I will not depart,’ said Patrick, ‘for I have been tormented, until I am gratified. Is there anything more?’ asked Patrick. ‘Yes,’ said the Angel, ‘you shall have one man for every hair in your *casula* from pains on the day of Judgment.’ ‘Which of the other Saints who labour for God,’ said Patrick, ‘that would not bring that number to heaven? I shall not accept that,’ said Patrick. ‘What will you accept, then?’ asked the Angel. ‘Here it is,’ said Patrick, ‘that I should bring from hell on the day of Judgment seven persons for every hair in this *casula*. ‘It shall be granted to you,’ said the Angel, ‘and depart from this Cruachan.’ ‘I will not depart,’ said Patrick, ‘for I have been tormented, until I am gratified.’ ‘Is there anything else you demand?’ asked the Angel. ‘There is,’ said Patrick; ‘the day that the twelve royal seats shall be on the Mount, and when the four rivers of fire be about the Mount, and when three peoples shall be there, viz. : the people of heaven, the people of earth, and the people of hell, that I myself shall be judge over the men of Erin on that day.’ ‘This thing cannot be obtained from the Lord,’ said the

Angel. 'Unless this is obtained from Him, I will not consent to leave this Cruachan from this day for ever; and even after my death there shall be a caretaker from me there,' answered St. Patrick.

"The Angel went to heaven. Patrick went to his offering. The angel came in the evening. 'How now?' asked St. Patrick. 'Thus,' answered the Angel: 'all the creatures, visible and invisible, including the twelve Apostles, entreated, and they have obtained. The Lord said that there came not, and would not come, after the Apostles, a man more illustrious, were it not for the hardness of the request which is granted thee. Strike thy bell,' said the Angel, 'thou art commanded from heaven to fall on thy knees, that it may be a blessing to the people of all Erin, both living and dead.' 'A blessing on the bountiful king that gave,' said Patrick, 'Cruachan shall be left.'\*

We have more than once said, that by prayer and penance, our great Saint brought down the blessing of God upon his Apostolic labours. The prayer, fasting, and petition for forty days and forty nights upon the mountain, Croagh Patrick, won from God the conversion of all Ireland. All opposition has now ceased, and henceforth our Saint's

\* Cusack, Tripartite Life, p. 416.

journeys are the march of a triumphal conqueror; like a campaign, where every city and army surrender at the very appearance of the enemy.

After his descent from the mountain, our Saint visited a country called Corco-Themne where he baptised several thousands, and founded four churches.

In this place was a famous well, supposed to be the residence and shrine of a deity; and hence venerated, and the object of superstitious rites by the people. St. Patrick removed and destroyed the immense stone which covered the well, and put an end to the idolatry.

About this place the Tripartite Life narrates the following fact. The charioteer unyoked his horses upon the plain, soon night folded the country in a thick mantle of darkness, and when he wanted to start the horses could not be found. Our Saint lifted his hand, and his five fingers, like five torches, illuminated the whole plain, and the charioteer had no difficulty in finding his steeds.

Our great Apostle, having crossed the river Moy, converted to Christianity the whole county of Sligo. In one place he baptized the seven sons of Prince Drogen,



with all the inhabitants of the neighbourhood. One of the young Princes named Mac-erca, when duly instructed, was consecrated bishop by our Saint, and placed over the Church of the district.

After seven years, Apostolic labours in Connaught, our glorious St. Patrick had the happiness to see, through the length and breadth of the land, the false idols overthrown, paganism and superstition abolished, and the praises of the true God, Jesus His Son, and Mary, the Mother of Jesus, ascend from hill and vale before the throne of the Most High.

The Tripartite Life thus concludes our Saint's mission in Connaught.

“Thrice Patrick went across the Shannon into the land of Connaught. Fifty bells, and fifty altar chalices, and fifty altar cloths he left in the land of Connaught, each of them he left in his church. Seven years he was preaching to the men of Connaught, and he left them a blessing and bade them farewell.”

#### PIOUS REFLECTIONS.

My soul! How wonderful is God in His Saints! All Apostles, destined to bring into the fold of Jesus Christ, pagan nations, are

endowed by God with special gifts and graces; with extraordinary sanctity of life; and with the power of working wonders. Extraordinary spirit of prayer and penance, joined with unbounded confidence in God, were the special grace of our beloved Apostle St. Patrick. The stupendous miracles that followed his footsteps proved him to be God's messenger; and opened the eyes and hearts of his hearers to the Gospel of Salvation.

A captive youth on the hills of Antrim, amid frost and snow, a hundred times by day and night on bended knee he adored God. "I remained," he says, "in the woods, and upon the mountains, and before the dawn I was called to prayer by the snow, the ice, and rain, and I did not suffer from them."

As we have seen, when about to storm the centres and strongholds of idolatry, in Slane, Tara, the Plain of Adoration, as well as the courts of the King of Connaught, days and nights, before the battle, were spent in prayer and penance. We have seen his confidence in God, and the mighty miracles wrought in the above places, for the conversion of the pagan.

My soul! For forty days and forty

nights, on Croagh Patrick, in prayer and penance, he laid siege to Heaven itself, and obtained, as by violence from the Almighty Himself, wonderful graces and favours for the Irish race, present and future, living and unborn, at home and abroad.

## RESOLUTIONS.

Dearest, sweetest Jesus! the life of St. Patrick is a living example of prayer, penance, and zeal for souls. I know the necessity of prayer. "Without me you can do nothing." "Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God." Dearest Jesus! I know the power of prayer. "Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you." "Amen, amen I say to you if you ask the Father anything in my name He will give it to you." "Cry to me and I will hear thee." "Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee." O Blessed Lord! I know too the necessity and power of penance. "Except you do penance you shall all likewise perish." "Do penance, the Kingdom of God is at hand."

I resolve, by the grace of God, to be most attentive to all my daily prayers, to try to keep my soul in God's presence by the habit

of fervent aspirations ; secondly, to practise every day some sacred acts of self denial and mortification, known to God alone.

PRAYERS.

Dearest, sweetest Jesus ! Grant me the spirit of prayer. Good God, convince and persuade me of the necessity of prayer. O God, through the bowels of Thy mercy, through the name and merits of Jesus, grant me a love of prayer. O most adorable Redeemer, grant me the efficacious grace to pray with humility, and to persevere in prayer. O Blessed Jesus, through the merits of Thy Passion and Death, grant me the grace to deny myself, to take up my cross, and to follow Thee. Grant me, O Divine Lord, the grace to mortify my passions and senses, and every day of my life to practise some little secret acts of self-denial, known to God alone. Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, and St. Patrick, pray for me.

PRAYER OF ST. IGNATIUS.

Receive, O Lord, my entire liberty, my understanding, and my will. Take me and all I possess and am. Thou hast given them all : behold, I restore all to Thee, to be

disposed of according to Thy good pleasure. "Give me only Thy love and Thy grace. These are sufficient for me; with them I shall be happy, and shall have no more to ask."

## ASPIRATION OF ST. IGNATIUS.

"May the most just, most high, and most adorable will of God be accomplished in all things. May it be adored, praised, and glorified, by all creatures now and forever. Amen."

"Holy St. Patrick, glorious Apostle of Ireland, obtain for me from Jesus, the spirit of prayer and penance, and a lively faith, and confidence in God's goodness and mercy. St. Patrick, pray for me to be worthy to be Thy client, and a faithful true child of Catholic Erin."

MORNING SALUTATIONS TO THE SACRED HEART  
OF JESUS FROM ST. GERTRUDE.

"I adore, praise and salute Thee, O most sweet Heart of Jesus Christ, fresh and gladdening as the breath of spring, from which, as from a fountain of graces, sweeter than its honeycomb, flows evermore all good and all delight. I thank Thee with all the

powers of my heart, for having preserved me throughout this night, and for having rendered to God the Father praises and thanksgivings on my behalf. And now, O my sweet Love, I offer thee my wretched and worthless heart as a morning sacrifice. I place it in Thy most tender Heart; and entrust it to Thy keeping; beseeching Thee that Thou wouldst deign pour into it Thy divine inspirations, and to enkindle it with Thy holy love. Amen."

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## CHAPTER IV.

### ST. PATRICK EVANGELIZES MUNSTER.

OUR glorious Apostle having evangelized all Connaught, turned his face towards the North, and entered Donegal, where he made many distinguished converts, and erected several churches. Here our Saint gave a special blessing to Prince Conale and his son Fergus; and predicted the birth and

extraordinary sanctity of St. Columba. Placing his hands upon the head of Fergus, St. Patrick said, "A youth shall be born of his tribe, who will be a sage, a prophet, and a poet."

Our Saint visited Donegal, Antrim, Tyrone, and Meath, everywhere preaching, baptized, and erecting churches; and, as usual with Apostles to heathen nations, he confirmed the truth of his new Gospel by numerous miracles.

The people of Munster had long heard of the visit of the distinguished stranger to Erin. They had heard of the fame and sanctity of St. Patrick and his companions. They had heard of a New Gospel preached throughout the land; and how kings and subjects, princes and peasants, druids and bards, were won and converted by the words of the extraordinary stranger. The fame of miracles and prodigies, some true, others exaggerated or invented, filled the land. No wonder, then, the people of Munster burned with curiosity to see and hear the extraordinary man, St. Patrick, the glorious Apostle of Ireland. This curiosity was soon to be satisfied.

## SECTION I.

*St. Patrick preaches at Cashel, baptizes Prince Aengus, bards, and druids, and all the natives.*

We have seen it was our Saint's custom to attack the strongholds and centres of authority in each province; wisely knowing that if he had once won the kings and princes the conversion of the people would easily follow. At Cashel, then, as now styled, "Cashel of the Kings," the king of Munster, with his court of princes and bards, and druids, resided; and hence our Saint having entered Munster, directed his steps towards the historic Rock.

St. Patrick with his companions arrived late in the evening at their destination; and when early in the morning Prince Aengus, son of Nadfracch, the reigning king, entered the fort, he found all the idols prostrated on the ground. Our Saint was received with the greatest joy and enthusiasm; and king, princes, bards, druids, and the vast multitude that curiosity brought to the spot, listened with breathless earnestness to the doctrine of salvation as it issued from the lips of our Apostle.



Whilst our Saint preached and baptized at Cashel, the prince Aengus stood by his side; and the sharp point of the crozier, called "the *Staff of Jesus*," pierced his foot from which the blood flowed most copiously; the fervent convert bore the pain in silence; and when St. Patrick, seeing the blood, and understanding the great pain caused by the accident, asked why he did not complain, the heroic prince replied, that he thought "it was the rule of faith," or a part of the usual ceremony. Honour to the heroic fortitude of the first convert in Munster, Prince Aengus of "Cashel of the Kings." As this especially interests us, the children of Cashel, we shall cite the words of the Tripartite Life:

"Patrick went afterwards to the territory of Munster, to Cashel of the Kings. When Aengus, son of Nadfraech, got up in the morning, all their idols were prostrate, and Patrick and his people came to the side of the fort, and he (Aengus) bade them welcome, and took them into the fort, to the place where Lec-Patrick is to-day. And Patrick after that baptised the sons of Nadfraech, and the men of Munster besides, and left a blessing and prosperity upon them. And he blessed the fort, *i.e.*, Cashel, and said that only one

race should be there for ever. And he was seven years in Munster. The learned calculate that he made an offering on every seventh ridge that he traversed in Munster.

“When Patrick was baptizing Aengus, the point of the crozier went through Aengus’s foot. Patrick asked, ‘Why was it that you did not tell me?’ ‘Because’ said he, ‘I thought it was the rule of faith.’ ‘You shall have its reward,’ said Patrick; ‘your successors from this day shall not die of wounds.’ No one is king of Cashel until Patrick’s comarb ordains him, and imposes the grade on him. Patrick said:—

‘The sons of Nadfraech of sounding fame;  
Of them shall be kings and chieftains;  
Aengus, from the lands of Fiemhen,  
And Ailill his brother.’

“And twenty-eight kings, of the race of Ailill and Aengus, reigned in Cashel, ordained with the croizer, until the time of Cenngegan. Patrick went after this to Muscraidhe-Breogain, and founded churches and establishments there.” \*

\* Cusack, p. 466.

## SECTION II.

*St. Patrick leaves Cashel; and preaches and baptizes at Kilfeacle, Cullen, Kiltzeely, and Pallas-Green.*

How long our great Saint stayed in "Cashel of the Kings" we are not exactly told; but, one thing is certain, he remained there long enough to fully instruct his new converts; to establish his church; and to place over it safe holy pastors to perpetuate his labours.

Our Apostle travelled from Cashel to Co. Limerick, through Kilfeacle, Cullen, New-Pallas, and Kiltzeely; as usual on his journeys preaching and baptizing the inhabitants of the country. Here, as in the other provinces, our glorious Apostle confirmed the truths of his preaching, and new Gospel, by wonders and miracles. St. Patrick remained a considerable time at Kilfeacle; converted all the natives, founded there a church, and left after him four of his disciples to perpetuate his work.\*

\* The Tripartite Life says, "One day he was washing his hands in a ford there, when a tooth fell out of his mouth into the ford. Patrick went up on the hill-side to the north of the ford; and persons went from him to look for the tooth, and forthwith the tooth glistened in the ford like a sun; and Athfiac lai is the

From Kilfeacle our Apostle travelled to Killeely and Cullen. At Cullen the native prince, named Ailill, refused to accept the new doctrine; and St. Patrick wrought a famous miracle, to confirm the truth of his Gospel. The prince, whose son was killed by swine, said to St. Patrick. "I will believe if you resuscitate my son for me." Our Saint accepted the challenge, and restored to life the prince's son. Needless to say, the prince and all the people received the faith and were baptized. St. Evin writes, "The boy was resuscitated through Patrick's prayers. The boy subsequently preached to the hosts and multitudes in Patrick's presence. Ailill and his wife thereupon believed, and all the Ui-Cuanach (the people of Cullen) believed and were baptized in that place."

Our Saint converted all the people round Pallas-Green (then called Grian), and left after him some of his disciples to follow up the work. At his departure the women of the district flocked round him, and with tears and sighs bewailed his leaving them,

name of the ford, and Cillfiacra (the church of the tooth, now Kilfeacle) is the name of the church where Patrick left the tooth, and four of his people, viz., Cuircthe and Loscan, Cailech and Bedan. He bade them farewell and left them a blessing." Cusack, p. 467.

and St. Patrick rewarded their enthusiastic devotion by imparting to them a special benediction. St. Evin writes, "As Patrick was leaving the place, the women of Grian (Pallas-Green) came to bewail his departure from them. Patrick blessed them, and said, that the children they would bear to extern tribes would be illustrious."\*

## SECTION III.

*St. Patrick goes to Limerick. The miraculous cure at Sangul, Patrick's well, Garryowen.*

From Pallas-green our glorious Apostle journeyed towards Limerick. The fame of his sanctity and wondrous deeds went before him; and the inhabitants of Thomond, and North Munster, crossed the Shannon in their

\*At Kildeely the following singular fact is narrated by St. Evin:—

"Patrick was at Fedil (the name of a hill, now the parish of Kildeely). When he was bidding farewell, two of his people remained behind. They were sent for, and found asleep under a bush there. This was told to Patrick. Here their resurrection will be, said he, which is true. Muin and Lomchu were left there by Patrick."

frail boats to see St. Patrick, and receive his instruction. At a place, now called Ferryglass in the barony of Lower Ormond, our Saint instructed and baptized his fervent converts. Delighted with the fervour of the men of Thomond, who crossed the Shannon to welcome him, and get his blessing, our Apostle ascended the hill of Fiunime, looking over the vast district, and lifting his eyes and hands to heaven, blessed the men of North Munster; and foretold the birth, in years to come of the great St. Senan, of Inniscathy.

“The green island in the West,” said the Saint, “in the mouth of the sea, the lamp of the people of God shall come into it, who will be the head of counsel to this district, *i.e.*, Senan of Innis-Cathaigh\* six score years from this.”

Nearer to Limerick, at the well of Sangul, St. Patrick baptized the natives, and among them a prince, the ancestor of Brian Boru, and of the O'Briens of Thomond.

At Sangul our Apostle cured a little boy named Ecchu Baldearg, who had been deformed and sick from his birth. McLenihan in his History of Limerick writes, “The

\*Scattery Island at the mouth of the Shannon near Kilrush.

holy well, stony bed, and altar of St. Patrick are to this day existing in Singland.”

## SECTION IV.

*Our Apostle at St. Patrick's Well, Garryowen, converts the natives of Desmond, enters the Co. Waterford, evangelizes the people of Desi on the banks of the Suir, enters Tipperary a second time, and gives his parting blessing to the men of Munster.*

We next find our Saint at Patrick's Well, near Limerick, in the world-famed district of Garryowen. To this day the *Holy Well* is visited, and venerated by thousands far and near; and the traditions faithfully handed down from sire to son are fresh in the memories of the natives. At this Well St. Patrick baptized the prince of the Desi, and all the people round Limerick. After some thirteen hundred years, to this day the foot-prints of the Apostle of Ireland, the mark of his knees when absorbed in prayer, the bed of stone on which he took a few hours' rest after the labours of the day, are carefully

préserved, and kissed, and venerated by his faithful children. To-day, as in past ages, gentle and simple visit the *Holy Well* to pray, to pay their rounds, to drink of the fountain, and to carry some of the water of the *Blessed Well* to some dear invalid confined to bed at home.

Our Apostle does not appear to have travelled further eastward, but turned his course to south Munster, and converted the natives of Desmond. We next find our Saint evangelizing the country of the Desi, the present county Waterford; and the *Tripartite Life* adds, that with the help of the chieftain Fergar, and the nobles of the place, St. Patrick arranged the ecclesiastical affairs of the whole territory. It is specially mentioned that on the banks of the Suir he was most friendly received, and welcomed by the natives. From the country of the Desi, or Waterford, our Saint enters Tipperary a second time, and we find him preaching and baptizing in Upper and Lower Ormond. In Lower Ormond St. Patrick converted Munach and Meachair, brothers, and powerful chieftains; whilst the eldest brother named Furech, shut his heart against the faith, and lived and died in infidelity.



