

secured the purity and morality of the people; by the third, care of the dead, he enlisted on the side of Catholic truth the natural love and strong feelings of the Irish character; and by the last, attachment and obedience to the priesthood, he secured to the Irish Church the principle of internal union, which is the secret of her strength. He preached fidelity and unswerving devotion to the Pope—the head of the Catholic Church—coming direct from Rome, and filled with ecclesiastical knowledge, he opened up before the eyes of his new children and revealed to them the grand design of Almighty God in His Church. He showed them in the world around them the wonderful harmony which speaks of God; then rising into the higher world of grace, he preached to them the still more wonderful harmony of redemption and of the Church—the Church, so vast as to fill the whole earth, yet as united in doctrine and practice as if the same family; the members of one little village; the Church, embracing all races of men, and leaving to all their full individual freedom of thought and action; yet animating all with one soul, quickening all with one life and one heart; guiding all with the dictates of one immutable conscience, and keeping every, even the least, member, under the dominion of one head. Such was the Church on which Patrick engraved Ireland "A glorious Church without spot or wrinkle; a perfect body, the very mystical body of Jesus Christ, through which we, being wild olives, are grafted on Him, the true olive tree," so that "we are made the flesh of His flesh, and bone of His bones." Now, Patrick taught our fathers, with truth, that the soul, the life, the heart, the conscience, and the head of the Church is Jesus Christ, and that His representative on earth, to whom He has communicated all His graces and powers, is the Pope of Rome, the visible head of God's Church, the Bishop of Bishops, the centre of unity and of doctrine, the rock and the corner-stone on which the whole edifice of the Church is founded and built up. All this he pointed out in the Scriptures, from the words of our Lord to Peter: "Peter was the shepherd of the fold, whose duty it was to 'feed both lambs and sheep' with 'every word that cometh from the mouth of God.'" Peter was the rock to sustain and uphold the Church: "thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church" (words which are the very touchstone of faith in these days of sorrow). Peter's was the strong, unerring voice which was ever to be heard in the Church, defining her doctrines, warning off enemies, denouncing errors, rebuking sinners, guiding the doubtful, strengthening the weak, confirming the strong; and Jesus said, "Thou, O Peter, confirm thy brethren." Patrick taught the Irish people not to be scandalized if they saw the cross upon Peter's shoulders, and the crown of thorns upon his head, for so Christ lives in His Church and in her supreme pastor; but he also taught them that he who strikes Peter strikes the Lord; he taught them what history has taught us, that "whoever shall fall upon that stone shall be bruised; and upon whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder." He taught them that in the day when they separated from Christ, as did the foolish men in the Gospel: "After this many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him. Then Jesus said to the twelve, will you also go away? And Simon Peter answered Him: Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Thus it was, my brethren, that He bound them to "the rock of ages," to Peter's chair, with firmest bounds of obedience and love, and infused into their souls that supernatural instinct, which, for fifteen hundred years, has kept them, through good report and evil report, faithful and loyal to the Holy See of Rome. It was a bond of obedience and love that bound Ireland to Rome. Thus, in the beginning of the seventh century, when the Irish Bishops assembled to consider the question of celebrating Easter, we find the Fathers selecting some "wise and humble men," and sending them to Rome for instruction, "as children to their mother;" and this in obedience to a primitive law of the Irish Church, which enacted that, in every difficulty that might arise, "the question should be referred to 'the Head of Cities,' as Rome was called. This devotion to the Holy See saved Ireland in the day of trial.

The next great feature in Patrick's preaching was devotion to the Mother of God. Of this we have abundant proof in the numerous churches built and dedicated to God under her name. (*Teampall Mhuire*), or Mary's Church, became a familiar name in the land. In the far west of Ireland, where the traditions of our holy faith are still preserved, enshrined in the purest form of our grand old Celtic language, the sweet name of the Mother of God is heard in the prayers and songs of the people, in their daily familiar converse, in the supplications of the poor, not under the title of "our Lady," or of "the Blessed Virgin," but by the still more endearing name of *Maire Mhathair*, "Mary Mother." And so it was that Patrick sent his Catholic doctrines home to the hearts of the people. He preached Jesus Christ under the name by which He is still known and adored in that far western land: (*Mac na Maighdine*) "the Virgin's Son," thus admirably insinuating the great mystery of the Incarnation, and

preaching Jesus through Mary; and Mary herself he preached, with all her graces and glories, as "Mary Mother." The example of her virgin purity and maternal love he made the type of the Irish maiden and mother; and so well did they learn their high lesson, that they have been for ages the admiration of the world, and the glory of their afflicted country. The devotion to Mary sank deep into the heart of the nation. So well had they already learned to love and appreciate her, that, in a few years after their conversion to the faith, when they would express their love and admiration for the first great Irish virgin saint—St. Bridgid—they thought they had crowned her with glory when they called her "the Mary of Ireland." This devotion to Mary was a protecting shield over Ireland in the day of her battle for the faith.

