

But is not this Gaelic Revival merely an attempt artificially to stimulate into life an effete civilization? Do we wish to go back to the clan system? Gaelic civilization is not effete; it is, on the contrary, superior to the Anglo-Saxon. Such, Irish history proves it to have been during the three eras in which it flourished amid even partially favorable circumstances, namely, during the four hundred years preceeding St. Patrick's arrival, during the four hundred years succeeding it, and during the two hundred years following Elizabeth's attempt to conquer Ireland. It would be very advantageous if we could get even the faintest idea of the Gaelic civilization of these three periods.

About the first period, the pagan one, the chief thing to remember is that Ireland *had* a civilization. The Irish were, it is true, Pagans, but their religion was a spiritual and moral one; so they were really less pagan than a great many civilized people of the present day. Their moral and social code, on which we have no time to dwell, was far superior to that of any other nation which had till then existed, save only the moral code given by God to the Hebrews. Though in intellectual development they were inferior even to the Romans, their literature gave as much promise of greatness as did the early Greek. In poetry there were epics ready for a Homer to put on the finishing touches. And a Homer not appearing, the bards changed their epics into prose, and thus created that species of literature known as the romance or novel. And finally about a couple of generations before St. Patrick, the Irish had invented and brought to perfection, one of the most powerful aids to the art of poetry, namely rhyme.

Then St. Patrick came. I have said Ireland's moral and social state was superior to all other pagan ones. The proof is that in one generation, changing hardly any of the civilization, St. Patrick Christianized Ireland. And just as Pagan Irish civilization was superior to all other pagan civilizations, so Christian Irish civilization was superior to all other Christian civilizations. The reason is apparent. In no country were the principles of Christianity so excellently received and practised. In Ireland, the land of saints and scholars, faith and knowledge flourished side by side. Ireland became the university of those times to Europe; she became also its seminary. Students from all