After seven years spent in Munster, years spent in prayer and penance, in preaching and baptizing, our Saint's work is done; idols are demolished, the whole province is evangelized; on the banks of the Suir and Shannon, the Blackwater and the Lee, the praises of the true God ascend before the Most High. Our glorious Apostle, to do his Master's work elsewhere, took leave of his devoted people, and gave them his blessing. St. Evin thus describes it: "After Patrick had founded cells and churches in Munster, and had ordained persons of every grade, and healed sick persons, and resuscitated the dead, he bade them farewell and left them his blessing."

St. Patrick now slipped away privately, and continued his journey from Ormond toward Leinster; the people having missed him, rose like one man, followed, and overtook our Saint at Brosna, in the King's County. Seeing the heavenly face of the man of God, their holy father and their Apostle, they rent the air with shouts of joy and gladness. Enthusiasm for faith as well as for fatherland was then as now, characteristic of the men of gallant Tipperary. That they may not return home fasting, and faint on the way, a holy bishop of the place, named Frion, entertained the

vast multitude; and St. Patrick gave his parting and last blessing to the men of Tipperary and Munster.

“A blessing on whatever is produced for its farmers.

A blessing on the men of Munster.

A blessing on the land which gives them food.

A blessing on each chief.

A blessing on the men of Munster.

A blessing on their woods.

A blessing on their sloping plains.

A blessing on their glens.

A blessing on their hills.

A blessing of sand beneath their ships.

A blessing of numerous homesteads.

A blessing on their slopes and levels.

A blessing on their slieves and peaks.

A blessing.”

*The martyrdom of St. Odran, St. Patrick's charioteer, the first who shed his blood for the faith in Erin.*

We have no record that St. Patrick ever preached in person in Kerry, Cork, or Clare. It is very probable that he did so; for we know that many most important events are not narrated by his ancient biographers.

One thing, however, is certain, that he evangelized these counties by his fervent and holy companions; and on giving his parting blessing to the men of Munster, after the apostolic labours of seven years, the true and living God was as well known and loved round the glens and hills of Kerry, on the banks of the Lee and Blackwater, as on those of the Suir and the Shannon.

Having given his last blessing to his devoted children, the men of Munster turned their faces southward, and our holy Apostle continued his journey toward the north. In the territory of Hy-Failge, the present county Kildare, the following extraordinary but well authenticated martyrdom occurred. An obstinate Pagan chieftain named Foilge Berrard, had long entertained an intense hatred against our Apostle, and publicly boasted that he would take away his life to avenge the destruction of the great idol Crom Cruagh, in the Plain of Adoration, in the county Cavan. The charioteer, Odran, having heard of the plot, resolved to save the life of his master by the sacrifice of his own. The faithful servant feigning great fatigue, requested our Saint to allow him take some rest in the easy part of the chariot. The permission was no sooner asked than

granted, and Odran entered the carriage, and St. Patrick took the reins. The Pagan chieftain was true to his word, and a well-directed thrust of a lance through the heart won the crown of martyrdom for the charioteer, and the life of the Apostle of Erin was saved. St. Odran was the first and only martyr of the age who shed his blood for the faith. Centuries afterwards, when the Saxon and the heretic held possession of our dear land, the blood of the martyrs flowed in torrents, and purpled the green soil of Erin. It is added that the murderer was soon struck dead by the hand of the Almighty.

We next find the Saint again at Tara; there the following facts are recorded in his life. On the road St. Patrick met a body of workmen, who were employed in felling trees in the forest to make masts for vessels, and whose hands were covered with blood. Having inquired who they were, and the cause of the blood, St. Patrick was informed that they were the slaves of a cruel chieftain named Trian, who, to make the work the more severe, would not allow them to sharpen their axes. Our Saint took pity on the poor men, and blessed their axes, so that they easily performed the task to which they were

bound. St. Patrick attempted but failed to convert the cruel master; and after his departure the slaves were treated worse than before. • Soon afterwards the just judgments of God overtook Trian. One day, driving in his chariot, his horse took fright, and dashed wildly into his own lake, in which he was drowned.

#### SECTION V.

*The extraordinary conversion of the wicked man MacCuil in Ulster, afterwards Bishop and Apostle of the Isle of Man. Graphic narrative from the Book of Armagh.*

We are not told the exact time spent in the neighbourhood of Tara, but the next great event in his life hails from Lecale, in Ulster, the scene of his earliest and successful labours in the holy vineyard of Christ. Here our Saint's zeal was crowned with success.

In this district St. Patrick met MacCuil, or Macculdus, an irreligious man, and the leader of a band of robbers, who were the terror of the neighbourhood. At first this

wicked man proposed to his followers to assassinate our Saint as an impostor and foreigner. Finally they agreed upon another plan to expose our Saint to public ridicule. One of the party feigned sickness, lay prostrate, covered with a cloak, and St. Patrick in derision was called to cure him. "One of our party has been taken ill," they announced to the Saint, "pray sing over him some of your incantations, so that he may be restored to health." Our Saint, knowing their deceits, replied that "no wonder the man was really sick;" and when they came and raised up the coverlet they found the impostor really dead. Struck by this prodigy they cried out: "This is truly a man of God;" and MacCuil and followers were converted and baptized. The perfect convert, MacCuil, anxious to do penance for his sins, inquired what he was to do; and St. Patrick ordered him to quit his native country, taking nothing with him except a coarse habit, and going to sea in a leathern boat, without oar or rudder, to serve God in the first place where the winds would land him. He obeyed, and the wind and frail bark landed him in Isle of Man, where he was most kindly received by two very holy bishops, Conidrus and Rosnubus, who

instructed him in the science of the Saints. The fervent pupil was worthy of his masters, succeeded them as bishop of the Island, and became famous for his austerity and sanctity of life.

We give the narrative in the graphic words of the Book of Armagh :

“ And they tempted the holy man : they tempted him in this way : They placed one of themselves under a cloak, feigning him to be lying in the agony of death, that they might try the Saint by this kind of deception ; so on the arrival of St. Patrick with his disciples, they were having recourse, muttering prayers, and practising witchcraft and incantations. The heathen said to him : ‘ Behold ! one of us is now sick ; approach, therefore, and chant some of the incantations of your sect over him, if perchance he may be healed.’

“ St. Patrick, knowing their stratagems and deceits, with firmness and intrepidity said, ‘ It would be no wonder if he had been sick ;’ and his companions, uncovering the face of him that was feigning sickness, saw that he was now dead ; and the heathens, amazed at such a miracle, said among themselves : ‘ Truly this man is from God ; we have done evil in tempting him.’ But St. Patrick,

having turned to MacCuil, says : ‘ Why did you seek to tempt me ? ’ The cruel tyrant answered : ‘ I am sorry for what I have done ; whatever you command me I will perform ; and now I deliver myself into the power of your supreme God, whom you preach ; ’ and the Saint said : ‘ Believe, therefore, in my God, the Lord Jesus, and confess your sins, and be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. ’ And he was converted in that hour, and believed in the Eternal God, and, moreover, was baptized ; and then MacCuil added this, saying : ‘ I confess to thee, my holy lord, Patrick, that I proposed to kill you ; judge, therefore, how much I owe for so great a crime ! ’ Patrick said : ‘ I am not able to judge, but God will judge. Do you, therefore, depart now, unarmed, to the sea, and pass over quickly from this country, Ireland, taking nothing with you of your substance, except a small, common garment, with which you may be able to cover your body, eating nothing and drinking nothing of the fruit of this island, having a mark of your sins on your head ; and when you reach the sea, bind your feet together with an iron fetter, and cast the key of it into the sea, and set out in a boat of one hide, without



rudder or oar, and wherever the wind and sea shall lead you, be prepared to remain; and to whatever land Divine Providence shall carry you, be prepared to live there and obey the divine commands.'

"And MacCuil said: 'I will do as you have said; but, respecting the dead man, what shall we do?' And Patrick said: 'He shall live and rise again without pain!' And Patrick restored him to life in that hour, and he revived quite sound.

"And MacCuil departed thence very speedily to the sea. The right side of the plain of Inis is reached; having his confidence unshaken in the faith, and binding himself on the shore, casting the key into the sea, according to what was commanded to him, he then embarked in a little boat, and a north wind arose and bore him to the south, and cast him on the island called Evonia, and the men of the island were converted by his doctrine."

## SECTION VI.

*St. Patrick founds the Primatial See of Armagh.*

Our Saint continued his journey northward, and founded a church where the present town of Louth stands, and intended to stay there permanently, as his apostolic labours were now drawing to a close. God's views were otherwise; and hence an Angel appeared to St. Patrick, and told him the place he had chosen was intended for another, and to proceed northward to Macha, afterwards called Armagh. The Saint's reply was worthy of the Apostle: "Deo gratias ago," "I give thanks to God," and instantly continued his journey. Our great Apostle rested for some time on a hill, since called after his name, Ard-Patrick, and there erected a church. Farther north St. Patrick founded the church of Clogher, and placed over it as bishop St. Carthen or Mac-Carthen; and finally arrived at his heavenly appointed destination, Armagh, the place mentioned to him by the Angel.

At the bidding of an Angel St. Patrick

asked the site of a church from Daire, who is styled by St. Evin "a prosperous and venerable person." Daire inquired what place our Saint had chosen, and St. Patrick asked for the hill north of the city. This was refused, and a site on the plain was granted, and which St. Patrick was obliged to accept. Daire afterwards had reason to regret to have refused the request of the man of God, for, seized with a mortal sickness, he was on the point of death. His wife implored the prayers of the Apostle for the recovery of her dying husband. St. Patrick blessed some water which he sent her, and she sprinkled the holy water over her husband, who was immediately restored to perfect health. Needless to say that the wished-for site with other precious gifts were granted to St. Patrick.

Again we quote from the Book of Ar-magh :

"Then Daire came after these things to honour St. Patrick, bringing with him a wonderful brazen cauldron, from beyond seas, which held three firkins. And Daire said unto the saint: 'Lo, this cauldron is thine.' And St. Patrick said: '*Gratzacham.*' Then Daire returned to his own home and said: 'The man is a fool, for he said nothing

good for a wonderful cauldron of three firkins, except '*Gratzacham*.' Then Daire added, and said to his servants: 'Go and bring us back our cauldron.' They went, and said unto Patrick: 'We must take away the cauldron. Nevertheless, this time also St. Patrick said: '*Gratzacham*, take it.' So they took it. Then Daire asked his people, saying: 'What said the Christian when ye took away the cauldron?' But they answered: 'He said *Gratzacham* again.' Daire answered and said: '*Gratzacham* when I give, *Gratzacham* when I take away. His saying is so good that with those *Gratzachams* his cauldron shall be brought back to him.' And Daire himself went this time and brought back the cauldron to St. Patrick, saying to him: 'Thy cauldron shall remain with thee; for thou art a steady and imperturbable man. Moreover, also, that portion of land which thou didst desire before, I now give thee as fully as I have it, and dwell thou there.' And this is the city which is now named Arddmachæ. And St. Patrick and Daire both went forth to view the wonderful and well-pleasing gift of the oblation, and they went up to that height of land, and they found there a roe with her little fawn, which was lying in the place where the altar of

the northern church in Arddmachæ now is, and the companions of Patrick wished to catch the fawn and kill it. But the Saint would not, nor did he permit it; nay, he himself took up the fawn, carrying it on his shoulders; and the roe, like a very pet lamb, followed him until he had laid down the fawn in another field, situated at the north side of Arddmachæ, where to this day, as the learned say, some signs of the miracle still remain."

According to topographers, the new Catholic cathedral is built upon the hill where St. Patrick laid down the fawn, our Saint likely foreseeing the day when the old site and church would be desecrated, and an heretical temple erected upon the spot where he himself laid the foundation of the altar of the living God.

## SECTION VII.

*St. Patrick's Epistle to Coroticus. He excommunicates the murderer.*

Coroticus was a Welsh prince, a Christian only in name, but a cruel tyrant and a pirate. When St. Patrick had baptized and

confirmed a vast multitude, whilst, as the Saint says: "The very chrism was shining on the brows of the white-robed neophytes," Coroticus, with an armed band, suddenly landed on the coast, attacked the unarmed Christians, put many of them to the sword, many of the others were carried into captivity, and sold as slaves to pagans, or apostate Picts and Scots. Our Saint's heart was wrung with anguish at this cruel and wicked deed; he himself had long experience of the horrors of captivity; he also feared the apostasy of some of his children in a pagan land. St. Patrick immediately dispatched a priest, attended by several clerics, with a letter to Coroticus, gently reminding the prince of the heinousness of his sinful deed, inviting him to repentance, and requesting the immediate liberation of the captive slaves. The letter and messengers were treated with scorn and mockery. Then St. Patrick wrote his famous Epistle or Circular Letter, in which he denounces and excommunicates the wicked prince.

This remarkable Epistle, which is admitted by all to be genuine, gives a vivid picture of the burning zeal, like St. Paul's, as well as the tender heart of our illustrious Apostle. The humility of our Saint shines

forth in the very first line. It begins as follows :

“ I, Patrick, a sinner and unlearned, have been appointed a bishop in Ireland, and from God I have received that which I am. I dwell among strangers as a proselyte and a fugitive for the love of God. He is my witness that it is so. It is not my wish to utter such hard and stern words, but I am urged by zeal for God and the truth of Christ, who has raised me up for the love of my neighbours and children, for whom I have abandoned my country and parents, and would give my soul unto death, if I were worthy. I have vowed to my God to teach these people, though I should be despised by them, to whom I have written with my own hand to be given to the soldiers, to be sent by Coroticus—I do not say to my fellow-citizen, nor to the fellow-citizen of pious Romans—but to the fellow-citizen of the devils, on account of their evil deed, and hostile acts. They live in death, companions of apostate Scots and Picts, bloodthirsty men, ever ready to redden themselves with the blood of innocent Christians, numbers of whom I have begotten to God, and confirmed in Christ.”

The Saint continues : “ On the day follow-

ing that in which they were clothed in white, and the Chrism shining on their brows, they were cruelly cut to pieces and slain with the sword by the above-named. I sent a letter by a holy priest, whom I have taught from his infancy, with some other clerics, begging that they would restore the baptized captives, and some of the plunder; but they laughed at them." Further on, St. Patrick excommunicates Coroticus.

"Wherefore, be it known to every man who fears God, that they are separated from me, and from Christ my God, from whom I am Ambassador, these patricides, these fratricides, and ravening wolves, who devour the people of the Lord as if they were beasts . . . I beseech you, therefore, who are the holy ones of God and humble of heart, that you will not be flattered by them; that you will neither eat nor drink with them, nor receive their alm, until they do penance with many tears, and liberate the Servants of God, and the baptized maidens of Christ, for whom He was crucified and died."

Our Saint declares his love for the Irish nation. "Did I come to Ireland according to God, or according to the flesh? . . . I was led by the Spirit of God . . . Have I not a pious mercy towards that nation that for-



merly took me captive? I am a servant to Christ unto a foreign people for the ineffable glory of eternal life, which is Christ Jesus my Lord."

In the end of this most beautiful Epistle, our Saint breaks forth in the most pathetic strain of lamentations over his beloved slain children :

"What shall I do, O Lord . . . Lo, thy sheep are torn around me, and plundered by the above-mentioned robbers, aided by the soldiers of Coroticus; the betrayers of Christians into the hands of the Picts and Scots are far from the charity of God. Ravening wolves have scattered the flock of the Lord, which, with the greatest diligence, was increasing in Ireland; the sons of the Irish, and the daughters of kings, who are monks and virgins of Christ, are too many to enumerate. Therefore, the oppression of the great is not pleasing to thee now, and never shall be.

"It is the custom of the Christians of Rome and Gaul to send holy men to the Franks and other nations, with much gold, to redeem baptized captives. You, who slay them, and sell them to foreign nations ignorant of God, deliver the members of Christ, as it were, into a den of wolves. What hope have

you in God? Whoever agrees with you, or commands you, God will judge him. I know not what I can say, or what I can speak more of the departed sons of God, slain cruelly by the sword. It is written: 'Weep with them that weep.' And again: 'If one member suffers anything, all the members suffer with it.' Therefore, the Church laments and bewails her sons and daughters, not slain by sword, but sent away to distant countries, where sin is more shameless and abounds. There, free-born Christian men are sold and enslaved amongst the wicked, abandoned, and apostate Picts.

"Therefore, I cry out with grief and sorrow: 'O beautiful and well-beloved brethren and children, whom I have brought forth in Christ in such multitudes, what shall I do for you? I am not worthy before God or man to come to your assistance. The wicked have prevailed over us. We have become outcasts . . . I grieve, O my beloved ones. But, on the other hand, I congratulate myself I have not laboured for nothing—my journey has not been in vain. This horrible and amazing crime has been permitted to take place. Thanks be to God, ye who have believed and have been baptized, have gone from earth to paradise. Certainly ye have

begun to migrate where there is no night, nor death, nor sorrow, but ye shall exult, like young bulls loosed from their bonds, and tread down the wicked under your feet as dust.

“Truly you shall reign with the Apostles, and Prophets, and Martyrs, and obtain the eternal kingdom, as he hath testified, saying : *They shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.* Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and murderers, and liars, and perjurers, and they shall have their part in the everlasting lake of fire. Nor does the Apostle say without reason : ‘If the just are scarcely saved, where shall the sinner, the impious, and the transgressor of the law appear?’ Where will Coroticus and his wicked rebels against Christ find themselves when they shall see rewards distributed amongst the baptized women? What will he think of his miserable kingdom, which shall pass away in a moment, like clouds or smoke which are dispersed by the wind? So shall deceitful sinners perish before the face of the Lord, and the just shall feast with great confidence with Christ, and judge the nations, and rule over unjust kings, for ever and ever. Amen.