The third great prominent point in St. Patrick's preaching was the doctrine of Purgatory, and consequently, careful thought and earnest prayer for the dead. This is witnessed by the ordinances of the most ancient Irish synods, in which oblations, prayers, and sacrifice for the dead are frequently mentioned, as evidently being the practice, frequent and loving, of the people. They were not unmindful of the dead, "like others who have no hope." Every ancient church had its little graveyard, and the jealous care of the people, even to this day, for these consecrated spots, the loving tenacity with which they have clung to them at all times, speak of their faith in this great doctrine, and tell us how much Irish love and love surrounds the grave. "Nothing is our own, and our dead," says the poet, and so these affectionate hearts took with joy the doctrine of mercy, and carried their love and their prayer beyond the tomb into the realms of expiation, where the dross of earth is purged away, the gold and silver refined, and souls saved are prepared for heaven, "yet so as by fire." This doctrine of the Church, so forcibly taught by Patrick, and warmly accepted by the Irish people, was also a great defence to the nation's faith during the long ages of persecution and sorrow.

Finally, the great saint established between the people and their priesthood the firmest bonds of mutual confidence and love. In the Catholic Church the priest is separated from the man and consecrated to God. The duties of his office are so high, so holy, and supernatural, and require such purity of life and devotion of soul, that he must, of necessity, stand aloof from amongst men and engage himself with God; for, to use the words of the apostle, he is "the minister of Christ and the dispenser of the mysteries of God." Hence, every Catholic looks upon the priest as a supernatural man; supernatural in the union of his priesthood, in his office, his power, his life, his duties, and most sacred in his person as the anointed of the Lord. This was the idea of the priesthood which Saint Patrick impressed upon the Irish people. The very name by which the priest has ever been known in our language, and which has no corresponding word in the English tongue, signifies "a sacred man and a giver of sacred things." Such is the exalted dignity of the priesthood, such the knowledge and matured sanctity required for, and the tremendous obligations and duties imposed upon it, that we generally find the first priests of a newly converted people strangers; men who in Christian lands were brought up and educated for their high mission. It would seem as if the young Christianity of a people, like a vine but newly planted, were unable yet to bear such full matured fruit of holiness. But it was not so in Ireland, my brethren. There we beheld a singular instance of a people who immediately produced a national priesthood. The priests and bishops of Ireland, who assisted and succeeded St. Patrick in his great work were almost to a man Irishmen. So congenial was the soil on which the seedling of Christianity fell, that forthwith it sprang up into the goodly tree of all holiness and power; and so the aged apostle saw around him in "the ring of his brethren" those whom he himself baptized, anointed, and consecrated into the ministry of God's altar and people. Taken thus from the heart of the people they returned to them again laden with divine gifts, and living in the midst of them, joyfully and contentedly ministered unto them "in all things that are of God." A community of joy and sorrow, of good and of evil, was thus established between the priesthood and the people of Ireland; an interest, the most familiar, yet most reverential; a union of the strictest kind, founded in faith, fidelity, and affection, and cemented by centuries of tears and of blood.

For more than a thousand years the work of St. Patrick was the glory of Christendom. The Virgin Church of Ireland, unstained even by one martyr's blood, became the prolific mother of saints. Strange indeed, and singular in its glory, was the destiny of Innisfail. The Irish Church knew no childhood, no ages of painful and uncertain struggle to put on Christian usages and establish Christian traditions. Like the children in the early ages of the Church, who were confirmed in infancy, immediately after baptism, Ireland was called upon as soon as converted to become at once the mother of saints, the home and refuge of learning, the great instructress of the nations; and, perhaps, the history of the world does not exhibit a more striking and glorious sight than Ireland for the

