

characters of the new hagiographers, and the re-casting of liturgical works even, undertaken in such dispositions, completely broke off all communion with a past of simple and unstudied faith. True historical criticism was doubtless often violated amid all these charges of falsehood flung on the testimony of ages; but this was unthought of in the joy felt on at last offering to the public, whose rationalism became daily more exacting, the *Lives of the Saints*, expurgated, as far as possible, of all that was wonderful.

In no case, however, has this expurgation of miracles gone so far as in Ireland, where it has gone so far as almost to consign to oblivion the lives of the early Saints, the Apostles, the Virgins of the Isle, of whom the current literature gives only such bald and tame sketches, that beside them Butler becomes enthusiastic, and Buillet full of unction and Christian persuasiveness.

Compare, for instance, the life of Saint Patrick by Jocelyn and that by Lynch. According to the one, he was a Thaumaturgus, wielding miraculous powers as great as those of Saint Vincent Ferer, Saint Francis Xavier, Saint Francis of Hyeronimo, or Blessed Peter Claver; according to the other, he wrought so few that it would be pretty difficult to obtain his canonization in our days. There is certainly an error in this. We conceive it was evinced by God's ordinary providence in the conversion of nations, that the first apostle of a land, the one who wins it to the faith of Christ, is uniformly endowed, to an extraordinary extent, with miraculous powers, not accorded in an equal degree to his successors. God fits every man for the ministry to which he calls him, and for the overthrow of idolatry and implanting of the truth, usually gives the gift of miracles. We should, then, be disposed rather to prefer a life of Saint Patrick, that would thus portray him, than one which divests him of that gift. In the accounts which centuries of pious reverence have accumulated with loving care, and perhaps fond credulity, there may be chaff, but there is certainly wheat which will repay the winnowing of judicious criticism.

"The miracles of the Irish Saints," says Barneval, "are not, I think, articles of faith; without questioning then their merits, we may then call in doubt many

of the wonderful signs with which they are invested; but if we admit that their whole legend is only an epic, half monastic, half popular, by turns ingenious and rude, vulgar and poetical, simple and brilliant, dramatic and plain, we must admit that most of these accounts are symbolical. Men passed amid the nations doing good. Gratitude has transmitted their actions, imagination has transformed them. Their miracles may be inventions: their virtues are not; and there is always something true in these fictions, something human in this supernatural, some moral in this fancy."

Detesting with all our heart these modern writers who so dislike the miracles of St. Patrick and the early Irish Saints, who so upbraid Jocelyn and Acamnan and Cogitosus, and all those of whom Ireland may really be proud, and biased as we are by our belief in the frequent manifestation of divine power in Ireland's conversion, we took up the book of Mr. Tachet de Barneval with some misgivings, when we found that his work was one not on Irish legends, in their popular acceptance, but a work on the Irish legend in its ecclesiastical meaning; in other words, a volume on the Irish saints. "In the French and Catholic meaning of the word the Legend is the *Lives of the Saints*."

Mr. Tachet de Barneval is a Frenchman, but of Irish descent, who, after his family's two centuries of exile, preserves a love for Ireland, with something of Irish blood and Irish instincts in him. We like him for this, and we like him better when he says: "In the seventeenth century, when reason became severe, when in the very bosom of Catholicity the worship of reason was inaugurated, the legend was attacked. The Bollandists soon criticised it, and the Benedictines expurgated it. Perhaps it then scandalized the unbeliever a little less: perhaps too it edified the faithful a little less. What the wise ridicule or prescribe; what the learned neglect or despise, what even the *litterateurs* disdain, is precisely what I have in preference explored."

His theory as to these lives is not ours: they are to him symbolical, and he seeks to trace by them the history of the times, the struggles of the early Church, and writing with ease and grace, and with something of Irish instinct, as he well says, he has made a volume which we have