

native country, he tells us that he dare not absent himself from Ireland, lest he should lose the fruits of his labors, and become guilty of a dereliction of duty in the sight of God. Had he been a native of either Scotland or England, such a journey, including his return, would only occupy a few days; or had he been overpressed with the labors of his ministry, a visit on the part of his friends and relatives from either of those countries could cause little inconvenience, as it would be more than counterbalanced by his gratitude.

In his writings, St. Patrick has left but an imperfect memorial of his family. The peculiar distress which the conduct of Corotius had caused, and which the Saint, in his letter to that Prince, had so firmly censured, induced him to allude rather particularly to his relatives. He describes their position in society as respectable, and such as then entitled them to partake in honors, which were attached to civic functions. His father, Calphurnius, was the son of Potitus, a priest, and was himself decorated with the holy order of deacon. According to the laws of the empire, his father and grandfather by engaging in the sacred ministry forfeited the privileges to which they were entitled by inheritance. But from a relaxation in those laws, or from some particular favor, the family of our Saint were not deprived of their hereditary privileges. That they were of Roman origin, is sufficiently clear from the form of their names; and in his letter to Corotius, he refers to the Romans as his fellow-citizens. Of his mother, Conehessa, and of the other members of his family, but little authentic has been preserved. It appears that she has been born in Gaul, but of her family connection the ancient annals are wholly silent. Some assert that she was the near relative of St. Martin, Bishop of Tours. The silence of those annals refutes the assertion, as a circumstance so honorable to her family would not be omitted by persons desirous to exalt the character of St. Patrick with posterity. St. Martin was a native of Pannonia; nor is there any ground for supposing that any brothers or sisters resided with him in Gaul. Neither Sulpicius Severus, Paulinus, or any other biographer of St. Martin, made mention of them; nor does it appear that any of his family, which was settled at Pavia, followed him to Tours. He returned to Italy to visit his parents, who were Pagans, and then exerted himself to bring them over to the Christian faith. His father remained obstinate, but his mother embraced the true faith which her son announced.

Much is related of the numerous kinsfolk of St. Patrick in Ireland, by Usher and Colgan, who has collected the whole in a copious dissertation. One sister is said to have been the mother of seventeen sons, all of whom became bishops, priests, or ascetics, besides five daughters, who were nuns. Another sister, blessed with as many sons as the former,