three hundred years immediately following her conversion to the Catholic faith. The whole island was covered with schools and monasteries, in which men, the most renowned of their age, both for learning and sanctity, received the thousands of students who flocked to them from every land. While cities were given up to them, as we read of Armagh, which was divided into three parts—"Triamore," or the town proper; "Trian-Patrick," or the cathedral close; "Trian-Sasenagh," or the Latin quarter, the home of the foreign students. To the students the evening star gave the signal for retirement, and the morning sun for awakening. When, at the sound of the early bell, says the historian, "two or three thousand of them poured into the silent streets and made their way towards the lighted church, to join in the service of matins, mingling, as they went or returned, the tongues of the Gael, the Cimbric, the Pict, the Saxon, and the Frank, of hailing and answering each other in the universal language of the Roman Church, the angels in heaven must have loved to contemplate the union of so much perseverance with so much piety." And thus it was, not only in St. Patrick's own city of Armagh, but in Bangor, in Clonard, in Clonmacnoise, in Mayo; or the Saxons in Tagmahon and Beg-Erin, on the Slaney; in famed Lismore, on the Blackwater; in Mungret, on the lordly Shannon; in the far-off Islands of Arran, on the Western Ocean; and in many another sainted and historic spot, where the round tower and the group of seven churches still remain, silent but eloquent witnesses of sanctity and the glory of Ireland's first Christianity. The nations, beholding and admiring the lustre of learning and sanctity which shone forth in the holy isle, united in conferring upon Ireland the proudest title ever yet given to a land or a people; they called her "the Island of Saints and Doctors."

The voice of history clearly and emphatically proclaims that the intellectual supremacy and guidance of the Christian world belonged to Ireland from the sixth to the ninth centuries. But although religion may flourish in the halls of the university, and be fairly illustrated in the peaceful lives of the saints, yet, there is one crown, and that, indeed, the very counterweight of faith—"victoria quoque vincit mundum fides," which can only rest on the brows of a church and a nation which has been tried in the arena of persecution and war; and that crown is victory. The bay-tree may flourish by the river side; the cedar may rear its majestic head on the mountain-top; leaf and fair flower, and the fullness of fruit may be there; but it is only in the dark hour, when the storm sweeps over the earth, and every thing yields to it, and is carried away by its fury, that the good tree is tested, and its strength is proved. Then do men see whether it has struck its roots deep into the soil, and so twined them about the hidden rocks that no power can tear them out. The good ship may sail before the prosperous gales, and "walk the waters" in all her beauty and majesty; but it is only on the morning after the storm, when the hurricane has swept over the face of the deep, when the angry waves have beaten upon her, and strained to its utmost every element of her strength—seeking to destroy her, but in vain—that the sailor knows that he can trust to the heart of oak, and anchor securely in his noble vessel. Thus it is with the Church in Ireland. Her beauty and her sanctity were known and admired both of God and man; but her Lord was resolved that she should wear such crown of victory as never was placed on a nation's brows; and therefore, at two distinct periods of her history, was she obliged to meet and conquer a storm of persecution and of war unequalled in the world's annals. The first of these great trials came upon Ireland when the Northmen, or Danes, invaded the country in mighty force. They came not only as the enemies of Ireland's nationality, but much more of her faith; and we invariably find that their first and most destructive fury was directed against the churches, monasteries, and schools. The gloomy and terrible worship of Odin was to replace the religion of Christ; and for three hundred long years the whole land was covered with bloodshed and confusion, the nation fighting with heroic courage and perseverance, in defence of its altars and homes; until, at the close of the eleventh century, Ireland rose up in her united strength, shook off the Pagan and fierce invaders from her virgin bosom, and cast them into the sea. The faith and religion of Christ triumphed, and Ireland was as Catholic, though far from being as holy, at the end of the eleventh as she was at the end of the eighth century. Now we can only realize the greatness of this result by comparing it with the history of other nations. Behold, for instance, how completely the Mussulman invasions destroyed the Christianity of those ancient peoples of the East who had received the faith from the lips of the apostles themselves; how thoroughly the Saracens succeeded, in a few years, in destroying the Christian faith of the north of Africa—that once famous and flourishing Church, the Alexandria of St. Mark, the Hippo of St. Augustine, the Carthage of St. Cyprian. History attests that nothing is more subversive of the religion of a people than long-continued war and of this great truth we have, without going to the East or to Africa, a most melancholy

proof in the history of England. "The Wars of the Roses," as the strife between the Houses of Lancaster and York was called, covered a space of only thirty years, from 1455 to 1485. This war was not directed at all against religion, but was simply a contention of two great rival Houses struggling for the sovereignty; and yet it so demoralized the English people that they were prepared to accept, almost without a struggle, the monstrous form of religious error imposed upon them at the so-called Reformation—an heretical Church with a tyrant, an adulterer, and a murderer for its head. Contrast with these and many other such terrible examples the glory of a nation that emerged from a contest of three hundred years, with faith unimpaired and untarnished by the least stain of superstition or infidelity to God. It is not necessary for us to-day to recall the sad events that followed the Danish invasion of Ireland. The crown of empire fell from Ireland's brows, and the heart broke in the nation's bosom.

