



## The Patronal Saint of Ireland.

### Anniversary of the Apostle of Erin.

(H. F. SHORTIS.)

On to-morrow will be celebrated the anniversary of Erin's Apostle, St. Patrick. Erin's sons and their descendants, who are even more Irish than the Irish themselves (Hibernores Hiberni)—will, in every part of the world, where they are to be found—and where are they not?—with joyous hearts and holy feelings commemorate the glorious advent of the True Faith to the old land of Heremon, in the sacred person of his illustrious Apostle. Fourteen hundred and ninety-two years ago exactly, St. Patrick commenced his missionary labors on Irish soil. In the year of our Lord 432 he landed at Croich Cuallan, now called by the Saxon name of Wicklow, in Leinster. He was then forty years of age. The place of his birth has occasioned much controversy for many years, and our friends the Scotchmen, who always like a good thing, are most pronounced in their assertions that he was born in their country. But his place of birth is of little consequence, and it does not trouble us very much as in what particular part of God's earth he first saw the light of day. Wherever he was born he belongs to the Irish, who never went back on his teachings, nor failed to honor his memory. The weight of authority, however, is in favor of ascribing him a French parentage.

#### NAME DERIVATIVE.

From the best possible authority I glean that the name of Patrick is derived from the Latin Patricius, which signifies Father, or rather

Senator, it was a high distinction which gave to him on whom it was conferred a rank next to that of Emperor. The Order of Patrick to which St. Patrick belonged was different from the old Roman order of the same name. It was one of much higher distinction, and was first instituted by Constantine the Great, who was the first Christian Emperor that sat upon the Throne of the Caesars. This distinction was conferred upon St. Patrick by Pope Celestine from whom he received his appointment as Apostle of Ireland. As the historian relates, it is well to observe here that Patrick had been in Ireland long before the time when his Apostleship commenced. At the age of sixteen years, he, among others, had been taken captive by the Irish legions, who under the Great Niall had fought against the Romans in Britain and Gaul; in the latter place now called France, Patrick and his two sisters, Lupida and Deverca, were taken prisoners and brought to Ireland, where he was sold to Milcho for a term of seven years, according to the then custom; after the expiration of which term he returned to his own country.

#### NOT THE FIRST IRISH MISSIONARY.

History states St. Patrick was not the first Irish missionary who had undertaken the conversation of the Irish. Five years before his Apostleship mission to Ireland, that is, in the year 427, Pope Celestine had sent Palladius as Bishop, with twelve priests to preach the True Faith to

the Irish people. This mission was however but partially successful, owing to the difficulty of making the people distinguish between the spiritual and temporal power of Rome. They thought that by admitting the spiritual supremacy of the Pope they would be thereby subjecting themselves to his temporal authority, a condition which they could not brook, seeing how often they had witnessed the Roman power in warlike encounter and sent the pierced Eagle screaming from the battle-field. At the time of Patrick's return to Ireland, the Irish Throne was filled by Laogare, the grandson of Niall, of the Nine Hostages. The account continues, that the Apostle immediately proceeded with the labours of his mission. After having made some converts at Croich Cuallan (Wicklow) he proceeded towards Dublin, and thence to the North of Ireland. The Princes and Lords of the country attempted to drive himself and his associates back from the coast, desiring them to be pirates. But the noble bearing, sanctified appearance, and the language of divine hope and heavenly consolation which characterized the Saint and his companions, produced their proper effect; and they who had come to resist and persecute the man of God, became converts to his doctrines, and professors of the True Faith. Being now in the neighborhood of his old master Milcho, he hastened to lay before him the Word of God. But the old man was too proud to yield to the teaching of him who was once his slave. He resisted, but his son, and two daughters became converts; whereupon, in the excess of his rage, he set fire to his house, and cast himself into the flames. This affected St. Patrick even to tears.

#### THE SAINTS' JOURNEYS.

From the North, he proceeded to Meath, where he preached the Faith, and made many converts—He also preached before the Assembly of Tara, which had met to celebrate the festival of Easter. Several of the Druids and Nobles were converted, as were also the Monarch, his wife and two daughters. He then proceeded to the Taltean plains, where the military exercises were celebrated. He preached; and many of the Nobles were converted and baptised. His labours were incessant; he knew not pause nor rest; he passed on to the other parts of the country disseminating the true doctrine of Christ—instructing the ignorant, baptizing those who embraced the Faith, ordaining priests and consecrating the altars. He left no corner of the land without pouring upon its heathen darkness the celestial light of Christianity. During his mission, he consecrated, according to the best authorities, no less than three hundred and sixty-two bishops, and ordained no less than three thousand priests; none of whom were admitted to their sacred offices before they had given the best and clearest proofs of the piety and sanctity of their previous lives. And now to use similar words of the historian, this is with purely a work of love, and not a historic portraiture of the life and labors of a great man. We throw out the fond thoughts to which solemn reflections on the heavenly achievements of our Apostle and our Father give rise—we throw them out irregularly, unconnectedly, lovingly; but not with the artistic arrangement—the impressive eloquence or the winning grace of the studious and aspiring compiler of heroic history.

