

An Hour with the Editor

IRISH HISTORY

For a long time it was thought by antiquarians that the inhabitants of Ireland before the introduction of Christianity were idolaters, or at least sun-worshippers. The round towers, of which so many are scattered over the country, were thought to have been built for use in this worship, and the cromlechs were supposed to have been sacrificial altars. Both these ideas have been exploded by late research, and it is now admitted that the cromlechs were burial places, and the towers were associated with the churches, being intended to be used by the priests to call the people to prayer, and were also a refuge in time of hostilities. There are no traces of idolatry in Ireland. Indeed the more the ancient Druidical religion is studied the more clearly it is seen to have been monotheistic. There does not even appear to have been in Ireland any notion of demi-gods, but the people seem to have accepted from the Druids the idea of one supreme deity, who was surrounded with mystery. The Irish were always lovers of the mysterious. No folk-lore is richer than theirs in tales of fairies, giants and all sorts of supernatural creatures. They were highly emotional, but exceedingly simple in their ideas. Therefore the ground was exceedingly favorable for the introduction of Christianity, and the result is that in no country was the new religion accorded a more cordial welcome or was it crowned with so early and complete a triumph. Its mysteries were presented to the people as mysteries, un-mixed with Greek philosophy or Roman politics.

As was said in the previous article, St. Patrick was not the first to preach Christianity to the Irish, for it had already obtained a footing on its shores when he came; but his mission was so remarkable and played so important a part in the history of the people that it may be said to mark an epoch. Tradition has surrounded this remarkable man with much that seems incredible, but if we choose to dismiss all the marvelous and weird things associated with his name, the fact remains that he found Ireland pagan, except in a few places on the southeast coast, and left it Christian from one end to the other. The date of St. Patrick's birth is not known with certainty, but the authorities place it somewhere between 377 and 387. His birthplace is not known with certainty, some saying it was in Scotland, others in France. He appears to have been of Roman extraction. He himself said that his father's name was Calpornius, which is a Roman name. His own name was Succat, Patrick being his Roman name, and it signifies that he was of noble descent. He was educated in France and was sent to Ireland by the Pope in 434. The date of his death is uncertain, the years assigned ranging all the way from 460 to 493. If the latter is correct, he must have lived at least 116 years. Some of the traditions that have come down from his time may be of interest. It is said that when he landed he engaged in contests of skill similar to those that took place between Moses and the Egyptian priest. Patrick was invariably successful, and in one of the contests five of the Druid priests died. Recraid, a chieftain, came before him with words of incantation written on his garments, but fell dead before Patrick's glance. Laeghaire, the supreme king of Ireland, perished with many attendants, because he would not accept the faith. His daughters met the saint, and on hearing him speak, decided to become Christians. They asked to be allowed to see Christ; Patrick administered the Eucharist and they died. Rins, a chieftain, found it hard to accept Christianity, and to convince him, Patrick restored his lost youth, and then offered him the joys of life or the joys of Heaven. He chose the latter, and at once died. So many are the traditions of this nature that Father Thebeau in his history, feeling unable to deny them, seeks to explain them by saying that the Irish were "a primitive people" with "a strong supernatural spirit and character."

It is not necessary to trouble ourselves with an attempt to explain these and the hundreds of other remarkable things told of St. Patrick's mission. We have the incontrovertible fact that his success was instant and overwhelming. For a third of a century and more he traversed the island, visiting every part of it at least once, and making at least three tours from end to end. The people thronged to hear him, and he baptized. Everywhere he went he erected churches, and in many places monasteries and nunneries. Young men by the hundreds begged to devote their lives to prayer, and hundreds of maidens sought to be made "brides of Christ." The converts were from all classes in society. When he appeared in what is now the County Mayo, the seven sons of the king and twelve thousand of their clansmen were baptized, and all the people accepted Christianity. The King of Cashel and all his nobility accepted the faith at the time of Patrick's first visit, and the whole Dalcaissian tribe were baptized at one time. The later history of Ireland shows that this acceptance of the Christian religion did not materially affect the character of the people as a whole. There is, indeed, reason to believe that with the supplanting of the Druids by priests of the new faith, the ancient civilization of the people perished.