“I testify before God and his Angels that it shall be so, as He hath intimated to my ignorance. These are not my words that I have set forth in Latin, but those of God and the Prophets and Apostles, who never lied : *He that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned.*

“God hath said it. I entreat whosoever is a servant of God, that he be a willing bearer of this letter, that he be not drawn aside by any one, but that he shall read it before all the people in the presence of Coroticus himself, that if God inspire them, they may some time return to God and repent though late, that they may liberate the baptized captives, and repent for their homicides of the Lord’s brethren ; so that they may deserve of God to live and to be whole here and hereafter. The peace of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.”

The Irish reader will doubtless excuse the above long extracts from the famous Epistle. They portray in vivid colours the character of our great Apostle—his burning zeal, his fervent charity, his tender heart. It is also interesting to read a letter penned near fifteen hundred years ago by the Apostle of Ireland.

Like Pharaoh of old, the heart of the cruel

tyrant, Coroticus, was only hardened by the letter of St. Patrick. Constant tradition, and the many ancient historians, narrate the singular fate that befell him. One day, in the presence of his people, and in the midst of his attendants, he was changed into a wolf, and vanished out of sight. "This fact," writes Jocelyn, "no one can fairly discredit, who reads the narrative of the wife of Lot turned into a pillar of salt, and that of King Nabuchodonosor."

Where, and when, the above massacre and captivity of the Christians took place, we know not for certain. Dr. Lanigan is of opinion that the fact happened "in some maritime and south-east part of Munster, as that tract lay very convenient for an expedition against the Irish coast from either south Wales or Cornwall, in one or other of which Coroticus' principality was in all likelihood situated . . . and about the year 450.\*"

Here we may make an important remark. Many modern writers, especially Protestant, call into doubt, and deny many events in the life of our great Saint, upon the grounds, that the date of the events, and place where

\* *Ecc. History*, p. 294.

they occurred, are not recorded by the old chroniclers. This is most unjust and uncritical, the result of prejudice; for the above Epistle is admitted by all to be genuine, it contains one of the most remarkable and important events in the life of our Saint, yet, neither St. Patrick in the Epistle itself, nor any of his contemporaries tell us where the massacre took place, or the date of the event.

#### SECTION VIII.

##### *St. Patrick's Confession.*

Two authentic documents from the pen of St. Patrick have been transmitted to posterity. All authors of any name, whether at home or abroad, whether Protestant or Catholic, have admitted the genuineness of the "Epistle to Coroticus," and the "Confession of St. Patrick"—two works written by the Saint himself. These two genuine documents throw a flood of light on the life and character of our great Saint. A spirit of the most profound humility, utter self-debasement, and a spirit of the most ardent love for God and his neighbour, breathes through

every page. In our last section we have given an analysis, and inserted long passages from the famous Epistle to Coroticus. The Confession is a far more important document, and we regret that space does not permit us to insert it in full.

The Confession was written in Armagh, some time before our Saint's death. His evident object was to return public thanks to the Almighty for his wonderful mercies; and to confirm his people in the faith, by declaring before the whole world, that the conversion of the Irish nation was not his work, or the work of man, but that of God, who deigned to make use of a weak, sinful instrument for his own mighty purposes, that he may say with St. Paul, "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to thy name give glory." (Ps. cxiii. 3.) The Confession begins as follows:—

"I, Patrick, a sinner, the rudest and least of all the faithful, and contemptible to very many, had for my father, Calpurnius, a deacon, the son of Potitius, a priest, who lived in Bannavem Taberniæ, for he had a small country house close by, where I was taken captive when I was nearly sixteen years of age."

In his humility he attributes his captivity

to his sins. "I knew not," continues the Saint, "the true God, and I was brought captive to Ireland with many thousand men, as we deserved; for we had forsaken God, and had not kept His Commandments, and were disobedient to our priests who admonished us for our salvation."

In the Confession, he constantly mentions his ignorance, his sins, and unworthiness, his sacred mission, and thanks and praises God for the fruit and success of his labours.

We are not to expect in the Confession a full history of our Saint's life, or a record of the stupendous miracles he wrought; yet, now and again, the simple narrative lets in a flood of light on the exalted sanctity of our Apostle. Let us hear how the captive youth spent his days and nights on the hills of Antrim.

"After I had come to Ireland," writes our Saint, "I was daily tending sheep, and I prayed frequently during the day, and the love of God, and his faith and fear increased in me more and more, and the spirit was stirred; so that in a single day, I said as many as a hundred prayers, and in the night nearly the same; so that I remained in the woods and on the mountains; even before dawn I was roused to prayer, in



snow, and ice, and rain, and I felt no injury from it, nor was there any slothfulness in me, as I see now, because the spirit was fervent in me."

After a touching narrative of his escape from captivity, and his happiness among his friends in his native home, he tells us of God's call to evangelize the Irish nation.

"I saw in the bosom of the night," he writes, "a man who appeared to come from Ireland; whose name was Victoricus, and he had innumerable letters with him, one which he gave to me, and I read the beginning of the letter, containing the voice of the Irish: and as I read aloud the beginning of the letter, I thought I heard in my mind the voices of those who were in the wood of Fochlut, which borders on the Western sea; and they cried out: "We entreat thee, holy youth, to come and walk among us;" and my heart was greatly touched, so that I could read no more, and so I woke. Thanks be to God, that after many years the Lord granted them their desires."

How beautifully he tells the success of his labours. "Wherefore, behold, how in Ireland they, who never had the knowledge of God, and hitherto worshipped unclean idols, have lately become the people of the Lord, and

are called the sons of God. The sons of the Scotti and the daughters of princes are seen to be monks and virgins of Christ."

Then follows the profession of a holy nun.

"And there was," writes the Saint, "one blessed Irish maiden of adult age, noble, and very beautiful, whom I baptized, and after a few days she came to us for a reason, and gave us to understand that she had received a command from God, and was informed that she was to become a virgin of Christ, and to draw near to God. Thanks be to God, six days after this she was most excellently and eagerly entered on this state of life, which all the virgins of God now adopt, even against the will of their parents, even enduring reproaches and persecution from them, and notwithstanding they increase in number; and as for those who are born again in this way, we know not their number . . . the Lord has given grace to many of my handmaids, for they zealously imitate him as far as they are able.

"The sons of the Irish, and the daughters of kings who are monks and virgins of Christ, are too many to enumerate."

Thus we see, that in the days of St. Patrick, as to-day, the noble, the beautiful, and the fair daughters of Erin consecrated their

souls and bodies in the cloister to the love of Jesus Christ, their Saviour and their God.

In his profound humility he frequently declares his sins, ignorance, and unworthiness. One place he says, "I give unceasing thanks to my God who preserved me faithful." Again: "I am truly debtor to God who has given me so much grace that many people should be born again to God through me . . . Therefore, I ought give thanks to God without ceasing, who often pardoned my uncalled-for folly and negligence . . . the Lord had compassion on me among thousands and thousands . . . Truly, I am a poor, miserable creature."

Our Saint concludes his Confession thus:

"Behold, I now commend my soul to my most faithful God, whose mission I perform, notwithstanding my unworthiness; but because He does not accept persons, and has chosen me for this office to be one of the least of His ministers. What shall I render to Him for the things He hath rendered to me? But what shall I say or promise to my Lord? . . . Behold, again and again I shall briefly declare the words of my Confession. I testify in truth and in joy of heart before God and his holy Angels, that

I never had any occasion, except the Gospel and its promises for returning to that people from whom I had before with difficulty escaped.

“But I beseech those who believe in and fear God, whosoever may condescend to look into or receive this writing which Patrick, the ignorant sinner, has written in Ireland, that no one may ever say if I have ever done or demonstrated anything, however little, that it was my ignorance. But do you judge, and let it be firmly believed, it was the gift of God. And this is my Confession before I die.”

“Thus far is what Patrick wrote with his own hand: he was translated to heaven on the seventeenth of March.”

#### SECTION IX.

*The death of St. Patrick, Apostle of Ireland;  
His last moments; by St. Evin.*

Our glorious Apostle spent the last years of his holy life in solitude, prayer, and penance, either at Saul or Armagh. Finding his last days drawing near, he left Saul, and set out for Armagh, where he wished to

die, and his remains to rest among the people of that town for whom he entertained a special love and affection. On his way, God's angel, Victor, met our Saint, and informed him that God's will was, that he should not die at Armagh, but at Saul, the scene of his first victory over paganism; and reminded him of his promise to the sons of Dichu, his first fervent converts, that he would breathe forth his last in their midst. We are told our Saint was troubled by the message; for, as we have said, he had a special love for Armagh, and wished his remains to rest in the primatial See which he had formed; yet, then, as during his whole life, he instantly obeyed the voice of the Angel Victor, and returned to Saul.

Our Apostle received holy Viaticum, or the last Holy Communion for the dying, from the hands of the saintly bishop, Tassach.

“The kingly bishop, Tassach,  
Who administered, on his arrival,  
The Body of Christ, the truly powerful King,  
And the Communion to Patrick.” \*

“Precious in the sight of God is the death of his Saints.” How precious and holy before heaven was the death, the eternal repose

\* Felire, O'Curry; Lectures, p. 370.

of our beloved Apostle, which was now near approaching? The work of his Divine Master has been done; a whole nation has been drawn into the fold of the Catholic Church. Through the length and breadth of the land the cross and the altar have taken the place of the idols of idolatry; and from hill and dale, the praises of the true God ascend before the Most High. The country is studded over with Churches; holy bishops and priests, worthy of the great Apostle, watch over the faith and morals of the new, fervent converts. Monasteries and convents spring up like magic; the young, the noble, the beautiful, and the fair, consecrate their souls and bodies to their Divine Spouse, Jesus Christ; and for the first time through all Erin over, the praises of the true God are sung by virgin lips.

“The sons of the Irish,” writes our Saint, “and the daughters of kings, who are monks and virgins of Christ are too many to enumerate.”

It is now time for our Saint to receive his reward, and to fly to the bosom of that God whom he so long and faithfully served. What a precious offering St. Patrick had to offer to his Divine Maker at the close of his life. Not only a long life of faith, prayer,

penance, and all the other graces and virtues that go to adorn a soul of a great Saint and a great Apostle; but he carries in his hand and lays at the feet of his Saviour, the faith and virtues of a whole nation, won by his sole labours to the fold of Jesus Christ.

God sometimes gives to his great Servants while on earth, a foretaste of the joys of heaven. Hence, we are not surprised that extraordinary, heavenly signs and prodigies are recorded to have taken place at the death of our Saint. On the 17th of March, in the year 493, at the age of 120, amid the sweet songs of the Angels, and a supernatural light from heaven, St. Patrick, the Apostle of Ireland, breathed forth his pure soul into the hands of his Creator.\*

The *Tripartite Life*, written by St. Evin, narrates the last moments of our Saint as follows:—

“A just man, indeed, was this man; with purity of nature, like the Patriarchs; a true pilgrim, like Abraham; gentle and forgiving, like Moses; a praiseworthy Psalm-

\* This date has the sanction of the Annals of Ulster, the Four Masters, Ware, Colgan, Ussher, Jocelyn, Morris, Todd, Cave, O’Flaherty, *Tripartite Life*, Cusack, &c.

ist, like David; an emulator of wisdom, like Solomon; a chosen vessel for proclaiming truth, like the Apostle Paul; a man full of grace and the knowledge of the Holy Ghost, like the beloved John; a fair flower-garden to children of grace; a fruitful vine-branch; a sparkling fire, with force and warmth of heat to the sons of life, for instituting and illustrating charity; a lion in strength and power; a dove in gentleness and humility; a serpent in wisdom, and cunning to do good; gentle, humble, merciful to the sons of life; dark, ungentle towards the sons of death; a servant of labour and service of Christ; a king in dignity and power for binding and loosening, for liberating and convicting, for killing and giving life.

“After these great miracles, therefore, *i.e.*, after resuscitating the dead; after healing lepers, and the blind, and the deaf, and the lame, and all the diseases; after ordaining bishops, and priests, and deacons, and people of all orders in the Church; after baptizing them; after founding churches and monasteries; after destroying idols, and images, and druidical arts—the hour of death of St. Patrick approached. He received the Body of Christ from Bishop Tassach, according to the advice of the angel Victor. He resigned



his spirit afterwards to heaven, in the one hundred and twentieth year of his age. His body is here still in the earth, with honour and reverence. Though great his honour here, greater honour will be to him in the Day of Judgment, when judgment will be given on the fruits of his teaching, like every great Apostle; in the union of the Apostles and Disciples of Jesus; in the union of the nine orders of Angels, which cannot be surpassed; in the union of the Divinity and humility of the Son of God; in the union of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I beseech mercy through the intercession of Patrick. May we all arrive at that union; may we enjoy it for ever and ever. Amen."

## SECTION X.

*St. Patrick was buried in Downpatrick; the prodigy at the Interment.*

The news of the death of our great Saint soon spread through the length and breadth of the land; holy bishops and priests flocked from all parts to celebrate the Sacred Mysteries over the remains of their Apostle. The funeral obsequies lasted for twelve

whole days, during which the body, wrapped in a shroud woven by the fingers of St. Brigid, exhaled a sweet fragrance. A bright light from heaven shone over the spot, and the voices of Angels were heard, singing day and night the praises of the Apostle of Ireland.

St. Evin writes: "For a space of twelve nights, that is, whilst the divines were waking him with hymns, psalms and canticles, there was no night, but angelic light . . . . In the first night the angels of the Lord of the elements were watching Patrick's body with spiritual chants. The fragrant odours of divine grace which issued from his holy body, and the music of the angels gave tranquillity and joy to the chief clerics, and men of Erin who were watching his body."

The time came when the sacred body of our Saint was to be consigned to its mother's earth. And now a fierce dispute arose between the people of Armagh, whom he loved, and the Ulidians, among whom he died, as to who should possess the sacred relics of the Apostle. The Providence of God intervened; and the following prodigy decided the contest. It was agreed to place the body of the Saint on a funeral car, drawn by two oxen; and whatever road the oxen would

take, without guide or director, was to be taken as an indication of the Will of Heaven. The men of Armagh faithfully followed what appeared to them the real car; but when approaching their city, the oxen and car disappeared, and to their utter astonishment, they discovered that they followed a phantom and not a reality. The Ulidians carried away the real body of the Saint, and according to the instruction of the Angel Victor, consigned it to its last resting-place at Downpatrick, amidst the sons of Dichu, his first faithful and fervent converts.

## SECTION XI.

### *A glance at the Success and Fruit of his Apostolic Labours.*

Long is the catalogue of great Apostles and wondrous Saints in the history of the Catholic Church. Every country in Europe can glory in her Martyrs, her Confessors, her Saints and Apostle. In every Christian country the Church is the prolific mother of exalted sanctity and heroic deed. But read over the catalogue, and where will you find an equal to our peerless and beloved Apostle St. Patrick?

From his captivity to his death, his whole long life was one series of living faith and confidence in God; of burning love for his Maker and the salvation of souls; of the highest spirit of prayer, penance, and austerities; and, finally, our Saint was endowed by God with the gift of working the most stupendous miracles, for the conversion of the heathen. Go over the catalogue of Apostles, and you won't find one who, like our beloved St. Patrick, by his sole work brought into the fold of Jesus Christ a whole country; not only converted to Christianity the people of a whole nation, but also to the practices of the evangelical counsels in the highest degree; so much so that his nation got, and has retained ever since, the proud and unique appellation of "*Island of Saints.*"

Later on we will dwell for some length on the fruits of his labours, here let us cast a passing glance at them.

After the death of our Apostle, convents for both sexes, and famous schools of learning rose up like magic, and covered the land; and so great was the fame of the schools and scholars of Erin, that students from every country in Europe flocked in crowds to her shores, to drink at the fountain of knowledge: and were received with that

welcome and hospitality, which has ever been characteristic of the Irish people.

Nor was sanctity and learning confined to the shores of Erin alone. The missionary spirit of St. Patrick animated his children; hence, during the sixth and seventh centuries, swarms of apostolic men, like bees, issued from famous monasteries, and spread the light of the Gospel, not only in England and Scotland, but in every country on the Continent. Irish scholars taught in the famous universities on the Continent; Irish Apostles evangelized the hordes of barbarians that swept off the face of Europe the Roman Empire with all its civilization; and Irish martyrs fertilized with their blood the garden of the Church. This is only one of the many fruits of the labours of our beloved Apostle St. Patrick.

Other countries, too, were once fervent Christians, but in the hour of trial apostatized and lost the old faith. At the bidding of a cruel tyrant England cast off the faith like a garment; Scotland, once so faithful, is no longer Catholic; Germany as a nation revolted against the Church; Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, followed suit; France offered incense to the goddess of reason; and Italy frequently exiled and imprisoned the

Vicar of Christ ; Ireland stands alone in the history of the Church, as a nation, ever faithful to the teaching of St. Patrick, her first Apostle.

True, St. Patrick converted to Christianity the whole Irish, without the shedding of one drop of martyr's blood with one solitary exception. This fact is unique in the history of the Catholic Church. True, Ireland had her "*Golden Age*," when in peace and happiness she cultivated literature, and practised the science of the Saints. By God's Providence the faith of Erin was put to the test, and tried in the crucible. The foe and the stranger visited the peaceful shores of Erin ; might did conquer right ; and the country was laid waste by fire and sword. The cloisters, the peaceful homes of learning and prayer, were razed to the ground ; and the holy inmates put to the sword, or exiled to a foreign land. No church or altar was left in the land ; the holy Sacrifice was offered at night, or at dawn of day, in the bog or on the mountain ; a rude stone serving as an altar, and the canopy the vast expanse of the heavens. Some priests found shelter in the homes of their faithful flock ; but the great majority were put to the sword or exiled. The same price was laid upon the

head of a wolf or friar. Nor was the storm a passing one; for centuries it raged, and swept over the land with increased fury. All the power, wealth, and perfidious ingenuity of a mighty empire were wielded to stamp out the Catholic religion. Property, life, country, fair fame—all were lost—but the faith of St. Patrick, like the shamrock, indigenous to the soil of Erin, alone survived the universal devastation.

When the storm began to abate; and when the thick cloud of persecution began to part; and a ray shone upon the land; before the amazed gaze of all Europe appears the Church of St. Patrick, like a lovely virgin, fatigued after the long fight; yet fair and beautiful, without spot or wrinkle, and her brow wreathed with the laurels of ten thousand victories.

