

statues, or idols, was not general in Ireland. However, it cannot be denied, that in some instances such was the custom, as St. Patrick alludes to these idols and unclean things.—*Conf.*, p. 16. In the lives of St. Patrick, reference is made to the idol which the monarch Leogaire adored; it is called "Cromeruach," *i.e.*, Heap of the Sun, and was surrounded by twelve smaller idols of brass. Admitting that idolatry was practiced, we are at liberty to confine its existence to that spot where it first originated. The place was called "The Field of Adoration," and was situated in the county of Leitrim. Lynch (*Camb. Ever.*, p. 59,) writes, that Tigernach, king of Ireland, who instituted the rites of idolatry in Brefny, was cut off by lightning.

In the Irish ritual, as well as in the Eastern, the veneration of fire held an important place, and the predilection of the people for this worship may be inferred from the degree of earnestness with which St. Patrick labored to detach them. In a manner worthy of his apostolic zeal, he denounces in his *Confessions* the perversity of man's intellect, whereby the homage due to the Lord of the universe, in whom all things move, and derive their origin and perfection, is offered to the creature, or to the work of his own hands. "For," says the saint, "that sun which we behold, rises each day for our benefit by the order of God; but that sun shall not reign for ever, nor shall his splendor endure; but all who adore him are wretched, and shall be subjected to punishment. For us, we adore the true sun, who is Christ."

The original religion of the Irish was Sabism, which began in Chaldea, and spread into Scythia, Medea, and Persia. It consisted of two kinds, and was celebrated with or without images, and its public worship was that of fire. The Chaldees were priests of Babylon, the first seat of idolatry, and were called Chalybes and Cephni, words which indicate the sun and its worship by fire. The image worship of Sabism was brought into Ireland by the Tuatha de Danaans, and that without images was introduced by the Milesians, who were originally Persians and Phœnicians.—*Vall. Vin. of Irish History.*

The priests of the Pagan Irish were required to observe chastity and purity, at least externally, nor were they permitted to marry widows, virgins only being considered as worthy of being admitted to their nuptial embraces; and certain rules at stated times, such as are found in the Levitical law, were strictly enforced. If the Pagan era of Ireland was remarkable for its cultivation of this virtue in the ministers of its false ritual, and if such rules were enforced in the lives of those who were of course their models and their guides, it is no wonder that a love of this virtue is still pre-eminent among the people, and that they regard with