"The emerald gem of the western world Was set in the crown of the stranger." It is, however, worthy of remark that although opposition to her English invader, as she had been at Clontarf, still the contest for national existence was so gallantly maintained that it was four hundred years since the first Norman invasion, before the English monarch ventured to assume the title of "King of Ireland." It was in 1169 the English first landed, and it was on the 19th of June, 1541, that the royalty of Ireland was first transferred to an English dynasty, and the Lordship of the Island of Saints conferred on one of the most wicked and inhuman monsters that ever cursed the earth, King Henry VIII. And now a new era of persecution and sorrow opened upon Ireland. The nation was commanded to give up its faith and religion. Never, since the beginning of the world, was an all-important question more solemnly put; never has it been more triumphantly and clearly answered. The question was: Were the Irish people prepared to stand by their ancient faith, to unite in defence of their altars, to close with the mighty persecuting power of England, and fight her in the cause of religion? Solemnly and deliberately did Ireland take up the gauntlet and accept the great challenge. The world refused to believe that a people who could never be united in the defence of their national existence would unite as one man in defence of religion; or that the power which had succeeded in breaking Ireland's sceptre and wresting her crown should be utterly defeated in its mightiest and most persistent efforts to destroy Ireland's ancient faith. Yet so it was to be. "The Island of Saints and Doctors" was destined to be a land of heroes and martyrs, and the sacred cause of Ireland's nationality was destined to be saved in the victory which crowned her wonderful and glorious battle for her faith. This is not the time nor the occasion to dwell upon the details of that terrible struggle in which the whole strength of earth's mightiest people was put forth against us; which lasted for three hundred years; which was fought out on a thousand battle-fields; which deluged Ireland with the best blood of her children, and reduced her fairest provinces, over and over again, to the condition of a waste and desert land. But the Celt was entrenched in the citadel of God; the light of His truth was upon his path, the power of the Most High pervaded his arm, and the spirit of Patrick hung over him, like the fiery cloud that overshadowed the hosts of Israel upon the plains of Edom and Madian.

Ireland's preservation of the Catholic faith has been a puzzle to the world, and men have sought to explain in many different ways the extraordinary phenomenon. Some ascribe it to our natural antipathy and opposition in England and every-thing English; others again allege the strong conservatism of the Irish character, and its veneration for ancient rites and usages, merely because they are ancient; whilst English historians and philosophers love to attribute it to the natural obstinacy and wrongheadedness which they say is inherent in the Irish. I do not deny that, amongst the minor and human causes that influenced the religious action of the Irish people, there may have been a hatred and detestation of England. The false religion was presented to our fathers by the detested hands that had robbed Ireland of her crown; it was offered at the point of the sword that had shed (often treacherously and foully) the blood of her bravest sons; the nauseous dose of Protestantism was mixed in the bowl that poisoned the last of her great earls—Owen Roe O'Neill. All this may have told with the Irish people; and I also admit that a Church and religion claiming to be of God, with such a divinely appointed head as the saintly Henry VIII.—such a nursing mother as the chaste Elizabeth—such gentle missionaries as the humane and tender-hearted Oliver Cromwell, may have presented difficulties to a people whose wits were sharpened by adversity, and who were not wholly ignorant of the Christian character, as illustrated in the history and traditions of their native land.