The history of Ireland during the five centuries after the mission of St. Patrick was marked by a great deal of discord and many tribal wars, and her coasts were harried by attacks from the Danes. It is notable that these hardy adventurers from the North were unable

to make any permanent conquest of the country. They took a few seaports, but were unable to hold them long. The claim is made, and apparently with justice, that Ireland was the only part of Western Europe upon which the Norsemen were unable to impose either their way or their institutions. In the Tenth Century Brian Boromhe (Boru) ascended the throne of Munster. At this time O'Maelachaghlen was Ard-Rhi, or supreme king, the position being something in the nature of that of an emperor. Brian deposed him and reigned in his stead. He set up his capital at Killaloe, but held court at Tara and Cashel. He was a great and successful ruler. He fought and won no less than twenty-six pitched battles with the Danes, compelling them to take refuge in Dublin, Wexford, Waterford and Limerick. He was killed in the battle of Clontarf in 1014, after inflicting upon the Danes a defeat from which they never recovered.

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

There are several theories as to the nature of electricity, and a person may hold either of neither of them, and yet, if he knows how, he can send a message by telegraph. This thought was suggested by reading the statement that a society had been formed in Calcutta to convert the Christian world to a faith in Vaishnavism and the acceptance of Gauranga as God. The word Vaishnavism is derived from Vishnu, the first in rank of the Hindu Trimurti, or Trinity, who represents the power of preservation. While tradition and the teaching of ignorant priests have surrounded his name with much that is grotesque and absurd, there is no doubt that Vishnu was originally a philosophical conception. Gauranga seems to be only another name for Vishnu. Vaishnavism is very differently understood by those who profess it, and there are at least twenty separate sects, many of which hold such distorted views that any one becoming familiar with them and supposing them to be truly representative of the fundamental doctrine of the faith, might well smile at the idea of persuading enlightened people to adopt them. But at the foundation this religion is a belief in one Supreme God, to whom man can be united in bonds of love. One of the more recent offshoots of Vaishnavism was what was known as the Bramo Somaj, of which a great deal was heard some fifty years ago, after the visit of its great apostle, Chunder Sen, to Europe. This sect was founded as recently as 1836. The doctrine of the Bramo Somaj, that is, the Society of God, may be thus stated: There is one Supreme God, who is the only object of worship; that nature and intuition are the only sources of the knowledge of God, and that religion admits of progressive development. It recognizes perfect equality between individuals, opposes anything resembling idolatry, considers worship to be necessary, and while acknowledging no sacred books, admits that there is good in all religions. It may be mentioned that the idea of progress in religion is one of the essential features of Vaishnavism. There are said to have been nine avatars of Vishnu, that is, the Supreme Deity has been incarnate nine times. He is to be incarnate again, and then the end of time will be at hand. There is a great deal of what seems to be confusion in the explanation given of the relations of Vishnu to Brahman and to Indra. To reduce Vaishnavistic mythology to anything resembling rational order is quite impossible, and no good purpose would be served by it, if it could be done, for there is no doubt that it represents the groping of the minds of a mystic people after truths the nature of which they themselves did not understand. All that we are interested in is the new movement above referred to, which closely resembles the Bramo Somaj, at least as far as can be judged from the general terms in which it has so far been described in the European press.

Perhaps it would be correct to say that, stripped of all its extravagances and grotesque features, Vaishnavism is rather a philosophy than a religion. As taught by its most progressive teachers, it imparts an idea of God far more in consonance with that portrayed by Jesus than is the Jehovah of the Old Testament. But while it is chiefly a philosophy, it is also a religion in the sense that it insists upon worship and makes purity of life essential to worship. There does not appear to be anything in it inconsistent with Christianity, and there seems to be no reason at all why the Vaishnavic conception of the Deity might not be accepted by persons who accept Christianity as taught by Christ Himself. Christians accepted the Jewish idea of the Deity for reasons that are obvious, but there is nothing in the teachings of Christ which compel us to believe that God is as He is at times represented to be in the Old Testament Scriptures. By philosophy we reach the conclusion that there must be a God, but that belief does not of itself constitute a religion. It may well be the foundation of religion. If we are honest in our reasoning, we will not only realize that there is a God, but the cry of our souls will be, "O that I knew where to find Him." Christianity answers this question, but so far as seems evident from any published statement of its doctrines, Vaishnavism does not. Those who accept its teachings may worship God afar off; those who accept Christianity can feel His presence in their own souls. The modern Vaishnavic conception of the Deity is not different from that held by the modern Christian Church. Therefore the Hindu faith in its most enlightened form is not antagonistic to Christianity, but the latter is its complement. It seems we then might say that where the an-