Persecution and the sword failed to root out the faith; another and perhaps heavier trial was in store for the Church of Erin. A famine, unparalleled in the history of the world, covered the land. From the centre to the sea, from shore to shore, people in thousands are dying of starvation. The enemy now rejoiced, and believed the time had come to bribe and rob the people of their faith. Abundance was landed on the coasts;

but apostasy was the price demanded for the necessaries of life. With lips quivering in the throes of death and famine, the brave race dashed from their mouths the poisoned cup of heresy, and nobly died in the faith of their fathers.

God, so to speak, was pleased with the fidelity of his people, and peace soon begins to smile upon the land. And what does history narrate? Now, as in the "*Golden Age*" of the Irish Church, schools, churches, monasteries, and convents spring up like magic, and cover the face of the land; and again, as of yore, the praises of the true God, of Jesus, Mary, and St. Patrick, from hill and vale ascend to heaven from virgin lips. The missionary spirit of St. Patrick has ever animated his children; and in the last half century the exiles of Erin have planted the cross, and built up flourishing churches in England and Scotland, in America, Canada, and Australia.

We have seen that on the famous mountain of Croagh Patrick, God confided to our saint the charge and guardianship of the faith of the Irish race till the "day of doom." St. Patrick was faithful to his trust; and hence, under God, we attribute the faith and fidelity of the Irish race to the prayers



of our great and illustrious Apostle. In the fiercest hour of persecution, in the darkest midnight of the storm, before the throne of the Almighty knelt St. Patrick, surrounded by St. Brigid the "Mary of Erin," and a host of countless Irish Saints, imploring courage and constancy for his beloved children.

The prayers were heard, the grace was granted, St. Patrick triumphed, the victory was won; and to these prayers under God, we attribute that during fifteen hundred years of weal and woe, the Irish race at home and abroad, have professed, and to-day do profess, the same faith which St. Patrick preached to the kings at Tara; the faith as pure and holy as it fell from the Divine lips of Jesus Christ our Blessed Saviour.

#### PIOUS REFLECTIONS.

My soul! how can we thank the Almighty as we ought, and as he deserves, for the greatest of all blessings, the true faith? Eternity is too short for every soul to return infinite thanks to God for the true faith of St. Patrick. God planted the faith; and nothing less than the right hand of God could have preserved that faith pure and holy during centuries of unparelled persecu-

tions. For both ends the instrument chosen by God was our great and beloved St. Patrick. Our Apostle was true to the call of God, and so corresponded with divine grace, and rose to those eminent heights of sanctity, and to that intimate union and friendship of heaven, that he obtained from the Almighty all the favours he asked. During his whole life, but especially on the hill of Croagh Patrick, our Saint stormed heaven for two favours; viz., the conversion of the whole Irish race, and their perseverance in the faith till the "day of doom." Both were granted. Hence, my soul, infinite thanks at every moment, and for all eternity, from every creature, to the Almighty; and praised be our glorious and beloved Apostle for the faith of thy fathers, and thine own.

#### RESOLUTIONS.

Glancing round the world and seeing the almost countless millions of pagans, Mahometans, infidels, heretics, and schismatics; and knowing that one of the greatest gifts of heaven is the true faith of the Catholic Church; I resolve, first, frequently to thank God, and under God St. Patrick for the true faith of the Irish race, and their fidelity to it; and secondly, to manifest the warmest

love and deepest reverence for every thing concerning holy faith, viz., the Sacrifice of the Altar and Sacraments of the Church, prayer, churches, altars, devotions, ceremonies, God's consecrated ministers, nuns, and monks.

## PRAYERS.

To God Almighty; to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three Persons in one God; to Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, be infinite thanks, praise, and glory from every creature, and at every moment, for all eternity, for the faith and fidelity of the Irish race at home and abroad. May God, in his infinite mercy, guard and preserve among the same people the same faith pure and holy to the day of judgment.

Thanks and praise from every Irish heart to our great and glorious Apostle, St. Patrick, through whom Ireland received the faith, and through whose prayers, under God, she has retained it. May St. Patrick, St. Brigid, styled the "Mary of Erin," and the host of countless Irish Saints before the throne of God, pray for the faith and purity of the sons and daughters of Erin.

## PRAYER TO ST. PATRICK.

O Glorious St. Patrick, Apostle of Ireland! in behalf of thy children at home and abroad, thank the Almighty for the faith of the Irish race; and for the heroic fidelity of our fathers. O blessed Saint! pray for thy children at home, and pray for the exiles beyond the seas. O Sweet Saint! pray that our children may be faithful to the faith till death; and pray that the sanctity of their lives may be in keeping with their holy faith. Amen.

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## CHAPTER V.

*The heroic virtues of St. Patrick.*

“WONDERFUL is God in his saints” (Ps. lxxvii. 36). All the virtues, theological and moral, in their fulness, adorn and beautify the soul of every saint. As in every well-preserved garden, the admiring eye of the beholder is won by some choice flower, exhaling round about a sweet fragrance; as in the heavens, star excels star in brilliancy and beauty; so God, from time to time, raises up in His

Church mighty Saints, and places them, so to speak, aloft on a pinnacle, that the lustre of their sanctity and good works may shine upon His people in all ages. Such a Saint is the Apostle of Ireland, whose fame will live, not only amid the Irish race at home and abroad, but throughout the Catholic Church to the day of judgment.

In the supernatural, as well as in the physical order, the infinite wisdom of God suits the means to the end. God gives grace and sanctity to His servants to fulfil the mission and office for which they are destined by heaven. The higher the mission, the greater the work, in the same proportion is the abundance of God's graces to His servants. St. Patrick's heavenly mission was to convert from paganism to the most exact observances of the Gospel, a whole nation; and by his prayers, let us add, to confirm for ever in the faith the Irish race; hence all the graces of the Apostolate, in their full plenitude were showered upon the soul of our glorious Apostle. Every virtue was his, yet some shone out more conspicuously than others. Of these we shall mention only a few; first, his faith and confidence in God; secondly, his eminent spirit of prayer; thirdly, his spirit of penance, and awful austerities; and

lastly, his fiery, burning zeal, like St. Paul's, for the spread of the Gospel and the salvation of souls.

## SECTION I.

### *St. Patrick's faith and confidence in God.*

“Faith,” writes St. Paul, “is the substance of things to be hoped for, and the evidence of things that appear not” (*Heb.* xi. 1). Faith is one of the three theological virtues, because it has God and His divine truths as its immediate object. Faith is the foundation of all religion and our salvation. Faith is absolutely necessary for the salvation of every adult who has come to the use of reason. The inspired text is clear upon the point. The Gospel says, “Now, this is eternal life; that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent” (*John*, xvii. 3). “Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be condemned” (*Mark*, xvi. 16). “Without faith,” says St. Paul, “it is impossible to please God. For he that

cometh to God must believe that he is, and is a rewarder to them that seek Him" (*Heb.* xi. 6). And again, "Man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ; we also believe in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified" (*Gal.* ii. 16). The Council of Trent defines, "Faith is the beginning of human salvation, the foundation and root of all justification, without which it is impossible to please God, and to come into the fellowship of His sons" (*Sess.* vi. *can.* viii.)

Faith is most pleasing to the Almighty; because by faith, proud man submits his intellect and will to God, and believes and adores what he can neither see nor understand. Faith is most pleasing to God; because by faith we pay supreme homage to His infallible authority, believing on His unerring word divine mysteries, which the human mind cannot conceive.

This holy faith, so essential for salvation, and so pleasing to God, is dearer to every Christian than life. When we look round the world, and see the countless millions living and dying in heresy, schism, and

idolatry, we ought constantly thank the providence of God for being members of the Holy Catholic Church.

That St. Patrick was a man of faith, and lived by faith, in the most eminent degree, there is no doubt; and of this we are not now about to write. Born of Christian parents, our Saint drank in the faith with his mother's milk, nor during his life have we any authority for believing that he had more trials or temptation against faith than any ordinary Christian. Confidence in God is one of the prominent virtues in the life of St. Patrick.

## SECTION II.

### *St. Patrick's confidence in God.*

In both the Old and New Testament, the Almighty has given the most extraordinary promises of help to all who trust and confide in Him.

Let us quote a few out the many :

In the Old Testament, God says, "Cry to me, and I will hear thee" (*Ter.* xxxiii. 3); "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee" (*Ps.* xlix. 15); "Turn to me, and I will turn to thee, saith the Lord of



Hosts" (*Zac.* i. 3); "For thou, O Lord, art sweet and mild, and plentuous in mercy to all that call upon thee" (*Ps.* lxxxv. 5).

In the New Testament, our Blessed Redeemer says, "Ask and it shall be given to you, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened" (*Matt.* vii. 7). "Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, that I will do: that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (*John*, xiv. 13). One text more, "Amen, amen I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it to you. Hitherto you have not asked anything in my name. Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full" (*John*, xvi. 23). All things, whatsoever you ask when you pray, believe that you shall receive, and it shall come unto you.

During the many years in the schools, famous for learning and sanctity, and under the great Masters, versed in the science of the Saints, the above promises sank deep into the soul of St. Patrick; and became part, so to speak, of his daily life. Hence, during his Apostolic life, in all his great and holy works, we find our Saint trusting,

hoping, and obtaining all things from God alone. During the six years of his captivity, serving a cruel master, and watching his flock on the mountains of Antrim, the holy youth's confidence in God was unshaken. When the "voice" told him to return to "his own country," and that the "ship was ready," and when he had travelled southward two hundred miles, and the captain refused to take him on board, saying, "By no means attempt to come to us," our young Saint never doubted God's providence. He soon got his reward; for the captain said to him, "Come, we receive thee in good faith."

When challenged by the pagan priests and magicians to a trial of strength in working prodigies, before kings, princes, and the vast unbelieving multitude, on the hill of Tara in Royal Meath; on the plain of Adoration in Cavan; in the capital of Connaught; in every other field of his Apostolic labours, St. Patrick's faith and confidence in God rose equal to every occasion. The minister of the true God took up the challenge, and like the Prophet of old, brought shame and confusion upon the magicians. The kings and princes, priests and bards, with the vast multitude, embraced the Gospel of Christianity.

We read in the life of St. Francis Xavier, the Apostle of the Indies, that he often deputed children to work prodigies for him. It is not to be wondered that like facts are found in the life of the Apostle of Ireland.

We give one example :

At Cullen, St. Patrick preached in vain to the chief, named Elelius, and his people. The chief's only son was attacked by a herd of swine, and torn to pieces. The disconsolate father, having heard of the power of the minister of the true God, asked St. Patrick to restore to life his beloved son, and that he and all his people would believe in the God of the Christians. St. Patrick, trusting in the power of God, deputed two of his disciples to do as the father wished ; he himself remained absorbed in prayer. The disciples obeyed in the faith of their father ; the boy was not only restored to life, but to his youth and beauty. Needless to say, the chief and his clans embraced the teaching of St. Patrick. \*

\* The words of the Tripartite Life will be of special interest to many in Tipperary and Limerick.

“ He (St. Patrick) went afterwards to Aradha-Cliach (the present parish of Kiltelly) until he was in Iochtar-Cuillem (now Cullen) . . . and Ailill met him. His wife went on the hillock where they the clerics were, and said the pigs have eaten our son Ailill through

## SECTION III.

*St. Patrick's spirit of Penance ; his awful Austerities.*

Our Blessed Redeemer has said to the world, "Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish" (*Luke*, xiii. 3). "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me" (*Matt* xix. 24). "Do penance," says the Baptist. "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (*Matt*. iii. 2). Our Divine Lord set the example, "And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards He was

savageness. And Ailill said, 'I will believe if you resuscitate my son for me.' Patrick commanded the boy's bones to be collected, and he directed a Célé-Dé of his people, *i.e.*, Malach Britt, to resuscitate him. 'I will not offend the Lord,' said he (he was seized with doubt. Patrick said, 'That is pitiful, O Malach,' . . . . . Patrick afterwards commanded bishops Ibar and Ailbhe to resuscitate the boy, and he prayed the Lord with them. The boy was afterwards resuscitated through Patrick's prayers. The boy subsequently preached to the hosts and multitudes in Patrick's presence. Ailill and his wife thereupon believed, and all the Ui-Cuanach (the people of Cullen) believed and were baptized in that place."

hungry" (*Matt.* iv. 2). St. Paul, the example, "I chastise my body and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway" (*1 Cor.* ix. 27). Finally, St. Paul tells us what every Christian ought to be: "They that are Christ's, who have crucified their flesh with its vices and concupiscences" (*Gal.* v. 24). Hence, the virtue of penance is as essential for the salvation of the sinner, as the waters of baptism for that of the newly-born babe; "Either penance," writes an ancient father, "or hell's fire."

St. Patrick's whole life, from his captivity to the hour of his death, was one constant practice of the most heroic penance, self-denial, and awful austerities. On the snowy mountains of Antrim, day and night, he bore with patience and resignation to God' holy will, cold, hunger, and nakedness.

Here our Saint began his novitiate for the Apostolate; here he began to "chastise" his body, to "crucify his flesh, with its vices and concupiscences."

We cannot repeat too often the unctuous words of our holy youth :

"After I had come to Ireland," he writes, "I was daily tending sheep, and many times in the day I prayed, and more and more the

love of God and his faith and fear grew in me; and the spirit was stirred; so that in a single day I have said as many as a hundred prayers, and in the night nearly the same; so that I remained in the woods and upon the mountains; and before the dawn, I was called to prayer by the snow, the ice, and the rain; and I did not suffer from them, nor was there any sloth in me, as I now see, because the spirit was burning within me" (*Confession*).

At the famous monastery of Marmontier, founded by St. Martin of Tours, where our young Levite spent some years, and received, according to St. Evin, the monastic tonsure, "he put away all earthly pleasures and cares, and resolved never more to eat meat." At Lerins, the most renowned school of the age for learning and piety, Patrick was the wonder of the masters and pupils for his rigid, austere life.

We cannot follow our Saint step by step, nor year by year. We have abundance of authority, and carefully handed-down tradition, showing the austerity of his life during his mission for the conversion of the Irish nation. Before attacking the great strongholds and centres of Paganism, he spent days and nights in prayer and penance; armed

with the Spirit of God, and confident of success, he assailed the enemy; barrier after barrier fell at his touch, and with an easy rush he planted the cross over the ruins of idolatry.

The day, he spent among men preaching and baptising; the night, communing with his God. The night he usually divided into three parts. During the first part he recited a hundred Psalms, making at the same time two hundred genuflections; during the second part he recited fifty Psalms, immersed in icy-cold water, with his hands, his eyes, and heart lifted up to God. Then he took some hours of repose, with a rock or bare ground for his bed, a stone for his pillow, and a rough haircloth for his covering. At St. Patrick's Well in Limerick, the stone on which he knelt, and the rock on which he slept, are to this day seen and venerated by devout pilgrims. We have already seen that on Croagh Patrick, a mountain ever revered by his children, our Apostle spent the forty days of Lent in prayer and penance.

To some minds, profane and inclined to indulge a sarcastic smile at great spiritual things, of which they know nothing, all this may appear extraordinary, if not incredible. Yes, it is extraordinary, but quite credible. Re-

member, "wonderful is God in his saints," and nothing is more natural, and in keeping with God's ways to men, than to expect and to find awful austerities, as well as singular miracles in the life of so great a Saint and Apostle, as our glorious and beloved St. Patrick. Before we permit the irreverent profane smile to play upon our lips at anything holy, let us call to mind the warning of God from the burning bush to Moses, "put off the shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (*Ex. iii. 4.*)

#### SECTION IV.

##### *St. Patrick's spirit of Prayer.*

Prayer is absolutely necessary for the salvation of every adult. "Without me," says our Blessed Saviour, "you can do nothing" (*John, xv. 5*). St. Paul writes, "Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God" (*2 Cor. iii. 5*). And again, "For it is God who worketh in you both to will, and to accomplish his good will" (*Phil. ii. 13*). It is of faith, that in the superna-



tural order, we cannot conceive a good thought, elicit a good act, nor advance one step towards salvation without the grace of God. "If any one saith," defines the Council of Trent, "that without the prevenient inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and without his help, a man can believe, hope, love, or be penitent as he ought . . . let him be anathema" (*Sess. vi. can. iii.*) Without the grace of God, therefore, we cannot be saved; the grace of God is obtained by prayer; prayer consequently is absolutely necessary for our salvation.

Prayer is all-powerful with God. By prayer we can obtain all things from God. God has pledged Himself, so to speak; He has promised to hear our prayers, "Cry to me, and I will hear thee" (*Jer. xxxiii. 3*). "Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee" (*Ps. xlix. 15*). "Turn to me, and I will turn to you, saith the Lord of Hosts" (*Zac. i. 3*). "Thou hast gone astray after many lovers; but return to me and I receive thee" (*Ps. lxxx. 5*).

Our Blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, has given the same, or perhaps greater promises. "Ask, and it shall be given to you: seek and you shall find: knock and it shall be opened to you. For every one

that asketh, receiveth : and he that seeketh, findeth : and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened " (*Matt.* vii. 7). " Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, that I will do " (*John*, xiv. 13). One text more, " Amen, amen I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in my name He will give it to you. Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name. Ask and you shall receive that your joy may be full " (*John*, xiv. 23).

The Almighty God has therefore pledged and promised to hear our prayers. God cannot deceive, nor be deceived, nor like false man break his word or promise. " God is not as man that he should be, nor as the son of man that he change " (*Num.* xxi. 19).

Prayer is the power of God's Church, the light and life of the soul. Prayer is the key of heaven, the key of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

St. Patrick excelled in every virtue ; but he was pre-eminently a man of prayer.

Our Saint's preparation for his mission, and his whole Apostolate was a life of prayer, and the most intimate union and familiarity, so to speak, with God. We are told in his life that, during the six years of his captivity on the mountains of Antrim, cold, hungry, and half naked, three hundred times by day,

and three hundred times by night, on bended knees, he adored God. Here without a sacrifice or sacrament, our holy youth lived in intimate union of soul with his Maker; and laid the deep foundations of his future sanctity.

