

THE BLACKBIRD OF NOENDRUM.*

BY MAGDALEN ROCK.



RIGHT green are the woodlands on Lough Cuan's
 shore,
 And blue is the lake as the lark ere flew o'er,
 And sweet is the song of the lark in the spring
 For the first baby buds or the sloe's blossoming
 Into milky white flowers.

And the lark's song is sweet, as a lark's song will be,
 Sing he soft from a cage, sing he loud from a tree ;
 But the sweetest bird notes heard from forest or lawn
 Can be heard in Noendrum's green alleys at dawn
 In her green shady bowers.

'Tis a blackbird that sings in the spot, as they say,
 Where the centuries once seemed to be as a day ;
 I'll tell you the legend, so rest in the grass
 Where the long shadows linger awhile as they pass,
 As if loath for to leave it.

St. Mochae, they tell, by St. Patrick's blessed hand
 Was tonsured, and preached the new faith in the land ;
 And the crozier he bore, by an angel's hand made,
 Fell straight on his bosom one day as he prayed,
 So our people believe it.

O'er the rude island home, where his monastery stood,
 'Mid the fairy sea caves and the far-spreading wood,
 He looked round one morning and planned where the
 church
 Should be built of the boughs of the poplar and birch
 On the ridge in the centre.

* These lines are based on an ancient legend told anew in the Most Rev. Dr. Healey's work on the Saints and Monasteries of Ireland.