cient philosophy of India leaves man, because it can take him no further, Christianity takes him up and carries him to a personal relation with the Deity. Vaishnavism holds out to its disciples the prospect of an ultimate union with the Divine; Christianity offers it now.

THE EARTH.

How is the external shape of the continents to be explained? Everyone who has examined a map of the world with any care cannot have failed to observe that north of the Equator the continental masses are irregular in outline, broadening towards the north, whereas south of the Equator they are smooth in outline and taper towards the south. He will also have observed that most of the peninsulas extend towards the south. Take South America as an example of the peculiar southern formation. It tapers from the Equator to the south and has not a prominent projection into the sea that can be called a peninsula. The same is true of Africa, and also of Australia, except that the latter does not show the tapering form. Take among peninsulas, Hindustan, Farther India, Korea, Kamtschatka, Alaska, California, Florida, Nova Scotia, Italy, Scandinavia and Greece. These all project to the south. The peninsulas which project towards the north are few in number, Denmark is almost the only one that suggests itself without inspection of the map. These interesting facts seem to be more than mere coincidences and afford ground for the theory that they are due to a common cause. What that cause may be we shall endeavor to suggest.

Before doing so it may be well to specify a few more details. It has already been mentioned in this series of articles that the three more northerly continents are marked by low-lying areas extending to their northern boundaries. In the case of North America, the low-lying area forms the great plain of Central Canada, which falls away from its extreme elevation in southwestern Alberta in a fan-shaped form to the shores of Hudson's Bay and the Arctic Ocean. In Asia the corresponding area rests on the south upon the Altai Range and falls off towards the north. In Asia, the low-lying region extends across the continent from north to south. In Canada and Siberia there are to be found numerous salt lakes, and on the borders of Europe and Asia we have the Caspian Sea. In the reference made to the structural geology of Asia mention was made of the opinion of geologists that the Caspian Sea and the Sea of Azoff are the remnants of what once was an ocean. The existence of these lakes and seas and of the numerous great bodies of salt found in various places over the low-lying areas in the three continents seems to be conclusive proof that the ocean once occupied what is now dry land.

The observations of Lieutenant Shackleton have established the theory, long held by geographers, that a South-Polar continent exists in a place corresponding to that part of the Northern Hemisphere which is now known to be occupied by water. On some of the maps of the world it is now the practice to place hemispherical representations of the earth, showing a land hemisphere and a water hemisphere. If a terrestrial globe be taken and standing above it, you look down upon what represents the North Pole, you will observe a water area nearly surrounded by land; if you reverse the globe so that the South Pole is uppermost, you will see a land area surrounded by water. The south is the water hemisphere. There is vastly more water south of the Equator than there is north of it. If the water were evenly distributed between the two hemispheres, the whole appearance of the earth's surface would be changed. A very large part of Central Canada would become an ocean and there would be a fringe of possible seaports along the eastern and northern coast of a part of the region we now call Alberta. The Tundras of Siberia would become an ocean bed; the Altai summits would look out over an ocean and ships could sail from the White Sea to the Black Sea across the steppes of Russia. The characteristic features of the northern Hemisphere would disappear. The northern prolongation of the Rocky Mountains would become an archipelago and the summits of the Scandinavian Mountains and of the Ural Range would form more or less broken islands resembling in shape the Dominion of New Zealand. What would take place in the southern Hemisphere we can only surmise, for we do not know enough of the land, which is there covered by the ocean, to be able to suggest with any definiteness what the coast line would be like if a very considerable part of the water were drained off towards the north. It is safe to assume, however, that the southern continents would lose their characteristic features; that the continents themselves would have large new areas added to them; that new islands would appear; new peninsulas would project into the sea. Some of these peninsulas would project from the Antarctic Continent, and they would of necessity extend towards the north. The shifting of the water would also have the effect of greatly reducing the area of those peninsulas, which now extend towards the south in the northern Hemisphere.