Obeying a "voice," calling him to his "own country," our holy youth travelled "two hundred miles" southward, most likely to Bantry Bay; and there found the "ships ready;" but the captain refused to take him on board, and angrily said to him: "By no means attempt to come with us." Here again prayer won the victory. We will give in our Saint's own words:

"When I heard the answer, I turned away to seek the cottage where I had lodged, and on the way *I began to pray*, and before my prayer was ended, I heard one of them shouting aloud, 'Come quickly, for these men are calling thee,' and, returning at once, they addressed me and said, 'Come, we receive thee in good faith, let us be friends in whatever way you will.'" Such was the power of prayer.

To go into the details of St. Patrick's love and spirit of prayer would be to transcribe his life; for his whole life was one of prayer. We can only allude to it.

Before leaving Ireland our young Saint, by prayer and penance, attained a high state of perfection. But what must have been his perfection and the odour of his sanctity, after more than thirty years spent in the most famous schools and monasteries on the Continent, and under masters renowned throughout the Church for their learning and sanctity? Let us only say he was fitted to be the Apostle of a pagan nation.

Having got his mission from the Vicar of Christ, who alone has that authority from the Redeemer of the World, our Apostle, armed with the power of prayer alone, set out to evangelize the Irish nation.

We have before narrated that, when our glorious Apostle was about to preach and announce the glad tidings of the Gospel before kings, princes, and vast multitudes; when he was about to storm the strongholds and centres of idolatry, he spent days and nights in penance, prayer, and holy communion with God; and then went to his holy work with an absolute certainty of success. Days and nights—spent in prayer and penance—won for our glorious Apostle victories at Tara, Cashel, Connaught, and Armagh, and laid the whole nation captive at the feet of the Ambassador of Jesus Christ.

After preaching and baptizing the whole day among men, he spent the night communing with God in prayer.

He divided the night into three parts. During the first part he recited a hundred Psalms, making, at the same time, two hundred genuflections; when wearied nature brought sleep to his eye, he plunged into a vessel of icy-cold water; and there immersed, with heart, and eyes, and hands lifted towards heaven, he recited fifty more Psalms. The third part of the night was given to repose—the bare earth his couch, a stone his pillow, and a rough haircloth his coverlet.

Hitherto our Saint, by prayer and penance, subdued himself, the world, and evil spirits; but, on Croagh Patrick, the struggle was with the Almighty Himself, so to speak, and Patrick won the victory.

On a hill in Mayo—ever since called Croagh Patrick, after our Saint—the Apostle of Ireland spent a Lent of forty days and forty nights without food or drink, like another Moses, praying for his children, and made demands so extraordinary as to appear to entrench on the rights or sovereignty of God Himself. Petition after petition was granted, and God sent an angel telling him to leave the hill, that no further demands could

be obtained. St. Patrick's petitions increased with his success; as he saw God's justice yielding to mercy, he replied, that he would never leave the mountain till he died or all his prayers were granted. The Angel went to heaven, returned, and informed him that all his petitions were granted, and ordered him at once to leave the hill.

The Saint refused to descend from the hill, and made a last demand, that, on the Day of Judgment, "I, myself, shall judge over the men of Erin on that day." The Angel said, "that could not be granted." Our Saint replied: "Unless this is obtained from the Lord, I will never consent to leave this Cruachan (hill) from this day for ever." The Angel went back to heaven and Patrick continued his prayers.

The Angel returned in the evening and Patrick asked, "How now?" "Thus," answered the Angel, "all creatures, visible and invisible, including the twelve Apostles, entreated, and they have obtained. . . . "Strike the bell," said the Angel, "thou art commanded from heaven to fall upon thy knees, that it may be a blessing to the people of Erin both living and dead." "A blessing on the bountiful King that gave," said Patrick; "the mountain shall be left."

A living biographer writes: "The man of God (Patrick) was marvellously favoured with heavenly visions and revelations in prayer: when," says his biographer "he every day in the Mass sacrificed the Son to the Father or devoutly recited the Apocalypse of St. John, it was granted to him to see the heavens opened and Jesus standing, surrounded by a multitude of Angels, and, whilst he meditated on these great visions, his soul was altogether lost in God." . . . From his union with God in prayer, there was such beauty and power in his preaching, that on one occasion, when a great multitude had come together to hear the Word, and the Saint interpreted the four Evangelists, for three days and nights the people were so entranced and spellbound by his inspired eloquence, that the time seemed to them but as the space of one day. . . . Commenting on his extraordinary spirit of prayer, he writes: "This is really the prodigious part of St. Patrick's life. We are not surprised that God should give power over nature to a man who has had such power over himself, and are, therefore, prepared for the statement that the working of miracles was of almost daily occurrence with him; that he gave sight to the blind and

speech to the dumb, cured all manner of diseases, and raised thirty-three persons from the dead in the name of the Holy Trinity." (Morris' Life, p. 147.)

## SECTION V.

### *St. Patrick's burning zeal for the salvation of souls.*

We cannot love Jesus without loving what pleases Jesus. Now, there is nothing that pleases our blessed Lord more than the salvation of souls. The love and greater glory of God is the sole end and object of the work of the Saints. Zeal, therefore, is an ardent love for the salvation of souls to promote the greater glory of God. It is only when we reflect on the value of souls in the sight of God that we can understand the zeal of the Saints. All material creation, with its enchanting beauty, variety, and harmony, is insignificant compared to the soul of man. The soul of man issued from the hands of the Almighty, one of God's noblest works, stamped with His own image and likeness, capable of knowing and loving Him, and destined to return to the heavens, to share



for all eternity the glories of her Maker. How noble the origin and destiny of the soul of man !

Let us see the interest God has ever taken in the salvation of souls. In the Old Law, God raised up Patriarchs, Prophets, Law-givers ; and He Himself was in constant and immediate communication with His chosen people.

In the New Law we are lost in amazement at the value of a soul in the sight of God. St. Paul says : " You are bought with a great price " (1 Cor. vi. 20). Now, what was the price that God Almighty has paid for souls ? The Incarnation, the Life, the Death, the Precious Blood of the Eternal Son of God ! To save the souls of men, the Eternal Son of God descended from heaven, assumed human nature, was born in poverty, and lived for thirty years in obscurity. To save the souls of men, our Divine Redeemer promulgated His New Gospel, confirmed His doctrine by stupendous miracles, and, amid the most excruciating tortures, shed His Precious Blood, even to the last drop, on Calvary's Hill. To save the souls of men, our Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ established His Church, instituted the most adorable Sacrifice of the Mass, and the grace-conferring sacraments, and

promised to be with her all days, even to the end of the world.

By deep reflection on the above, we begin to understand the zeal of the Saints—the zeal of our great Apostle, St. Patrick.

A few sayings of the Saints on this subject will edify, and perhaps astonish the simple reader. St. Bernard says: “One soul is more valuable in the sight of God than the whole world.” St. Ignatius used to say that he would rather live uncertain of his eternal salvation than die with a certainty of salvation, provided he could continue to assist in the salvation of souls. St. John Chrysostom writes: “Nothing is more pleasing to God than the salvation of souls.” St. Denis writes: “The most divine of all divine works is to co-operate with God in the salvation of souls.” Under the influence of burning zeal St. Paul writes: “I wish myself to be an anathema from Christ for my brethren” (*Rom. ix. 3*).

The following inspired text is a consolation to the poor labourer in the vineyard, fatigued by the frailties and falls of human nature, as well as by the labours of the day: “They that instruct many to justice (shall shine) as stars for all eternity” (*Daniel, xii. 3*). “He who causeth a sinner to be con-

verted from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins" (*James*, v. 20).

Charity is the love of God; and zeal is the essential flame of divine charity by which we love our neighbours for the love of God. From this it follows, the greater and holier our love for God, the greater must be our love for the salvation of souls. The Mother of God, being the nearest and dearest to Jesus, loved the salvation of souls more than all the Saints and Angels put together. St. Joseph, after the Blessed Virgin—the most holy soul that God ever created—comes second in his love for God and that of his neighbour. We have no hesitation in ranking the zeal of our great and beloved St. Patrick with the greatest Saints of God's Church; but even with the Apostles chosen by our Blessed Lord Himself. The rigid French critic Tillemont compares the burning, fiery zeal of St. Patrick to St. Paul's. He writes: "Patrick was filled with the overflowing plenitude of the apostolic spirit. . . . Who can be surprised if, in an enterprise altogether apostolic, God should have led, in the way of the Prophets and Apostles, a Saint who appears to have borne a greater resemblance to them than those

Saints who have succeeded them. . . .  
In one word, we see in him much of the character of St. Paul.”

The captive youth, whose soul was on fire with the love of Jesus on the mountains of Antrim, yearned for the salvation of the Irish people, who never knew or tasted the sweets of the love of Jesus. When, after his captivity, the clear voice of God called our young Saint to evangelize the Irish nation, during the many long years spent in the famous schools on the Continent, and under masters renowned for learning and the science of the Saints—zeal for the salvation of his future people consumed his soul.

The abundant grace of God had prepared our Apostle for his heavenly-appointed work; he is consecrated bishop, and gets his mission from him who alone on earth, is authorized to give it—the Pope, the Vicar of Jesus Christ—we can understand with what joyous love St. Patrick directs his steps to the coast of Erin.

To trace his zeal during his many years of labour in Ireland would be to write out his life. The day was spent preaching and baptizing, winning souls to Jesus, and the greater part of the night in prayer, begging God's blessing on the works of the morrow

Single-handed and alone, the zeal of our great Apostle not only won a whole country to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but raised the whole nation, kings, princes and people, to the highest practices of the Evangelical Counsels.

“The sons of the Scotti,” he writes, “and the daughters of princes are seen to be monks and virgins of Christ. . . . The sons of the Irish and the daughters of kings, who are monks and virgins of Christ, are too many to enumerate” (*Confession*).

We have seen his burning zeal in excommunicating Coroticus for destroying the souls of his flock.

To evangelize the Irish people, he writes. “I have abandoned my country and parents, and would give my soul unto death if I were worthy.” In another part our Saint declares his love for the Irish people: “Did I come to Ireland,” he says, “according to God or according to the flesh? . . . I was led by the Spirit of God. . . . Have I a pious mercy towards that nation that formerly took me captive? I am a servant to Christ unto a foreign people for the ineffable glory of eternal life which is in Christ Jesus my Lord.” In the most pathetic strain our Saint laments and weeps over his slain children.

“What shall I do, O Lord? . . . Lo! Thy children are torn round me and plundered. . . . Ravening wolves have scattered the flock of the Lord. . . . Therefore, I cry out with grief and sorrow: ‘O, beautiful and well-beloved brethren, whom I have brought forth in Christ in such multitudes, what shall I do for you? I grieve, O my beloved ones.’”

The same burning zeal lights up every page of his *Confession*, many passages of which we have quoted in a preceding section, to which we refer our reader.

We have seen how, on the mountain, Croagh Patrick, for forty days and forty nights our glorious Apostle laid siege to and stormed the heavens, for the salvation of the souls of his people; and never descended from the hill until he obtained demands, which appear to entrench on the sovereignty of the Almighty Himself. The zeal of St. Patrick only rested from his labours, when every soul in his dear Erin was converted; and the praises of the true God ascended from hill and vale, and died out on the ocean. No wonder the rigid critic compared the burning fiery zeal of St. Patrick to St. Paul's.

## PIOUS REFLECTIONS.

My soul ! admire the glories of God, God's own infinite and eternal glory. Admire God's wonderful works, the heavens and all the blessed spirits, from the Angels to the Seraphim ; reflect on the wonders of the earth and seas, and all the variety and beauty of animated nature ; look up to the terrestrial heavens, and see the majesty and magnitude of planets, stars, and systems, revolving in perfect order and harmony, all created and cast into boundless space by the breath of God. One of the most noble and most precious works in the sight of the Almighty is the sanctification of the souls of God's great Saints. What a thing of beauty and loveliness, and how precious before the heavens, and God Himself was the soul of our great and beloved St. Patrick, the Apostle of Ireland. The soul of St. Patrick was the seat and centre of all virtues ; that soul, as pure as an Angel, burning with the love of Seraph, animated with the faith of St. Peter, and the zeal of St. Paul.

## RESOLUTIONS.

My God ! I praise, and bless, and glorify Thee. My God ! I admire Thy wonderful

works. My God! I thank Thee for the faith, purity, and sanctity of the soul of St. Patrick. In order to imitate, even at a great distance, I resolve, first, to guard the purity of my soul, and by God's grace to avoid every occasion, whether place or person, where there may be danger of sullyng the white lily of virgin modesty. Secondly, to gain the mastery over my heart and senses, and in imitation of St. Patrick, I resolve, every day of my life, to practise some little secret acts of self-denial and humility, known to God alone. Thirdly, I resolve, whether by masses, prayers, alms-deeds, example, or exhortation, to do all in my power, for the conversion of sinners, and the salvation of souls.

## PRAYERS.

### DAILY OBLATION.

My God and my all! I most earnestly desire by every breath, every thought, every word, every aspiration, every movement of body and soul, to tell Thee a thousand times I love Thee more than life, or anything in this world; and I offer and dedicate myself to Thee; renewing my baptismal vows, together with the most fervent promises



and resolutions of my past life. I offer Thee also (and by every movement of my body and soul, I desire to renew the oblation), all the praise, thanks, and adoration of the Church militant, triumphant, and suffering; all that it has offered Thee, or will offer Thee to the end of time; all the love, complacency, and delights thou possessest in Thy divine essence, one God in Three Persons; all the homage my beloved Jesus renders Thee in the adorable Sacrament of the Altar; all the masses that are now being celebrated, have been or will be celebrated to the end of time, to Thy honour and glory, without will, wish, or desire, but these solely of pleasing Thee, loving Thee, living for Thee, and dying for Thee. I am Thine, O my God, and my all. Oh, make me so entirely and eternally; above all, take my heart; extirpate from it all other affections, and make it for the future a burning furnace of the purest flames of Thy most ardent love. Amen.

O God! through the bowels of Thy Divine mercy, through the name and merits of Jesus, grant me the firm faith, the spirit of prayer and penance, the ardent charity, and burning zeal of Thy servant, St. Patrick.

## CHAPTER VI.

*The fruits of St. Patrick's labours.*

## SECTION I.

*The immediate fruits of his labours.*

WE have already seen the fruits of the labours of our great Apostle, St. Patrick, during his lifetime. What a holy and glorious thing to say of our dear Saint, that, single-handed and alone, he converted from paganism a whole nation, and raised up his converts to the strictest observances, not only of the precepts, but counsels of the Gospel. To perpetuate his work, he everywhere ordained holy priests, and consecrated apostolic bishops, and placed them over his new converts. In the present chapter we shall place before our pious readers a brief sketch of the fruits of his labours after his death. St. John the Evangelist writes: "I heard a voice from heaven, saying to me: Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. From henceforth now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours: for their works follow them" (Apoc. xiv. 13.)

The glories of the Church of a nation consist in the sanctity of her saints and people ; in her schools of learning and piety ; in her churches and monasteries ; in her missionary spirit ; and finally, in her fidelity to the faith in adversity as well as prosperity. These tests will show forth in their brightest colours the glories of our dear Irish Church, founded by St. Patrick.

Let us bear in mind at the outset—that, at the invasion of the Northmen or Danes, and later on, that of the English, but more especially during the wars of Elizabeth and Cromwell, the monasteries and famous schools of learning were razed to the ground ; and libraries, containing priceless treasures of books and manuscripts, masterpieces of men of genius and world-wide fame, were committed to the flames, and reduced to ashes. Little remained to tell the historian the glories of the past.

The learning and researches of modern Celtic scholars have brought to light what had been for centuries “sealed-up fountains.” On the neglected and dusty shelves in libraries at home, but especially on the Continent, where the exiles of Erin found a home in the dire days of persecution, were found manuscripts, treasures of priceless worth, from which the

historian gets a glimpse of the history of our ancient Irish Church. Let us remark at the outset that, in this brief sketch, we can do but little more than mention the names of persons and places.

## SECTION II.

### IRISH SAINTS WHO FLOURISHED IN THE SIXTH AND SEVENTH CENTURIES.

Ireland had her "Golden Age" of Saints and Scholars. In the sixth and seventh centuries, hordes of barbarians, from their strongholds in the North, swept over Europe, destroying in their course all the glories of Roman power and civilization. The veteran legions, the conquerors of the world, reeled and fell before the fierce Goths, Huns, and Vandals; and the Roman Eagle disappeared from the face of the Continent. The great seats of religion and learning, schools and churches, the work and sacrifice of Saints and Scholars, shared the fate of the conquered; and social chaos and ruin reigned in Church and state.

Whilst war devastated most countries in Europe ; Erin was beyond the reach of the barbarian ; she was in blissful peace, occupied in prayer and study. Whilst the lamp of learning hardly flickered in its socket on the Continent, science, religion, and literature shone in the full brilliancy of meridian sunshine in the land of St. Patrick. It was during this "*Golden Age*" that Ireland merited and obtained the glorious appellation of the "*Island of Saints and Scholars.*" From a few authentic catalogues, the reader can form a fair idea of the sanctity of the Irish Church during the above centuries. The great French orator and academician, Comte Montalambert, writes : "From the fifth to the eighth century Ireland became one of the great centres of Christianity in the world, and not only of Christian holiness and virtue, but also of knowledge, literature, and that intellectual life with which the new faith was about to endow Europe."\*

Another writer says : "While the vigour of Christianity in Italy, Gaul, and Spain was exhausted in a bare struggle for life, Ireland, which remained unscourged by the invaders, drew from its conversion an energy

\* Monks of the West, vol. iii., p. 84.

which it has never known since. Christianity had been received with a burst of popular enthusiasm, and letters and arts sprung up rapidly in its train. The science and biblical knowledge which fled from the Continent took refuge in famous schools which made Durrow and Armagh the universities of the West.”\*

Gorres, a distinguished German, writes: “When we look into the ecclesiastical life of this people, we are almost tempted to believe that some potent spirit had transplanted over the sea, the cells of the valley of the Nile, with all their hermits, its monasteries, with all their inmates, and had settled them down on the Western Isle.” †

Ware counts no fewer than 164 monasteries, built in the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries; and all the great monasteries had large schools attached to them.