#### HONORING THE ANNIVERSARY.

On to-morrow the Irish race—the inheritors of the Faith of St. Patrick, will commemorate the anniversary of the Great Saint, and of the conversion of their dear old Fatherland from Pagan superstition to Christian Truth. And oh, while we kneel together under the roof of that Cathedral reared by the Christian zeal of Old Ireland's descendants as well as by the heavenly aid of one of St. Patrick's successors in the Apostolic vineyard, whose ashes now repose within its sanctuary—while we kneel together under the sacred roof, on to-morrow let us not forget the Old Land which Patrick blest, and which contains his ashes and the ashes of those who lived and suffered and died for it and for the Faith that clings eternally around its heart of hearts. To-morrow we shall hear from the lips of the clergyman, the same Divine Doctrines and Holy Truth which Patrick preached fourteen hundred and ninety-two years ago to our forefathers. The same Faith will be preached, the same doctrines inculcated, the same mysteries taught, the same ceremonies practised, to-morrow, as on the day when Patrick first opened his lips and proclaimed the Eternal Faith of Christ, on Croich Cuallan, in the year of Grace 432. Yes, the same true Faith, in all its minutiae, which Christ preached, which the Apostles taught, which Pope Celestine received from his predecessors, who drank at the very fountain of Apostolic Truth—this very Faith thus transmitted from Christ, through a few intervening links, to St. Patrick, will be preached to the descendants of Ireland, in all its purity, totality and perfection, to-morrow, in the year of Grace 1922.

#### THE PRIDE OF THE IRISH.

This, after all is something. Yes, the Irish race, amid their trials, their sufferings and their woes, can look back with feelings of pride to that ancient and renowned country from whose bosom they have sprung, and from whose living fountains of Christian Truth they have derived the Faith which Christ taught, and which constitutes their safeguard amid the assaults of heresy and their passport to the realms of Eternal Life. After having converted Ireland, St. Patrick proceeded to Rome to report to the Holy Father the success of his labours. He sailed across the Irish Channel to Liverpool, where he preached and received several hundreds of converts to the Faith of Christ. From Liverpool he went to the Isle of Man and thence to the Eternal City. After a short stay with the Holy Father, he again returned to Ireland, and resumed his apostolic labours. He consecrated thirty new bishops, ordained many priests and divided the kingdom into Sees, deaneries, rectories and parishes, over which he appointed ecclesiastics of great learning and piety. At length grown old and worn out by incessant toil, he retired to Laugh Derg in Donegal, where he spent the remainder of his days in retirement and meditation. He died at the age of one hundred and twenty-six years, and was buried in Downpatrick, in the North of Ireland. The remains of Saints Bridget and Colum Killie were afterwards deposited in the tomb of the apostle. The following Latin inscription was found on the tomb in 1174:—  
"Hic tres, tumulo tumulatur in uno, Brigida, Patricius, atque Columba Plus."  
Of which, this is the English version:—  
"In Down three saints one grave do fill, Bridget, Patrick and Colum Killie." In the reign of Henry VIII, this tomb was destroyed by the crimson fanatics who sprang up under the auspices of that brutal tyrant, and the crozier of the Apostle was carried off by them.

#### THE COUNTRY OF SAINTS AND SCHOLARS.

Soon after her conversion to Christianity Ireland became the seat of Religions and Learning. About this time the Roman Empire fell, and the Goths rushed, like a desolating torrent, from the North, and swept away every vestige of Art, of Science and of Literature from the face of Europe. Those Northern barbarians mounted the thrones of the Caesars, and every trace of civilization was blotted out from the European Continent. Ireland alone stood out like an Oasis in the wilderness of desolation and to her as an asylum and a nursery of Religion and Learning, came people from all nations of Europe. Here, as from a fountain, they drank large draughts of learning and wisdom, and imbued their souls with a knowledge of the Divine Truth of Religion. It was at this time, and by the Nations of Europe, Ireland was called by the name of "Island of Saints (Insula Sanctorum). Monasteries and religious establishments of every kind, churches, cathedrals, colleges, studded the land. From these establishments holy and learned men issued forth, like an inundation, over every part of Europe, and founded similar institutions in the various countries to which they had gone. In France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany and every other country in Europe they founded institutions for the promotion of religion and learning. In England they established various Monasteries, Churches and colleges. Thus when the western world became overwhelmed in the darkness of barbarism, Ireland shone out, like a

light from Heaven, to guide the people to civilization, and to win them back from the depths of Gothic ignorance to the knowledge and worship of the Divine.