The conclusion to which these facts and considerations seem to point is that there has been within comparatively recent time a great

displacement of water from the north to the south. It is very probable that this displacement was gradual and not in the nature of a flood. It may have been due to the elevation of the land in the north or to its subsidence in the south. There are constant oscillations in what we call the crust of the globe. Sometimes they are confined to small areas and are sudden, and we call them earthquakes; sometimes they extend over centuries. They are not uniform. For example, you can see near the Isthmus of Chignecto, which connects Nova Scotia with New Brunswick, abundant evidence that there has been a subsidence of the land during the historic period. On the coast of Sweden there is unmistakable evidence that an elevation of the land occurred not long before the beginning of the historic period. We saw last Sunday in speaking of the formation of coral islands that there is a more or less steady subsidence going on in the South Pacific Ocean, and on the previous Sunday it was mentioned that an elevation of the ocean bottom seems to be in progress in the eastern part of the Pacific. It is quite conceivable that, while these local and relatively minor oscillations have been going on, there may have been a greater oscillation between the north and the south, a sort of tectonic, as it were, the north formerly having been down and the south up, and that at present the process is reversed.

When this oscillation began there is no means of ascertaining. There are reasons for thinking that it was not at a very remote period. Possibly much of it has taken place within the past ten thousand years. In previous articles on this page mention has been made of the evidence of a great event of a geological nature that happened possibly not more than a hundred centuries ago, or at the time the ice of the Glacial Age began to disappear from the northern part of this continent, and when the canyons so characteristic of our northern rivers were formed.

Stories of the Classics

(N. de Bernard Lugin)

Helen of Troy

(Continued)

How the old-time poets loved Achilles! A modern writer finds a subject more to his taste in Hector, Menelaus, Ulysses, or even Patroclus, distinguished principally for his devotion to his friend. But Achilles possessed all of those heroic qualities which the ancient Greek most admired, qualities which made him more godlike than human. We look at things from a different standpoint now. To love, with us, is greater than to admire. The Greeks purported to learn their cunning, their strength, their skill, their dauntlessness from the gods, who loved as they hated, with a power that knew no scruple. We have established a purer and a gentler code of virtue since Jesus was born in Bethlehem two thousand years ago.

And so, because the Greek poets loved the warlike hero, they felt that he possessed no fitting mate except that queen of women whom a whole world adored, and if they could not bring Achilles and Helen together in reality, they must provide a meeting between the two through the instrumentality of Thetis and Aphrodite, who permitted that Achilles should see Helen in a vision on the summit of Mount Ida. Then he told her that it was his hatred of Paris that had brought him against Troy. "The valiant holding the hearth as sacred as the temple, is never a violator of hospitality. He carries not away the gold he finds in the house; he folds not up the purple linen worked for Solemnities, about to convey it from the cedar chest to the dark ships, together with the wife confided to his protection in her husband's absence, and sitting close and expectant by the altar of the gods." And Helen, abashed, threw the blame of her participation in the abduction of Aphrodite, "who urged me by day and night."

It was a very human Helen indeed who wept with Andromache over Hector's corpse.

"Hector," she cried, "of brethren dearest to my heart,

For I in sooth am Alexander's bride,
Who brought me hither: would I first had died!

For 'tis the twentieth year of doom deferred
Since Troyward from my fatherland I fled;
Yet never in those years mine ear hath heard
From thy most gracious lips one sharp accus-

ing word;
Nay, if by other I haply were reviled,
Brother, or sister fair, or brother's bride,
Or mother (for the king was always mild),
Thou with kind words the same hast pacified
With gentle words, and mien like summer tide.
Wherefore I mourn for thee and mine own ill,
Grieving at heart: for in Troy town so wide
Friend have I none, nor harbinger of good will,
But from my touch all shrink with deadly
shuddering chill."