We shall begin with the famous *Feliré* or *Martyrology*, written by the holy poet, St. Aengus, *Celé Dé* or *Culdeé*; and referred by Usher, Todd, O’Curry, and other learned Irish scholars to the middle of the seventh century. This *Martyrology* was composed in metre in the old Celtic tongue, and enumer-

\* Green. *His sketches*.

† *Ecc. Record*, April, 1885.

ates many great Saints, whom he calls "princes of Saints," for every day of the year.

"Taking this Festology of St. Aengus," writes O'Curry, "as a purely historical tract, largely interwoven with the early history of Erin, civil and ecclesiastical, I almost think no other country in Europe possesses a national document of so important a character."

This great Irish scholar translates as follows the invocation of the Feliré :

"Sanctify, O Christ! my words;

"O Lord of the seven heavens

"Grant me the gift of wisdom

"O Sovereign of the bright sun!

"The heavens with all thy holiness,

"O King of the government of angels.

"O Lord of the people!

"O King! all-righteous and good

"May I receive the full benefit;

"Of praising Thy royal host—

"Thy royal host I praise

"Because Thou art my Sovereign.

"I have disposed my mind

"To be constantly beseeching Thee

"I beseech a favour from Thee—

"That I may be purified from my sins

"Through the peaceful bright-shiny flock,

"The royal host whom I celebrate."

On the 17th of March our glorious Apostle St. Patrick is invoked thus :

“The blaze of a splendid sun—

“The Apostle of stainless Erin,

“Patrick, with his countless thousands,

“May he shelter our wretchedness.”

The bishop, St. Tassach, who administered the Last Sacrament to St. Patrick, is thus commemorated :

“Kingly Bishop Tassach

“Who administered on his arrival

“The Body of Christ--the truly powerful  
King

“And the Communion to Patrick.”

Of the second Martyrology in prose, compiled by St. Aengus, Dr. Kelly writes : ‘He (St. Aengus,) composed, with the assistance of his friend, St. Malruan, another Martyrology in prose, far the most comprehensive and commemorating more Saints of every age and country, than any other I have ever seen.’ “He wrote,” continues Dr. Kelly, “five books on the Saints of Ireland, a countless host ; the glorious assertors of her title—the Island of Saints.”\*

In one of the books above referred to, St. Aengus divides the Irish Saints into three classes. The first class, extending from the



year 432 to 534, begins with St. Patrick, and numbers 350 Saints, all bishops and founders of Churches. The Saints in this class are called "most holy," and are compared to the sun in its meridian splendour. "They had one head, our Divine Redeemer; one leader, St. Patrick; one Mass; one mode of celebration; one tonsure from ear to ear."

The second class, extending from the year 534 to 600, counts 300 Saints. The Saints in this class are chiefly priests; are called "very holy," and are compared to the moon.

The third class, extending from the year 600 to 664, numbers 100 Saints, comprising bishops, priests, and laymen. They are called "holy," and their sanctity "like brilliant stars."

Thus, according to one catalogue alone out of the many, Ireland, in 232 years, was the prolific mother of 750 Saints of the highest order.

St. Aengus composed several litanies for daily prayer, and "in these litanies," says Dr. Kelly, "several thousand Saints are invoked." "Not only was Ireland peopled by native Saints," but continues Dr. Kelly, "the soil we tread covers the remains of many thousand foreigners, who came to find learning, or the greatest learning of all—the

science of the Saints,\* and lived and died in the odour of sanctity in their adopted country." The Litany of St. Aengus begins thus :

"The three times fifty Roman pilgrims, who settled in Ui Melé, &c , I invoke unto my aid, through Jesus Christ, &c."

"The three thousand father confessors, who congregated in Munster, to consider one question under Bishop Ibar—and where to the Angel of God was ascribed the great feast which St. Brigid had prepared in her heart for Jesus, I invoke to my aid, through Jesus Christ."

The other thrice fifty pilgrims of the men of Rome and Latium, who went into Scotland, I invoke unto my aid, through Jesus Christ."

The thrice fifty Gaedhilils of Erin in holy orders, and each of them being a man of strict rule, who went into one pilgrimage in one synod with Abban, I invoke unto my aid, through Jesus Christ."

Seven Ægyptian monks who are buried in Ulidh, I invoke, &c."

"150 foreigners, Romans and Italians, who accompanied St. Abbanus into Ireland, I invoke, &c."

\* *Disser. His.*, p. 216.

“ 50 monks of Britain, I invoke, &c.”

“ 510 foreigners, who came from beyond the seas with St. Boethius, Bishop, and accompanied by ten virgins, I invoke unto my aid, through Jesus Christ, &c., &c.”\*

So numerous were the Greek students in the great school of Trim, that they had there a church for their own use. To the eternal honour of Irish hospitality, let it be recorded, that these thousands of strangers, from every country in Europe, were not only welcomed to the schools of Erin, but were supplied gratuitously with books, clothes, and food. “So zealous and disinterested love of learning,” writes a modern author, “is unparalleled in the annals of the world.”

In the Litany, St. Aengus invokes the intercession of French, Romans, Britons, and Egyptians. The great, Irish scholar, Dr. Petrie, a candid Protestant, writes: “I may, I think, fairly ask: Is it possible that they would remain much longer ignorant of the use of lime cement in their religious edifices, a knowledge of which must necessarily have been imported to them by the crowd of foreign ecclesiastics, Egyptians, Romans, Italians, French, British, and Saxons

\* Dr. Kelly, *Dis. His.*, p. 217. O’Curry, p. 382, and 515.

who flocked to Ireland, as a place of refuge, in the fifth and sixth centuries. Of such immigration there cannot possibly exist a doubt; for, not to speak of the great number of foreigners who were disciples of St. Patrick, and of whom the names are preserved in the most ancient lives of that Saint, nor of the evidences of the same nature so abundantly supplied in the lives of many other Saints of the primitive Irish Church; it will be sufficient to refer to that most curious and ancient document, written in the year 799, the Litany of St. Aengus the Culdee, in which are invoked such a vast number of foreign Saints, buried in Ireland" (*Round Towers*, p. 134).

The great Irish scholar, Eugene O'Curry, writes: "And thus did Aengus go on to invoke groups of men and women, who came into EIRLN from all parts of the world; and joined themselves to various religious persons and communities throughout our land, to benefit by their purity of morals and exalted piety; as well as the countless groups of men, lay and ecclesiastical, who left Erinn on pilgrimages to the Holy Land, under SS. Ailbhé, Brendan, &c.; and others who went out to plant and propagate their Christian knowledge and piety in remote and unfrequented coun-

tries, which had not yet been brought within the range of the Lord's vineyard, or in which the seeds of Christianity formerly sown, had either run to extravagant wildness or totally failed" (*Lectures*, p. 382).

We shall finish this section by a quotation from another Irish scholar, the late lamented Dr. Kelly of Maynooth :

"Besides these Martyrologies, St. Aengus served his country and the Church of God with many other works. He wrote five books on the Saints of Ireland, a countless host, the glorious assertors of her title—'Island of Saints.' The first book tells in three chapters the Saints of different orders or classes—first, 345 bishops; second, 299 priests; third, 78 deacons.

"The second book is on the Homonymi, or Saints of the same name . . . . . this book commemorates not less than 855 Saints.

"The third book is called the 'Book of Sons,' who are divided into three classes—first, those holy men who were of the same father; second, only sons; and third, holy women descended from the same father. The number of Saints in this book is uncertain; but the names of at least ninety-four fathers, who had one or more Saints among his children, are cited.

“The fourth book gives the maternal genealogy of 210 Irish Saints.

“The fifth book is on the Litanies, composed for daily prayer; and invoking in a long list of Saints who had been associated by special bonds, as because they either studied under the same master; or followed the same Apostle to preach the faith to the *heathen*; or were buried in the same monastery; or associated in the same Church; or were conjoined by some other link of saintly friendship.”\*

Thus, from the writings of St. Aengus alone, our reader can form a fair idea of the glories and sanctity of our ancient Irish Church, the fruits of the labour of our beloved Apostle, St. Patrick.

### SECTION III.

#### *Irish Missionaries.*

We cannot love God without loving our neighbour. The more intense our love for God, in the same ratio will be our love for the salvation of souls. St. Patrick bequeathed his zeal for souls, in its full plenitude, to his successors in the Irish Church.

\* *Dis. His.*, p. 215

When learning and sanctity filled to overflowing, so to speak, the great monasteries and schools of Erin, during the sixth and seventh centuries, holy and learned men, fired with zeal for the salvation of their neighbours, looked **beyond** the seas for a field for their labours.

Like bees from the hives, Irish monks and missionaries in swarms left their fond homes, and spread themselves, not only through England and Scotland, but in almost every country on the Continent, to evangelise the pagan and preach the glad tidings of Redemption.

At the very mention of St. Columba, and of his famous monastery at Iona, what a legion of holy Irish monks rise before the mind! The narrative of the prodigies and conversions wrought by St. Columba and his disciples among the Picts and Scots, round and beyond the range of the Grampian hills, and on the Western Isles, where the sweet name of Redemption was never heard, is only surpassed by that of St. Patrick himself. It is asserted on the best authority, that St. Columba forestalled St. Augustine, by preaching Christianity among the Anglo-Saxons.

A learned French writer says—"The history of the Catholic Church for the sixth and seventh centuries, belongs to the Irish Church."

The following figures and facts speak eloquently of the missionary spirit of the children of St. Patrick :

In Germany are found 150 Irish Saints, Patrons of churches ; and of these 36 fertilized with their blood the garden of the Church. In France we find 45 Irish Saints, and of these six also shed their blood for the faith. In Belgium 30 Irish Saints are Patrons of churches, many of whom died also for the faith. The martyr St. Roluldus is the Patron of the Cathedral of Malines, the metropolitan see of Belgium. In England 44 Irish Saints and Patrons of churches ; in Italy no fewer than 13 ; and Norway and Iceland 8. St. Gall and his companions evangelised Switzerland. The Canton St. Gall takes its name from the great Irish Saint. \*

The apostolic labours of the great missionary St. Columbanus and his companions in France, Italy, and Germany, would fill a large volume, and have been graphically

\* White, *Apologia*, p. 24. Haverty, *His.*, p. 108.



narrated by the celebrated orator and academician, Comte Montalambert. St. Rupertus preached the Gospel with the greatest success, first in France, and afterwards in Germany, and merited the proud title of "Apostle of Bavaria." Fridolin, surnamed the Traveller, preached Christianity in Lorraine, Alsace, and Switzerland. St. Killian, "the Apostle of Franconia," fertilized the Church of Germany by shedding his blood for the faith. St. Gall and his companions preached the Gospel in Switzerland, and founded there several famous monasteries. The famous scholar, St. Virgilius, preached the Gospel in France, King Pepin, the father of Charlemagne, being one of his audience, and died Bishop of Saltzburg, in Germany. St. Cataldus is the Patron Saint of Tarentum, which country he evangelized. St. Livinus, in the odour of sanctity, left his dear Erin, preached the Gospel through Belgium, and sealed his faith with his blood by a martyr's death about the year 656. His biographer thus describes this double crown—"One day as he was preaching to the people, a band of impious men rushed upon Livinus, and, scattering and maltreating his companions, cruelly beat him with cudgels. Moreover, one of them, Wilbertus by name, thrusting

a pincers into the Saint's mouth, pulled out his tongue, and casting it on the ground, cried out, 'There is the false tongue of the deceiver.' This impious wretch and sixteen of his companions were instantly destroyed by fire from heaven; the tongue of the Saint was miraculously healed, so that he preached again to the people as before. . . .

Here I stand, a victim to be offered to God, strike, and spare not me, only spare my dear companions. He then kissed his faithful three who had clung to him from youth, and fervently prayed that God Almighty might guard and protect them in the land of the stranger. Then signing that he was ready, the wicked men cut off his head." The labours of other Irish Saints, such as St. Fiacre, Fursay, and his two brothers, Ultan and Foilan, Fridolan, Caidoc, &c., are, after the lapse of centuries, yet remembered on the Continent; and their memories are in benediction.

The famous Monasteries of Luxeuil, Bobbio, St. Gall, Fiacré, Lindisfarne, and Iona, founded by Irish Saints, were nurseries of Saints and Apostles to spread the light of the Gospel among pagan nations.

It has been calculated that Irish monks founded in Scotland 13 monasteries; in Eng-

land 12 ; in France 7 ; in Armoric Gaul, 12 ; Lotharingia, 7 ; in Burgundy, 12 ; in Alsatia, 10 ; in Belgium, 9 ; in Bavaria, 16 ; in Italy, 6 ; in Retia, Helvetia, and Suevia, 15. \* These figures, taken from authentic history, speak more eloquently than words of the glories and missionary spirit of the Church of St. Patrick.

#### SECTION IV

##### *Irish Schools in the Early Ages.*

As we before remarked, at the invasion of the Northmen or Danes, and later on, of the Saxon heretics, our famous schools and monasteries were razed to the ground ; and libraries, containing books and manuscripts of priceless value, masterpieces of men of genius, were committed to flames and reduced to ashes. Hence, scanty is the record left us to tell the glories of the past : the glories of our great schools and scholars.

The Monastery and School of Armagh were founded by St. Patrick himself ; and the fame of the school became so great in the sixth and seventh centuries, that over

\* Ware's Antiquities.

three thousand students thronged its halls to drink at the fountain of knowledge. This school flourished for several centuries, until it was plundered and burned no less than four times by the Danes.

The great school of Bangor was founded by the learned St. Comgall in the year 558. St. Columbanus was the glory of this school; in the halls of Bangor our Saint stored up that varied learning with which he afterwards astonished the scholars of France, Italy, and Germany. St. Finnian founded the School of Clonard in 527. "From this sanctuary and abode of wisdom," writes Wilde, "undoubtedly sprang much of the learning both of Britain and the Continent."

The famous School and Monastery of Clonmacnoise were established in 548 by St. Kieran. This monastery was the mother of many great Saints and scholars. "Clonmacnoise," says O'Curry, "continued to be the seat of learning and sanctity, the retreat of devotion and solitude; and the favourite place of interment for kings, chiefs, and nobles, of both sides of the Shannon, for a thousand years after the founder's time, till the rude hand of the despoiler plundered its shrines, profaned its sanctuaries, murdered or exiled its peaceful occupants, and

seized on its sacred property." (Lectures, p. 60.)

Lismore, the best known of the schools of Munster, was founded by St. Carthage in 633. Lismore can boast of her pupil, St. Virgilius, the most accomplished scholar of his age in both profane and sacred learning, and died Bishop of Saltzburg.

St. Brendan founded the great School of Clonfert, where frequently 3,000 students attended lectures. St. Finbarr may be said to be the founder not only of the School of Cork, but even of the city itself, which grew round his lecture halls.

The School of Durrow, in the King's County, founded by St. Columba in 549, sent many distinguished scholars to Great Britain and the Continent. The School of St. Mungret, in Limerick, was founded by St. Nesson; and that of Ross, by St. Fachnan, in the sixth century.

We may mention other remarkable schools at Kildare, Trim, Birr; schools in the Islands of Arran, Innisfallen, and Inniscathy, Lough Erne and Lough Derg. We have reserved on purpose for the last the great school of our own dear Emly, founded by St. Ailbe, a cotemporary of St. Patrick, in or about 470. This school, built on the

borders of a beautiful lake, which measured 200 acres, never counted fewer than 600 students. It was eleven times plundered by the Danes, and finally destroyed by the English.

In the year 846 the schools and churches of Emly, as well as all the country round, were laid waste by the Danes. The bishop of Emly, named Olchobair MacKinede, was also King of Cashel or Munster, the first bishop who united the mitre and sceptre. This warlike prelate attacked and defeated the Northmen in three pitched battles, putting to the sword no fewer than 2,900 of the invaders. In the year 1123 the See of Emly was again plundered, and the mitre of St. Ailbe, which had been preserved in the Cathedral with great veneration, was burned by the robbers. In the year 1162 Emly was destroyed by fire; and in 1197 its Cathedral was burnt to the ground. \*

\* Lanigan, Vol. i., p. 283; Vol. iii., p. 275; Vol. iv., p. 182 and 331.

There were two SS. Ailbes; and both contemporaries of St. Patrick. One St. Ailbe was ordained by St. Patrick himself in Leitrim or Roscommon, and there lived and died in the odour of sanctity. The other St. Ailbe was first Bishop of Emly, and is the Patron Saint of that diocese. Usher, and after him many Protestant writers, defended a false theory that

## SECTION V.

*Irish Scholars in the Early Ages.*

St. Columba, or as he is sometimes called Columbkil, the *Dove of the Church*, born in the year 521, was not only a great apostle, but also a famous scholar. He studied under the celebrated St. Finnian at Clonard, where

SS. Ailbe of Emly, Declan of Ardmore, Iber of Begery, and Kieran of Saigar, were bishops in Ireland before St. Patrick; and, therefore, that the Irish Church possessed a Hierarchy before the arrival of our Apostle. This false opinion has been refuted by Dr. Lanigan with such crushing and convincing arguments, that since his time no Protestant ventured to adopt it.