#### THE DANISH INVASION.

Such was the position which Ireland occupied in Europe from the time of St. Patrick up to the ninth century, when the Danes, a plundering barbaric nation from the North, began to infest her shores. This people continued from time to time, for the space of two hundred years, to commit various depredations on the Irish coast, as well as in the interior of the country, from time to time, which caused much annoyance to the inhabitants, and tended in a great degree to retard the progress of their religious and literary institutions, as well as to obstruct their general prosperity. They were, at length, finally routed and destroyed on the battlefield at Clontarf, by the famous King and warrior Brian Borlombo. After this, the country returned to its former course of prosperity, and religion, literature and science flourished as before.

#### THE COMING OF THE ANGLO-NORMAN.

The period of poor old Ireland's woes is now approaching. Internal divisions (oh, this has ever been her blackest curse) brought about what the armies of the Caesars had never been able to accomplish. By the folly and treachery of one of her own sons, a petty King, or Riahg Beg, as each of the provincial Kings was called, the Anglo-Saxon, or rather the Anglo-Norman, for the first time found footing on Irish soil. This occurred in the year of our Lord 1169. From that moment Ireland's woes may be said to have begun. In the commencement of this aggression, however, nothing occurred that could cause any serious apprehension to the Irish Nation. The intruders were confined within a small corner of Ireland; and, after some time, they became incorporated with her people, pliant, submissive and obedient to the laws. Their descendants became even "more Irish than the Irish themselves." But ambitious, wily and rapacious, the English Crown kept hawk's eye on the fertile fields and rich demesnes of old Ireland. Secretly and stealthily was division and dissension fomented and encouraged among the people by the agents of the Crown; while the King, princes and nobles of Ireland were too much engrossed with their own petty quarrels, and the maintenance of their individual power and dominion, to turn their thoughts to the common foe who lay lurking in ambush outside their walls. Little, however, occurred, as we have observed, to affect the independence of the nation for the length of three or four centuries after the landing of the first Anglo-Norman settlers.

#### HIBERNIA ILLUMINATRIX.

How inscrutable are the ways of Heaven! We have seen, in the middle ages, when the darkness of barbarism had overpread the West of Europe, Ireland shone out like a lamp from Heaven, dispelling the barbaric gloom, pouring the floodlight of religion and learning over the world again. Look at her in later years; oppressed, persecuted and trampled down, in a way to which no nation of ancient or modern times afford a parallel, she has adhered to the Faith of St. Patrick with a grasp which no power could break. Nay, more; persecution has been the means of propagating the Faith in every part of the known world. From the Atlantic to the Pacific, the Irish Exile has planted his country's Faith in every city, village and hamlet of the New World. As the most ancient and venerable monuments of religion and learning which the Old World presents, are interwoven with the memory of their Irish founders, so the noblest achievements in the Arts, and Sciences, in the extension of Literature, and the propagation of Religion of which the New World can boast are the work of the persecuted Irish race. And now that a bright and glorious morn has burst upon her crushed hopes, her languid form, her struggling valour and covering, the dark spots on her past history, induce her to forget her past sufferings in her restoration to freedom and happiness.

#### COMES INTO HER OWN.

The Irish Free State has now the management of her own affairs, and it is needless to say that her great natural resources will be developed, factories started, lines of steamers running between the Old Country, United States, France, Belgium, Spain and other countries. The Irishmen and their descendants, many of them multi-millionaires will advance the necessary funds to place the country of their birth, and the land of their forefathers, in a position to work out her own destiny, and I am as certain as I am that I am penning these lines, that before ten years Ireland will become one of the most prosperous, happy people the most united in either the New or Old World. When that day shall arrive, those of us who can afford it, will visit the land of our forefathers to congratulate the Irish people upon their success in achieving their independence, their prosperity and happiness of the old land, and view with interest and pride the resting place of Emmett, when the object

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