

was dignified by a noble literature, and might justly feel proud of the high and honorable title of "insula sanctorum" or island of saints—a title which she seems to have merited, when compared with her sister kingdoms. When we say so, we make due allowance for the warm enthusiasm of modern Irish historians and the exaggerations of ancient Irish chroniclers. Her St. Patrick is no fabulous hero,—no mere legendary saint: but a truly great one, wise and good, who left behind him a name and a fame justly dear to every Irishman. Thirteen centuries ago, she was honored by God in being chosen as a nursery of able and zealous workmen for His vineyard, when such workmen were indeed but few. Thence, clad in the panoply of Christian soldiers, they came forth to do battle under Prince Emmanuel. Brave hands grasped that banner, and bore it triumphantly over stormy seas, across bleak and inhospitable mountains and on, through the labyrinths of pathless forests, to plant it on the land of the stranger. Brave hearts throbbing with all the natural warmth of the Irishman and all the supernatural devotion of the Christian, invited fierce and warlike clans and roving barbarians, to seek and find rest in Him, who has said:—"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Then, indeed, was Ireland a gem of the ocean. For back through the long vista of ages, we can see it looming beautifully over the wave, while the beacon-fire of truth glows brightly across the dark waters, giving light and life to its children and hope to the world. But Ireland forsook the teachings of her first missionaries. A change has come over the national creed, and consequently over the national prosperity. Her energies have become crippled by a tyrannical priesthood, and the vitality and independence of her early history has departed. God grant that she may again give to the world her St. Patricks and her St. Columbas! that, again, this warm-hearted and generous nation may take its place in the front ranks of progressive nationalities, and that she may shortly be as far in advance of her present position, as she was in advance of her sister kingdoms, when in 563 St. Columba and his followers landed on the small island of Iona! And in what condition did these missionaries find Britain, wild Scotland, when they came to visit it? This, we must know, before we can estimate the services they rendered.

Christianity, it is supposed, was introduced into Britain at a very early period of its history; some believe, by St. Paul, or, at least, by some of his contemporaries or immediate successors. Yet, for a considerable period, it made but little progress; for at the time of which we speak,—(the landing of the Culdees) the religion of Scotland was undoubtedly the Druidical. Their altars might be found in every dark grove and their mystic worship was the national creed.

It is quite true that, as a form of Pagan-

ism, the religious belief of the Druids stood far higher than most of its contemporaries. This belief was monotheistic. While the great nations of antiquity—the Greeks and Romans—deified the powers of nature and called them gods, the Druids taught that there was no God but one. That Supreme Being was known to them under the title of *Ihu* or *Dia*,—the title by which he is still known among the Celtic nations. The Celt, and particularly the Scottish Highlander, is often laughed at for his views with respect to the antiquity of his race, and that language he loves so well; yet, in the fact above-mentioned, as well as many others which might be produced, we think we are justified in tracing the origin of these, back to the far East and the ancient lands of the Bible. Their belief in the existence of one personal God—a Deity possessing those attributes ascribed to Him by the Druidical priests, seems to have been the result of tradition, and not a deduction of their own reason. Many circumstances seem to indicate that the Celtic tribes have advanced westward with the onward tide of emigration—westward from the plains of Shinar, the second cradle of the human race. The doctrine of future rewards and punishments was also taught by the Druidical priests. And it is worthy of notice that the names under which the respective places of those rewards and punishments were designated 13 or 1400 years ago by the Scottish Celt, are exactly the same as those now used in the Gaelic language to denote the abodes of the happy and of the lost. The Druidical priest taught that the portion of the lost should be in "*Ifrinn*," a word evidently compounded of "*I*," an island, and a modified form of "*fiar*," cold. Yet, how completely changed has the meaning of the term become since that period! To the inhabitant of a bleak and cold northern climate, his imagination could suggest no greater punishment than the intense cold of winter. Hence he depicts the place of punishment as a frozen island, where the voice of Spring was never heard, and the genial breezes of summer were never known to blow.

The place of the departed happy was there, as now, known under the designation of "*flaitheanas*," a compound of "*flath*," a hero, and "*innis*," signifying an island. In their estimation, this state of bliss was emphatically the home of the departed warrior. In beauty it surpassed "the hunting grounds abounding with game," to which the dying Indian hunter looked forward with hope. So beautiful indeed is the description of "the better country" given by one of their bards that we are tempted to copy it. "The vallies," he says, are open and free to the ocean; trees loaded with leaves, which scarcely move to the light breeze, were scattered on the green slopes and rising grounds. The rude winds walked not on the mountains: no storm took its course through the sky. All