The death of Hector spelt the beginning of the end to the Trojans, though their hopes for a little while revived when Penthesilea, queen of the Amazons, with a band of her courageous women warriors came to their assistance. Death and destruction were the lot of all, however, who had Achilles for an antagonist, and though at first the Amazonian queen was suc-

cessful in beating back the besiegers, it was only later to fall herself beneath the sword of this invincible warrior. Flushed and breathless with triumph, Achilles knelt, and removed the helmet from her head, whereupon her white and lovely face was exposed, and her golden hair fell about her in a shower. So amazed and grieved was he upon learning that his brave enemy had been a woman, and a woman of so many charms, that the great hero almost wept, and burying his face in his hands groined aloud. Whereupon one Tharsites, overjoyed to see the invulnerable chief display some weakness, taunted him scornfully, and Achilles avenged the insult swiftly and surely by killing the rash young soldier with one blow of his fist.

Then there arrived upon the battlefield, Memnon, son of the dawn, with a company of enormous black Aethiopians. Again for a brief space the fortunes of the besieged seemed in the ascendant, but when at length the result of the combat rested between Memnon and Achilles, though the fight was long and arduous, the strength and skill of the latter, and the prayers of his mother Thetis to Zeus, prevailed, and brave Memnon fell, though his mother, Eos, obtained for him the gift of immortality.

But Achilles' end was drawing near, and it was fated that after all his death should be comparatively ignominious, for he was slain by him whom he had so bitterly despised, that Paris, who, the cause of all the bitter feud, cared best to fight behind the protection of the wall. Achilles had routed the Trojans and was chasing them back to the town, when near the Scaean gate he was struck in the heel by an arrow from the quiver of Paris.

The Trojans made every attempt to procure the body of the great Greek chief, but Ajax and Ulysses snatched it from under their very eyes. "Bitter was the grief of Thetis for the loss of her son. She came into camp with the Muses and the Nereids to mourn over him; and when a magnificent funeral-pile had been prepared by the Greek to burn him with every mark of honor, she stole away the body and conveyed it to a renewed and immortal life in the Island of Leuke, in the Euxine Sea. According to some accounts, he was there blessed with the nuptials and company of Helen."

It was during the splendid funeral games which Thetis celebrated in honor of her son that Ajax came to an end. The panoply of Achilles, forged and wrought by Hephaestus, had been offered as a prize to the most illustrious warrior in the Grecian army. Ulysses and Ajax became rivals for the honor of its possession, but the deities favored Ulysses, and some Trojan prisoners being asked which one had worked greatest havoc in their country, named Ulysses also. And so the brave Ajax, feeling himself wronged and humiliated, went out of his mind with grief and anger, and in a paroxysm of madness slew some sheep, mistaking them for the men who had wronged him, then fell upon his own sword.

TO A JILT

If handsome is as handsome does,
As handsome hath been said to be,
Why, you're the handsomest ever was,
For you have "done me" handsomely!
—London Opinion.

FLASKS

Sing a song of sixpence,
Pocket full of rye—
That's the way to carry it
When the town is dry.
—Philadelphia Telegraph.

WELL?

"You must not rock the baby at all," says the grave physician.
"But I think an old-fashioned cradle is so cunning, and besides the gentle motion gets the baby to sleep without crying for an hour," says the young mother.
"Yes, but that rocking motion is very injurious upon the child's brain. The constant swaying really damages its mind."
"Doctor?"
"Yes, madam?"
"When you were a little baby they still used cradles, didn't they?"
"Certainly. That was before science had determined so many of the—"
"Well-I-I-I!"

YOUNG AMERICA

The following answers are taken from a number collected by a teacher in the Topeka schools:
"A blizzard is the inside of a hen."
"Oxygen is a thing with eight sides."
"The cuckoo never lays its own eggs."
Indianapolis News.

Stranger—But, hang it, man, if you don't know whether there'll be another train today, who in thunder does?
"Ye might try ole Hank Henders, over yonder. They do say he's a gind o' fortune teller."

"Son, I hear you have joined the Boy Scout movement."
"Yes, dad."
"Well, s'pose you scout ahead and see if your mother is sitting up for me."
—Pittsburg Post.