We may also admit to a slight extent the conservatism of the Irish character and its veneration for antiquity. Oh, how much our fathers had to love in their ancient religion! Their history began with their Christianity; their glories were all intertwined with their religion; their national banners were inscribed with the emblem of their faith, "the green, immortal Shamrock;" the brightest names in their history were all associated with their religion—"Malachi of the collar of gold," dying in the midst of the monks, and clothed with their holy habit on an island of Lough Ennell, near Mullingar, in Meath—Brian, "the great King," upholding the crucifix before his army on the morning of Clontarf, and expiring in its embraces before the sunset—the brave Murkretach O'Brien answering fearlessly the threat of William Rufus, for when the English king said, looking towards Ireland, "I will bring either my ships, and pass over and conquer the land;" "Hush the King," asked the Irish monarch, "in his great threatenings said, 'if it please God.'" And when answered, no; "Then tell him," exclaimed the Irish hero, "I fear him not, since he putteth his trust in man and not in God."—Roderick O'Connor, the last "High King" of Ireland, closing his career of disaster and of glory amongst the canons of the Abbey of Cong—saint, and hard, and here, all alike presented themselves to the national mind surrounded by the halo of that religion which the people were now called upon to abandon and despise. Powerful as was the appeal of history and antiquity, I cannot give it any great weight in the preservation of Ireland's Catholicity. I do not believe that adherence to ancient usage because of its antiquity is a prominent feature of Irish character. We are by no means so conservative as our English neighbors. It is worthy of remark that usages and customs once common to both countries, and long since abandoned and forgotten in Ireland (Christmas "waits," for instance, harvest-home feasts, Maypole dances, and the like) are still kept up faithfully and universally throughout England. The bells which, in Catholic times, called the people to early Mass on Sunday morning, are still rung out as of old, through mere love of ancient usage, although their ringing from Protestant towers in the early morning has no meaning whatever; yet it invites to no service or prayer. And yet, in the essential matter of religion, where antiquity itself is a proof of truth, the conservative English gave up the old faith for the new; whilst the Irish—in other things so regardless of antiquity—did and shed their blood for the old religion, rather than turn for one instant to the strange imposture of the new.

But none of these purely natural explanations can explain the supernatural fact, that a whole people preferred, for ten generations, confiscation, exile, and death, rather than surrender their faith; and the true reason lies in the all-important circumstance, that the religion of the Irish people was the true religion of Jesus Christ, bringing not only light to the intelligence, but grace and strength to the heart and will of the nation. The light of their divine faith showed them the hollowness and fallacy of Protestantism, in which they recognized an outrage upon common sense and reason, as well as upon God; and the grace of their holy Catholic religion enabled them to suffer and die in its defence. Here it is that we recognize the providence of God in the preaching of St. Patrick. The man and false religion assailed precisely those points of Catholic teaching which he had engraved most deeply on the mind and heart of Ireland, as if he had anticipated the trial and prepared for it. Attachment to the Holy See was more than a sentiment; it was a passion in the Irish bosom. Through good report and evil report, Ireland was always faithful to Peter's chair; and it is a curious fact, that when the Christian world was confused by the pretensions of Anti-popes, and all the nations of Christendom were, at one time or other, led astray, so as to acknowledge some false pretender, Ireland, with an instinct truly supernatural, never failed to discover, to proclaim, and to obey the true pontiff. She is the only Catholic nation that never was, for a moment, separated from Peter, nor mistaken in her allegiance to him. Her prayer, her obedience, her love, was the sure inheritance of each succeeding Pope, from Celestine, who sent St. Patrick to Ireland, to Pius, who, in our own day, beheld Patrick's children guarding his venerable throne, and prepared to die in his glorious cause. In every Catholic land union with Rome is a principle. In Ireland it was a devotion. And so, when the evil genius of Protestantism stalked through the land, and with loud voice demanded of the Irish people separation from Rome, or their lives,—the faithful people of God consented to die, rather than to renounce the faith of their fathers, transmitted to them through the saints.

Devotions to the Mother of God was the next great feature of Patrick's preaching and of Ireland's Catholicity. The image of all that was fairest in nature and grace, which arose before the eyes of the people, as depicted by the great apostles, captivated their imaginations and their hearts. They called her in their prayers "Miden Dheolish," their darling Virgin. In every family in the land the eldest daughter was a Mary; every Irish maid or mother emulated the purity of her virgin innocence, or the strength and tenderness of her maternal love. With the keenness of love they associated their daily sorrows and joys with hers; and the ineffable grace of maiden modesty which clung to the

very mothers of Ireland seemed to be the brightest reflection of Mary which had lingered upon the earth. Oh, how harshly upon the ears of such a people grated the detestable voice which would rob Mary of her graces, and rob the world of the light of her purity and the glory of her example! Never was the Mother of God so dear to Ireland as in the days of the nation's persecution and sorrow. Not even in that bright day when the Virgin Mother seemed to walk the earth, and to have made Ireland her home, in the person of their own St. Bridget, was her name so dear and the love of her so strong, as in the dark and terrible time when, church and altar being destroyed, every cabin in the land resounded with Mary's name, invoked in the holy rosary, the great devotion that saved Ireland's faith.