St. Ailbe was born in Eliogarty, County Tipperary, and became a disciple of St. Patrick about the year 445, and was ordained priest by the Apostle himself. It is not certain by whom St. Ailbe was consecrated bishop; but there is good authority for the opinion that Ailbe, and some other young priests of great promise, were sent by St. Patrick to finish their theological studies in the famous schools on the Continent, and that our Saint was consecrated bishop by St. Hilary of Arles, or by Pope Hilary himself. "The whole matter," writes Dr. Lanigan, "is involved in such obscurity that it is useless to attempt an elucidation of it." (Hist., Vol. 1, p. 290). It is almost certain that St. Ailbe witnessed the conversion and baptism of St. Aengus, King of Cashel, and accompanied St. Patrick to Kilfeacle and Limerick: for we find at Cullen the Apostle ordered SS. Ailbe and Ibar to raise to life the prince's son who was killed by

there were at his time three thousand students. His learning was well known, not only in Ireland and Scotland, but also among the Anglo-Saxons. Another celebrated Irish scholar, Adamnan, has written his life. Of

swine. At Cullen, the prince and people would not believe the preaching of St. Patrick. The chieftain's wife said to her husband, "The swine have eaten our son Ailil. Ailil said to Patrick, 'I will believe if you resuscitate my son for me.' Patrick commanded the boy's bones to be collected, and he directed a Cel-De of his people, i.e., Malach Britt, to resuscitate him. 'I will not offend the Lord said he.' (He was seized with doubt . . . Patrick afterwards commanded Bishops Ibar and Ailbe to resuscitate the boy, and he prayed the Lord with them. The boy was resuscitated through Patrick's prayers. The boy subsequently preached to the hosts and multitude in Patrick's presence. Ailil, his wife, and all believed, and were baptized in that place." (*Tripartite Life* p. 498).

The See of Emly was founded in the year 464; and a grant of the lands, on which St. Ailbe built his cathedral and schools, was given by the pious King Aengus, whom St. Patrick baptized at Cashel.

According to the Bollandists and others, Dr. Lanigan pronounces the opinion tenable, St. Ailbe was consecrated in the year 464, in the 30th year of his age, which proves him to be a man of extraordinary merit; and died on the 12th of September, in the year 527, being 93 years of age, and 63 a bishop. During the episcopacy of St. Ailbe a synod was held in Cashel, at which St. Declan of Ardmore, King Aengus, and the princes of the Desii attended. At this meeting of synod many salutary decrees, regarding ecclesiastical jurisdiction and discipline, were enacted. Dr. Lanigan



the "Life of St. Columba," written by Adamnan in the seventh century, the well-known Scotch critic, Pinkerton, says: "It is the most complete piece of biography that all Europe can boast of."

St. Columbanus, born about the year 559, and educated at the great school of Bangor, under the pious and learned St. Comgall, was

writes: "St Ailbe of Emly, after a long life, the greater part of which was spent in preaching the Gospel, instructing and preparing others for the sacred ministry, and in forwarding by all means in his power the good of religion, was called out of this world on the 12th of September, 527 . . . The reputation of this holy and learned man was so great that he was styled *Another Patrick*, and was reckoned among the principal fathers of the Irish Church. Of his writings there is still extant 'a Monastic, or Collegiate Rule.'" (His., p. 461.)

To shun the honours and veneration which the fame of his eminent sanctity brought round him from every part of Ireland, St. Ailbe determined to quit the country, and with some twenty-two monks retire to the island of Iceland, and there serve God hidden and unknown. King Aengus discovered the secret, and gave strict orders that all the seaports should be watched to prevent his departure, that his subjects should not be deprived of the prayers and services of this great and holy man. Finally, the King prevailed upon our Saint to change his intentions, but allowed his twenty-two followers to go, as they did, and spread the light of the Gospel in the island of Iceland: and St. Ailbe died, as he lived, in the odour of sanctity in Emly. St. Ailbe Patron Saint of Emly, pray for us.

one of the most celebrated Irish missionaries and scholars on the Continent, Not only was he well versed in theology and the Sacred Scriptures ; but he was master of the Greek, Hebrew, and several Oriental languages. Our great Saint took a prominent part in all the famous controversies of the day, and held his own, and even enlightened the greatest divines of France, Germany, and Italy. The renowned monasteries of Luxueil, Fontaines, and Bobbio, were the works of his hand. The beautiful town of San Columbano, near Lodi, to this day retains the name of the great Irish Saint.

St. Cummian, surnamed the Tall, to distinguish him from Cummian the Fair, who was abbot of Hy, was abbot and bishop of Clonfert ; and was, writes Dr. Healy, “ the most learned Irish scholar of the seventh century.” Born near Killarney, about the year 590, he studied in the great school of Cork, founded by St. Finbarr ; and so great was his learning and sanctity, that he was styled the Gregory the Great of the Irish Church. He took a leading part in the famous Paschal controversy, which raged so fiercely through the Church in the seventh century ; and his writings, which are extant on this question, prove that he was well

versed in Sacred Scripture and Church history.

St. Virgilius, who studied in the great school of Lismore, founded by St. Carthage, and whose great missionary labours in France and Italy have been already alluded to, was also the greatest science scholar of the age; and hence was styled the "Geometer." Centuries before the birth of the immortal astronomer Copernicus the famous Polish priest, whose name the "System of the World" bears, the Irish Saint Virgilius demonstrated the sphericity of the earth, hence the antipodes, and that the sun not the earth, was the centre of the "System of the World." For this teaching, novel and startling at the time, supposed to be contrary to the Sacred Scripture, and hence heretical, he was complained of to Pope Zachary, who punished him by appointing him bishop of Saltzburg. At Saltzburg he built a magnificent cathedral, in honour of his countryman St. Rupertus; he evangelized Corinthia, of which he is styled the Apostle, died in the odour of sanctity and was canonized by Pope Gregory the IX. in the year 1233.

St. Dungal defended the Catholic doctrine on the veneration of images and invocation of Saints; and wrote a most learned work

against Claudius, a Spaniard, and bishop of Turin.

St. Donatus, bishop of Fieosle in Italy, was a distinguished theologian, and an accomplished Latin scholar. The learning of the Irish monks was so esteemed by Charlemagne, that he appointed one monk named Clement, superior of his great school in Paris; and another, Albinus, rector of the schools at Pavia. Later on King Lothaire appointed another great Irish scholar, named Dungal, rector of the great school which he founded in the same city of Pavia.

The Clemens Claudius, or the Irish Claudius, bishop of Auxerre, so called to distinguish him from Claudius, bishop of Turin, was well known on the Continent for his great learning. His commentaries on the Gospel are to this day highly prized. We have already referred to St. Aengus, the great poet, and certainly one of the greatest if not the greatest hagiographer of his age, or any other age.

Sedulius, who flourished about the year 490, was beyond doubt the greatest of our ancient Irish poets. His numerous writings in prose and verse won from Pope Gelasius the title "Venerable Sedulius," and from St. Hildephonsus, "evangelical poet, eloquent orator, and Catholic writer."

Many of his hymns, especially his "Carmen Paschale" were, and are to this day greatly admired. The public Liturgy of the Church, both in the divine office of the Blessed Virgin, and in the Introit of the Mass of the Blessed Virgin, to this day retains and admires his beautiful hymn on our Blessed Lady—*Salve sancta parens enixa puerpera regem Qui cœlum terram que tenet per sæcula.*

St. Sechnal, a cotemporary of St. Patrick, St. Cuckumneus of the seventh century, and St. Finnian, wrote some exquisite Latin hymns, which to this day are greatly admired.

Eric of Auxerre, a distinguished French writer, says: "What shall I say of Ireland, who, despising the dangers of the deep, is migrating with her whole train of philosophers to our coasts."\*

The names alone, not to say comments, of the great Irish scholars, who flourished in the sixth and seventh centuries; and who adorned, not only the Church of Erin, but the Catholic Church, would fill pages; hence, not to swell our little volume beyond its intended bulk, we shall wind up this section by

\* Moor, His., 236.

four great names, John Scotus ; Marianus Scotus, the Chronicler ; Marianus Scotus, the poet and theologian ; and John Duns Scotus.

John Scotus, surnamed Erigena from the land of his birth, was unquestionably the greatest linguist, the most profound and original philosopher, and the greatest thinker of his age. He was a layman, and perhaps to that may attributed his unsound theology. "He was of very small size," says Dr. Lanigan, "but gifted with extraordinary genius . . . By his learning eloquence, and wit, he became a singular favourite of King Charles the Bald, who was so pleased with him, that he kept him constantly with himself, and did him the honour of having him a guest at his table" (Ecc. His., p. 288).

Scotus was well skilled in most of the Oriental languages, especially Hebrew ; he wrote Latin and Greek prose and verse with elegance ; he was well versed in all literature, both profane and sacred, his original writings and translation would in themselves form a nice library ; he was rector of the Royal School of Paris ; as a poet, original thinker, gigantic grasp of mind, and diversity and depth of knowledge, modern critics have ranked him with Dante, Chrysostom, and St. Thomas of Aquin.

Marianus Scotus, styled the Chronicler, flourished in the beginning of the eleventh century. At the age of twenty-eight he left his dear Erin, and joined the monastery of St Martin at Cologne, which was founded by Irish monks. After two years in Cologne, he was induced to go to Fulda, where he spent ten years a strict recluse, engaged in prayer and study. By the orders of the Archbishop of Mentz, and the abbot of Fulda, Scotus was obliged to go to the famous monastery of Mentz, where he spent thirteen years, and there composed his famous Chronicle, which begins at the creation of the world, and comes down to his own time. This work, considered the most learned of the age, obtained for the Irish scholar the name, Chronicler.

Blessed Marianus Scotus, styled "the poet and theologian," born in Donegal, left the shores of his dear Erin eleven years after that of Chronicler. After various wanderings, he, with his two companions, settled down at Ratisbon in Bavaria; and there founded an Irish monastery, which for centuries after his death was famous for learning and piety. Here he wrote his learned commentary on the Sacred Scriptures, which was highly prized by the scholars of his day. An

ancient annalist says of him, "At that time flourished the blessed Marianus Scotus, a distinguished poet and theologian second to no man of his time." Another biographer writes, "Marianus was, like Moses, the meekest of men, and God bestowed upon him in a wonderful way the gift of healing many diseases, but especially fevers, not only during his life, as I have heard from trustworthy witnesses, but at his tomb after death, as I have seen with my own eyes."\* John Duns Scotus flourished in the thirteenth century. As to his nationality as an Irishman, there is now no doubt among the learned. He joined the great Franciscan order when a boy; we find him a most distinguished student and Professor at the University of Oxford; he taught amid the applause and admiration of all Europe philosophy and theology at the University of Paris, then the greatest school of learning in the world. Here in his famous thesis against the Dominicans on the Immaculate Conception, in which from memory alone he refuted 200 objections, he proved to demonstration the dogma; and so won the admiration of the learned, that by a solemn decree of the University, he was crowned

\* Dr. Healy. *Ecc. Rec.* Aug.. 1884.



and styled the "Subtle Doctor." He was the founder of a system of theology which will ever bear his name; and is second only to St. Thomas the Angelic Doctor of the Schools.

The invasion of the Northmen, as we have before remarked, and later on of the English, reduced to ashes our seats of learning with their vast libraries, leaving comparatively but little to narrate the glories of the past. We have it from the authority of the best Irish Scholars, like O'Curry, that in libraries at home, but more especially on the Continent, are manuscripts of priceless value, the works of Irish genius, moth-eaten, and neglected on dusty shelves. The industry of German scholars has brought many of these works to light. We hope the time is near when Ireland will be a nation, then a national government will foster and develop native talent and genius; willing and loving hands will be found to bring to light these sealed-up fountains of learning; and the literary world will stand astonished at the glories of our ancient Irish Church; and will endorse the proud appellation of Erin, the *Island of Saints and Scholars*.

We would love to linger over the fascinating story of our dear old Church—her

Saints and her missionaries; her schools, her scholars and her monasteries, which tell the glories of the fruits of the labours of our great and beloved Apostle, St. Patrick; and amid these scenes, the heart and soul of the Irish Catholic will expand in praise and thanksgiving to God Almighty, and to His faithful servant, for the faith and fidelity, the sanctity and learning of his forefathers; and Heaven won't fail to inspire the fervent prayer, that peace and plenty, sanctity and learning may again smile upon the land; and that dear Erin may become again, what she once had been, the *Island of Saints*.

#### SECTION VI.

*The remote and abiding Fruits of the Labours of St. Patrick, the glorious Apostle of Ireland.*

To linger longer, as we would have wished, over the glories of our ancient Irish Church, would lead us too far from our subject; and would swell our little volume beyond its intended bulk; hence with reluctance we have to put aside stores of priceless materials, collected by the industry and genius of modern Irish Scholars.

Thus far we have been sketching the history of the Irish Church in the sixth and seventh centuries, "*The Golden Age*" of the Church of St. Patrick, the Church of St. Brigid, the "Mary of Erin." From the day our holy Apostle landed on the coast of Erin, to the invasion of the Danes, the history of the Irish Church is an unbroken narrative of triumphs, glories, and smiles, at home and abroad. Now all is changed. The foe and the stranger have landed on our shores. The happy homes of prayer are razed to the ground; the lamp of learning is nigh put out; and the canticle of praise, like sweet incense, no longer ascends before the Almighty. Henceforward our triumphs are the victories of faith over the brute force of persecution; our glories, the chains of the confessors; and our smiles, the serene joyous looks of the martyrs meeting death in its fiercest shapes.

It is now "Erin, the tear and the smile in thine eye."

*Persecution under the Northmen or Danes.*

The Northmen or Danes landed in Ireland about the year 797; and from that day, to the date of their final overthrow, on Good

Friday, April 23rd, 1014, on the memorable plains of Clontarf, by the famous Brian Boru, the history of the Irish Church is almost an unbroken narrative of murder, plunder, and devastation. Churches and monasteries were burnt to the ground; libraries, containing priceless treasures of learning and arts, consigned to the flames; thousands after thousands of captives of every age and of both sexes taken and sold as slaves in foreign markets; and the churches and shrines of the Saints desecrated and robbed of their sacred ornaments.

In the year 798 the Northmen attacked the coasts of Ulster, and set on fire the famous monastery of Hy, in which many of the monks perished in the flames. In 807 the Danes in great force entered Connaught, and penetrated as far as Roscommon, laying waste the country, and leaving behind them scarce a vestige of Christianity. In 812, the Irish chieftains attacked and defeated the invaders with great slaughter, and expelled them from the country.

About the year 815, the redoubtable Norwegian chief, Turgesius, with a large fleet and a mighty host of barbarians, landed in Ireland; took and held possession of the country for thirty years. This savage chief

with his followers were animated by the deadliest hatred of Christianity, and hence nothing sacred escaped their sword. "The history of the proceedings of the Danes in Ireland during the long and afflicting reign of Turgesius, presents but one dark and monotonous picture of plunder, massacre, and devastation" (*Lanigan's History*, p. 273). No church or monastery escaped their fury. The famous monastery of Bangor, which one time could boast of no fewer than 3,000 monks, was burned to the ground; the rich shrine and sacred relics of its founder, St. Congall, were scattered to the wind; and the venerable Abbot with 900 monks put to the sword in one day. Now, indeed, we may well say the Church of St. Patrick was bleeding at its heart's core.

Munster was invaded and laid waste in 823, and the great schools and monasteries of Lismore, Cork, and Inisdamle shared the fate of that of Bangor. Six years later on, in the year 836, the Northmen, having got reinforcements, burned and sacked Cork, Clonfert, and Ferns. In the year 831, Armagh was plundered; and then, as well as three successive times afterwards, its schools and monasteries burned to the ground, and 710 captives were sold as slaves in foreign

markets. Much about the same time Clonmacnoise, Kildare, Glendaloch, Slane, Clonmore, shared the same fate at the hands of the savage Northmen.

The schools and Cathedral of Emly, being so near Limerick, were eleven times burned and plundered by the Danes; but in the year 846, the enemy met a crushing defeat.

Olchobair Mackinede, Bishop of Emly, also King of Cashel, the first in Ireland who wore the mitre and crown, routed the invaders in three great battles in 848, having put to the sword 3,000 of the invaders.\*

In the year 914 the Northmen in great force landed at Waterford, and attempted to plunder and burn down the city. They were attacked and cut to pieces to a man by the brave native prince named Idroua. Much about the same time Prince Callaghan Cashel defeated the Danes in two battles, in which 2,000 of their best troops were left dead upon the field.

We shall not go into further detail. History tells us that, not only all the seaport towns, but the principal inland ones, all the famous schools and monasteries, were several

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\* *Lanigan, His.*, vol. iii. p. 27

times during the two centuries plundered and burned to the ground.

Though a few of the Northmen in Dublin became Christians, all were animated with the deadliest hatred of Christianity. At last the eyes of the Irish princes were opened to their dangers. To save, not only their country, but to preserve the faith of St. Patrick, it was necessary at any sacrifice to expel the invaders. Brian Boru, in his eighty-eighth year, summoned to his standard the Irish Chieftains. The Northmen mustered all their strength for their final struggle. On the 23rd of April, 1014, the foes met face to face. It was on Good Friday, and Brian, with a sword in one hand and the Crucifix in the other, rode through the ranks, encouraging his troops to fight for their religion, and to cut to pieces the sacrilegious invaders. From dawn to dusk did the heroes fight; the Cross conquered, and the dead bodies of 13,000 Northmen, including kings, and princes, strewed the plain. Brian, his son Morogh, and grandson Turlogh were among the slain. This was the final overthrow of the Northmen in Ireland.

Sacrifice is the test of conviction. Fidelity to the faith, in persecutions, sufferings,

and death, shows forth the presence of Divine grace, as well as the Divinity of the true Church of God. We gloried in the "*Golden Age*" of the Irish Church, when dear Erin obtained from Europe the proud appellation of the "*Island of Saints and Scholārs.*" We have now seen the Church of St. Patrick put through a crucible of sufferings. For two centuries the fiercest storm raged with unabated fury. Again and again her towns, monasteries, churches, and schools, were sacked, plundered, and burned to the ground; and the inmates put to the sword, or sold as slaves in foreign markets; the survivors fled to the mountains and bogs and there served the God of their fathers. Not only did Ireland hold the faith, but succeeded in converting many of her savage invaders.

Under God, and Mary His Mother, we attribute this fidelity to the faith, this heroic perseverance in suffering and death, to the prayers of our great St. Patrick. This is one of the remote and abiding fruits of the labours of our beloved and glorious Apostle.



*Persecution under the English.*

After two centuries of fierce fight with the Northmen, the Irish Church lost all save faith; but the faith preached by St. Patrick, like the Shamrock indigenous to the soil, could not be rooted out.

The battle of Clontarf brought peace to the land. Of the Danes, those who escaped the sword were driven back to their savage homes in the North; and the few who remained embraced Christianity. The Irish Church, with its wonted vigour, set to work to make up the breaches made by the enemy.

Again monasteries and schools of learning and piety began to spring up from the ruins of the past; and we find learned and apostolic missionaries, animated with the spirit of St. Patrick, leaving the shores of their dear Erin to spread the light of the Gospel on the Continent.

As we are not here writing the history of the Irish Church, we shall pass over several centuries, and come to the last and the greatest trial that Divine Providence permitted to assail the Church of Ireland, or that of any nation.

Sad and pregnant with centuries of evil was the day when the Anglo-Normans first landed on the shores of dear Erin. On a bright May morning in 1169. the English invaders surprised and stormed the city of Wexford; and thence dates the history of seven hundred years of woe and strife in Church and State for our poor dear country.

Might conquered right; and though the English were then Catholic, they despised and detested the Irish, with the same animosity as their Protestant descendants five centuries afterwards.

No sooner had the English possession of the important seaport town, but every effort was made to Anglicize the Irish in Church and State. Hence at every fitting opportunity English bishops were appointed to the important Sees; English monasteries were built and richly endowed with the plunder of the natives; and English Abbots set over Irish monks. Thus, from the very beginning of the invasion, and all through the dark centuries afterwards, every attempt was made by the English, Catholic as well as Protestant, to degrade the Irish in their own land. That accounts for the deadly hate, more of race than religion, of the Celt and Saxon.

About the middle of the sixteenth century, England followed in the wake of Germany, shook off the supremacy of the Vicar of Christ, and adopted the principles of the Reformation. Henry VIII., a loathsome monster of lust and cruelty, by the sword, gibbet, and halter, partially enforced the new heresy upon the people of England.

In Ireland he succeeded with some of his own countrymen of the Pale: but the Irish people rejected with scorn the new false religion: and with the courage of their race, clung with a death-grasp to the faith of St. Patrick.

Elizabeth, the most unprincipled, unscrupulous, and corrupt sovereign that ever sat on the throne of England, completed the work of destruction which Henry VIII. began with such success; and though deeds of the most heroic courage and unflinching fidelity, in meeting death in its fiercest shape, are recorded in every grade of the Church—among bishops, priests, religious, and laymen; yet it is sad to reflect that, at the bidding of a tyrant, England, as a nation, apostatised from the Church, and changed her faith as a garment.

Flushed with her victories in Church and State in England and Scotland, the impious

Queen directed all her might and energies to stamp out the ancient faith in Ireland. The monasteries that escaped the fury of Henry, are plundered and burned to the ground; the bishops are exiled, or hanged, like Dr. O'Hurley of Cashel, and Dr. Plunket of Armagh; not a school, church, or chapel is left through the land; the property of the Catholics is confiscated, and Protestants planted in their demesnes; the priests, who escaped the sword, are hunted to bogs and mountains; and there surrounded by a faithful people, with a huge rock for an altar, and the heavens for a canopy, the "tremendous mystery of Redemption" is offered to the Almighty, imploring perseverance, and grace and courage to shed their heart's blood for the faith of Jesus their Saviour. The same price was set upon the head of wolf or friar.

After a reign of forty years of blood and plunder, of unparalleled persecution, Elizabeth went to judgment; and the faith of St. Patrick, in the green Isle, remained unshaken.

It is not within our scope to enter into the details of the sufferings and persecutions of the Irish Catholics; nor to describe the inhuman Penal Laws, devised and executed

by the most diabolical ingenuity of man. Suffice it to say that, during three centuries the wealth, the power, the learning, and perverse ingenuity of one of the most powerful empires in the world, were directed to root out Catholicity in Ireland. King succeeded king; dynasty followed dynasty, but only to intensify sufferings for the old faith.

As in Rome of old, under a Nero, a Domitian, or a Decius; so in dear Erin, the saintly prelate, the devoted priest, the holy religious, the dauntless youth, the helpless mother, the grey-haired father, the tender virgin, met death in its fiercest shape with the courage of the early martyrs. What a spectacle in the sight of God and His Angels was the Irish Church during these dark ages! In the whole island, sometimes there were only a few bishops, and they concealed in their hiding-places; the priests, who succeeded to land in Ireland from the Continent, travelled through the country in disguise, preparing the dying, encouraging the living, and not unfrequently sealing their faith in their blood; our Cathedrals were converted into Protestant conventicles, and no church or chapel left through the land; not one Catholic school or college in the island; and finally, every bribe held out to encourage apostasy.

For centuries, as we have said, did this dark cloud, like a pall, hang over the land, a cloud not penetrated by one bright ray; and yet the faith of the Irish Church remained as unbroken and firm as the Rock of Peter, the Church of Rome, to which our glorious Apostle St. Patrick had wedded her. Under God, we attribute this undying fidelity to the faith, to the prayers of our great Apostle St. Patrick.

When the axe, the gibbet, and the halter, when brute force failed to extinguish the old faith of the Irish race, the wily heretic tries a new stratagem, and attempts to win and corrupt the heart through the head. Protestant schools and colleges, richly endowed by the estates and plunder of Catholics, cover the land; flowers are strewn along the path to apostasy; every reward and bribe are held out to the Catholic youth, and the fatal poison is concealed in the honied cup of learning, to which the Irish people were known to have a thirst and passion. Thanks to God above and St. Patrick, the fiendish craft of the enemy was discovered; with scorn and disdain the proffered boons were rejected; and with holy indignation the Irish people cast from their lips the poisoned draughts of the heretic. St. Patrick guarded the purity of the faith of his people.

One trial more, and perhaps the greatest, for the faith of the Irish Church. We allude to the Great Famine.

God in His Providence sends blight upon the land, the staple food of nine millions rots, and famine in its most appalling shape covers the whole island. One short Winter sends many millions to the grave ; and many millions also beyond the seas, to perish on the way, or upon a foreign soil. Death stalks through the land ; and millions are in the throes of hunger. In that awful moment of God's visitation the ravening wolf invades the fold.

The English heretics open their coffers ; and gold, food, and raiment are sent across the Channel ; but the price demanded to live was apostasy from the faith of their fathers.

Gold did not tempt the eyes swimming in death ; the lips, quivering in the throes of hunger and death, disdained the proffered food of apostasy ; millions found an early crown in paradise ; the seed of the Gospel was sown in foreign lands by the emigrants ; and the faith of the survivors in the dear old land was only intensified. Infinite thanks for all eternity, from every creature, be to God Almighty ; our Blessed Lady, too, had

a share in the good work ; and our glorious Apostle St. Patrick, with St. Brigid, the "Mary of Erin," and his legion of Irish Saints before the throne of God, prayed and obtained the victory of faith for his beloved children.

Thus famine, with all its appalling horrors, the bribes of the tempter, and the gold of the heretic proved as ineffectual as the sword or gibbet, to extinguish or weaken the faith of the Irish people.

In the Irish Church, as in the early ages, the blood of the martyrs became the seed of Christianity ; and the old faith having passed through the crucible of every trial, only shone forth the more brilliantly ; showing hereby to the world, that God was its Defender, as well as its Author. Deep into the soil of the Irish heart did St. Patrick plant the seeds of holy faith. The Church of dear Erin has seen the snows of fifteen hundred Winters. She has been assailed by every foe, and under every form. Now the storm is over ; and to-day, in the sunshine of peace, she stands before the world, one of the impregnable citadels of the Church of God, with the banner of the Cross proudly floating from her battlements ; and round are strewn the bleached bones of every foe who had dared to



attack her. To-day, after fifteen hundred years of weal and woe, the Church of Erin stands before an admiring world, like a virgin, fair and beautiful, without spot or wrinkle, and her brow wreathed with the laurels of countless victories.

Such are the abiding fruits of the labours of our great and glorious Apostle St. Patrick.

The fidelity of holy Job was put to the severest test. By God's permission, Satan deprived him of all his immense wealth, and put to death all his children. By God's permission, "Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord and struck Job with a grievous ulcer from the sole of his foot even to the top of his head. And he took a potsherd and scraped the corrupt matter, sitting on a dunghill" (Chap. ii. 7). Holy Job was firm in his faith, and said, "Naked I came out of my mother's womb and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away: as it hath pleased the Lord so it is done, blessed be the name of the Lord." (*Ibid.*) God was pleased with the faith and fidelity of His servant, holy Job, and now cured his wounds, restored to him all the happiness of wealth and family, blessed him, and gave him length of days. "And the Lord," says the Word of God, "blessed the latter

end of Job more than the beginning. And he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses. And he had seven sons and three daughters . . . And there were not found in all the earth women so beautiful as the daughters of Job . . . And Job lived after these things a hundred and forty years, and he saw his children, and his children's children to the fourth generation, and he died an old man, and full of days" (*Job*, xlii. 12).

In like manner God's providence tried the faith of the Irish Church in a fiery furnace of persecution. Nor was the storm of a passing nature; for centuries it raged with unabated fury. All was lost—country, property, and life; the faith alone survived firm and unsullied. As with holy Job, God appeared pleased with the undying fidelity to the faith of the Irish people, and so in His own good time sends comparative peace and plenty to the land.

Peace is made with the enemy, and immediately the Church of Erin rises up in the fulness of her first fervour; and girds her loins to repair the breaches made in her ramparts, and to erect new fortresses of defence. Peace smiles upon the land, and the "*Golden Age*" of religion returns. In a few years

chapels, churches, stately cathedrals are built; schools, colleges, convents, and monasteries spring up, as touched by the magician's wand, and cover the land; and again, as of old, the praises of the Most High ascend from hill and dale from virgin lips. To-day the Church of dear Erin is the wonder of the world, her faith as pure, her religion as holy, as fifteen hundred years ago it was preached by St. Patrick; as pure and holy as nineteen hundred years ago it fell from the holy lips of Jesus Christ, her Divine Founder.

In the early ages, Irish apostles, priests, and monks, spread the light of the Gospel in many countries on the Continent. In our own days, in the nineteenth century, Ireland became a missionary nation; and God's Divine Providence deigned to make use of the children of St. Patrick to spread the light of the true Gospel in England, Scotland, America, Canada, and Australia. In these lands, at home and abroad, the exiles of Erin, in the midst of their poverty, erected cathedrals and churches; built schools, colleges, and convents. It is a well-known fact that the Catholics, that is, the bishops, priests, and people of England, Scotland, and Australia, with few exceptions, are all of Irish birth, or Irish blood. The French and Irish

make up the Catholic population of Canada. In the cities and prairies of the United States, Irish hands planted the cross; and to-day some ten millions of Irish devoted Catholics, under the free banner of the Stars and Stripes, salute and invoke St. Patrick, their glorious Apostle. In these countries, as we have said, not the people, but the priests and prelates, with few exceptions, are of Irish birth or Irish blood. "In the Vatican Council," writes Cardinal Manning, "no saint had so many mitred sons as St. Patrick."

Such are the remote fruits of the labours of our great and beloved Apostle, St. Patrick.

#### PIOUS REFLECTIONS.

My soul! Adore, praise, and admire the wonderful mercies of God to the Irish race. God's Providence raised up the great St. Patrick; and showered upon his soul the choicest gifts and graces of heaven, to fit him to spread the light of the Gospel on the Irish nation. Our great Saint's mission was twofold. First, to convert the whole nation to the doctrines of Christianity, and to elevate the people to the highest practices of the Evangelical Counsels; secondly, by his prayers in heaven, to watch over, and per-

petuate the same pure and holy faith to the day of judgment.

My soul! Reflect on the persecutions and sufferings of the Irish Church for centuries under the Northmen and English. No power less than God's could have preserved the faith. St. Patrick, with the countless host of Irish Saints before the throne of God, obtained for our forefathers this heroic courage and fidelity to the faith, under every persecution, nay death, in its fiercest shape.

My soul! Thank God that to-day the Irish race at home, and the exiles of Erin abroad, possess that priceless gift of faith, as pure and as holy as it was preached by St. Patrick nigh fifteen hundred years ago; and for which our forefathers shed their hearts' blood.

#### RESOLUTIONS.

My good and merciful God! I adore, praise, and glorify Thy mercies to the Irish Church. O my God, I wish to offer Thee infinite thanks for the sanctity of our great and beloved Apostle, St. Patrick. Infinite thanks to the Almighty for the mission of St. Patrick; and for the success and fruits

of his mission. Infinite thanks to God for the heroic courage and fidelity to the faith of our forefathers. I resolve, first, in fervent prayer, frequently to thank the Almighty for His mercies, His favours, and His Providence over the Irish Church; and for the fidelity of our fathers to the pure and holy faith preached by St. Patrick. Secondly, I resolve, by every means in my power, to support the spiritual and temporal interests of the Irish Church. I will support her spiritual interests, by treating and speaking with reverence of her sacrifice and sacraments; her ministers of religion—bishops, priests, nuns, and monks; her ceremonies, and every thing relating to the Catholic Church. I will support her temporal interests, by contributing liberally to the erection and maintenance of churches, schools, convents, and monasteries, and to the propagation of the faith.

#### PRAYERS.

Infinite thanks to God Almighty, that I am a child, though unworthy, of the Catholic Church. O blessed for ever, by all creatures, and for all eternity, that I am a member of the only true Church, founded

by Jesus Christ, sanctified by His Precious Blood, and preached to the Irish race by St. Patrick. Infinite praise, glory, and thanksgiving, to the most adorable Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost for the mission of St. Patrick, and for the fruits of his mission. Glory be to God on high for the firm faith, heroic courage, and undying fidelity of our forefathers to the true Church of Jesus Christ. Thanks to our Blessed Lady in Paradise, to St. Patrick, St. Brigid—the “Mary of Erin”—and to the host of countless Irish Saints in heaven, who, in the dark days of trial and distress, prayed for, watched over, and preserved, in all its pristine beauty, the purity of the faith among the children of Erin at home and abroad.

#### A PRAYER TO ST. PATRICK.

O glorious St. Patrick, Apostle of Ireland! I praise, bless, and glorify God for thy sanctity, thy zeal, thy charity, thy labours, and the success of thy labours. I thank thee, O great St. Patrick, for watching over, and preserving the faith of the Irish people. O dearest St. Patrick! heed not the unworthiness of thy children; but continue, in the future as in the past, to pray for

them. O glorious Apostle, St. Patrick, guard and preserve, to the Day of Judgment, the purity of the faith and morals of thy people in every land and in every clime. O beloved St. Patrick! obtain from God that Erin, our dear country, may become again what she formerly was, "THE ISLAND OF SAINTS AND SCHOLARS." Amen.

AN ACT OF THANKSGIVING, FROM THE  
DEVOTIONS OF ST. GERTRUDE.

"Blessed be Thy goodness, O my God, and blessed be Thy compassion, O Thou one and true Godhead, Thou one and holy Trinity, Thou one and supreme God, for all the benefits and loving kindnesses with which Thy profuse and loving compassion has surrounded me, undeserving as I am. For all these I adore Thee, I praise and bless Thee, O my most tender Lord and God, in union with that supernal praise with which Thou, O glorious Trinity, art Thine own sufficient praise, which pours down from Thee upon the blessed Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, upon His glorious Mother, and upon all holy Angels and Saints; and from them flows back again into its source in the abysses of Thy Di-



vinity. I give Thee thanks for the love with which Thou hast created and redeemed me, sanctified me, called me, preserved me, and endowed me with all manner of good things. And since praise is not seemly in the mouth of a sinner, I beseech Thee, O sweetest Jesus, by that prevailing love wherewith Thou sittest at the right hand of the Father, to pay for me to my God, eternal, infinite, unfaltering, unceasing praises, such as Thou alone canst pay, and such as Thou knowest to be befitting His most dread glory and the honour of His Majesty, for all the good which has ever flowed forth upon me from the inexhaustible abyss of His Godhead. Break forth, therefore, O beloved Jesus, into such thanksgivings as Thou alone canst utter ; O my Lord, great and wonderful exceedingly, praise the Godhead in Thyself, in me and for me, with all the might of Thy Divinity and with all the love of Thy Humanity, in the name and on behalf of all the universe Thy hands have made. Amen."

PRAYER OF ST. IGNATIUS.

"Receive, O Lord, my entire liberty, my memory, my understanding, my will. Take

me and all I possess and own. Thou hast given them all; behold I restore all to Thee, to be disposed according to Thy good pleasure. Give me only Thy love and Thy grace. These are sufficient for me; with them I shall be happy, and shall have no more to ask."

#### ASPIRATION OF ST. IGNATIUS.

"May the most just, the most high, and the most holy will of God be accomplished in all things. May it be adored, praised, and glorified by all creatures now and for ever. Amen."

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We have at length come to the end of our little work. We confess it was not a task, but a labour of love. The great St. Augustine thus expresses it: "In works which we love we either do not feel the labour; or if we do, we love the labour."\* Many and long were the interruptions since we wrote the first line; for the duties of our sacred ministry were enough to occupy all our time.

The hours devoted to its pages were serene and happy; for the soul tastes a sweetness in contemplating the glory of God in His

\* *In eo quod amatur, aut non laboratur; aut labor amatur (De bono Viduitatis, ch. xxi.)*

saints. Learned dissertations, deep researches, beauty of style are not to be sought for, or found in our little book. Our chief and only aim is to put into the hands of the masses a Popular Life of our great Apostle St. Patrick; hence, the style throughout is simple, plain, and unadorned, and therefore suited, we expect, to the capacity and intelligence of the great bulk of our readers.

How far we have succeeded we know not. We expect indulgence from a kind public; but in this, as in our other little books, we expect the success and fruit of our humble efforts from the blessing of the most Adorable and Sacred Heart of Jesus; that we may say with the Royal Prophet, "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to thy name give glory" (*Ps.* cxiii. 3).

Most humbly and reverentially do we lay at the feet of our great and beloved Apostle St. Patrick this poor offering of love; and we beg a new blessing upon ourselves, and upon all his children at home and abroad.

FINIS.







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