The third great leading feature of our holy religion assailed by Protestantism was the sweet and tender doctrine of prayer and love for the dead. That which is opposed to divine truth is always, when we analyze it, an outrage on the best instincts of man. Remembrance of those who are gone, and a desire to help them, to communicate with them, seems natural to us all; and the more tender-hearted and affectionate and loving a people are, the more deeply will they realize and appreciate the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory, and prayer for the dead. How terrible is the separation of death, as seen from the Protestant point of view. In the Catholic Church this mystery of death is deplored of its worst bitterness. It is only a removal from our bodily sight, as if the loved one were only gone on a journey for a few days, to return to us again. Our intercourse with him does not cease; nay, we can do more for him now than ever we could in life, and by our prayers obtain for him the relief and consolation that will never be forgotten during the long day of eternity in heaven. To a people like the Irish, naturally affectionate, and strongly attached to each other, the Christian doctrine of prayer for the dead must always be grateful. Our history served to deepen this portion of our Catholic devotion, for it was a history of sorrow and of national privation; and sorrow softens and enlarges the heart. A people who had lost so much in life turned the more eagerly and lovingly to their dead. I remember once seeing an aged woman weeping and praying over a grave in Ireland; and when I questioned her, endeavoring to console her, she said, "Let me cry my fill; all that I ever had in this world are here in this grave; all that ever brought me joy or sorrow is here under this sod; and my only consolation in life is to come here and speak to them, and pray for them, and weep." We may imagine, but we cannot realize, the indignation of our fathers, when the heartless, surly, cold-blooded men of Geneva came to them to tell them, that henceforth they must be "unmindful of their dead, like others who have no hope." This doctrine may do for the selfish, light-hearted, thoughtless worldling, who loves nothing in death, and who in life only loves for his own sake; but it would scarcely be acceptable to a generous, pure, and loving race, and withal a nation of mourners, as the Irish were, when the unnatural doctrine was first propounded to them.

Finally, the new religion was represented to the Irish people by men who grotesquely represented themselves as successors of the apostles. The popular mind in Ireland had derived its idea of the Christian priesthood from such men as Patrick, Columba, of Iona, and Kevin, of Glendalough. The great majority of the clergy in Ireland were at all times monastic—men who added to the sanctity and austerity of the Cenobite, the virtues of Ireland's priesthood made them the admiration of other lands, but the idols of their own people. The monastic glories of ancient Lismore and Bangor were still reflected from Mellifont and Bective the men of Glendalough and ancient Armagh lived on in the Franciscan and Dominican abbeys throughout the land; and the Catholic Church presented, in the sixteenth century, in her Irish clergy, the same purity of life, sanctity and austerity of morals, zeal, and learning, which illumined the world in ages gone by. Steeped as our people were in sorrow, they could not refrain from mirth at the sight of the "holy apostles" of the new religion,

the men who were to take the place of the Catholic bishops, and priests, and monks, to teach and illustrate by their lives the purer gospel which had been just discovered—the Mormonism of the sixteenth century. English renegade monks, English apostate priests, English drunken brawlers, with a ferocious English army at their back, invaded the land, and parading themselves, with their wives or concubines, before the eyes of the astonished and disgusted people called upon the children of St. Patrick and St. Columba to receive them as "the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God." Their religion was worthy of them—they had no mysteries to dispense to the people; no sacrifice, no penance, no confession of sin, no fasting, no vows to God, no purity, no counsels of the Gospel, no sacrament of matrimony, no priesthood, no anointing of the sick, no prayer for the dead. Gracious God! They came to a people whom they had robbed of their kingdom of earth and demanded of them also the surrender of the kingdom of heaven! Was ever heard such audacity! What wonder that Ireland took her own priest, her "soggarth aroon," to her bosom! Never did she know his value till now. It was only when she had seen his hideous counterpart that she realized all she possessed in the humble child of St. Francis and St. Dominic. The sunshine is all the more welcome when we have seen the blackness of the night; the sweet is all the sweeter when we have tasted bitterness; the diamond shines all the brighter when its dull, glassy counterfeit is set beside it; and the Angel of Light has all the purer radiance of heaven around him, after the afflicted eye has caught a glimpse of the Spirit of Darkness. As strangers, the ministers of Protestantism have lived in Ireland for three hundred years; as strangers they live in the land to-day. The people and their clergy, united, "have fought the good fight, have kept the faith," and we have lived to see the triumph of that faith in our own day.

Now, I say, that in all this, we see the Providence of God in the labor of Ireland's glorious apostle. Who can deny that the religion which St. Patrick gave to Ireland is divine? A thousand years of sanctity attest it; three hundred years of martyrdom attest it. If men will

CONTINUED ON PAGE SIX

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