

ST. PATRICK, THE APOSTLE OF IRELAND.

DIED, A.D. 465.

(Concluded from Last Week.)

It was not long, however, before Patrick's future mission was shadowed forth by a vision. One night a dignified personage appeared to him, bearing many letters from Ireland. He handed the Saint one, on which was written: "This is the voice of the Irish." While in the act of reading, he says, "I seemed to hear the voices of people from the wood of Fochut, near the western sea, crying out with one accord: 'Holy youth, we implore thee to come and walk still amongst us.'"

Patrick's noble heart was touched. He "awoke, and could read no longer." Saint and student that he was, Patrick now began to prepare himself with redoubled vigor for the vast work that lay before him. He placed himself under the guidance of St. Germain, the illustrious Bishop of Auxerre, who sent him to a famous seminary on the island of Lerins, where he spent nine years in study and retirement. It was here that he received the celebrated crosser called the Staff of Jesus, which he afterwards carried with him in his apostolic visitations through Ireland.

The learned and saintly priest returned to his patron, St. Germain, and passed several years in the work of the holy ministry and in combating heresy. In 430, however, St. Germain sent him to Rome with letters of introduction to the Holy Father, warmly recommending him as one in every way qualified for the great mission of converting the Irish people. A residence of six years in the country, a perfect knowledge of its language, customs, and inhabitants, and a life of study, innocence, and sanctity—these were the high testimonials which Patrick bore from the Bishop of Auxerre to the Vicar of Christ.

Pope Celestine I. gave the Saint a kindly reception, and issued bulls authorizing his consecration as bishop. Receiving the apostolic benediction, he returned to France, and was there raised to the episcopal dignity. The invitation, "Come, holy youth, and walk amongst us," rang ever in his ears. It armed his soul with energy. The new bishop bade adieu to home and kindred, and set out for the labor of his life with twenty well-tried companions.

It is supposed that St. Patrick first landed on the coast of the county of Wicklow; but the hostility of the natives obliged him to re-embark and he sailed northward toward the scenes of his former captivity. He finally cast anchor on the historic coast of Down, and, with all his companions, landed in the year 432 at the mouth of the little river Slaney, which falls into Strangford Lough. The apostolic band had advanced but a short distance into the country when they encountered the servants of Dicho, lord of that district. Taking the Saint and his followers for pirates, they grew alarmed and fled at their approach.

The news soon reached the ears of Dicho, who hastily armed his retainers and sallied forth to meet the supposed enemy. He was not long in learning, however, that the war which Patrick was about to wage was not one of swords and bucklers, but of peace and charity; and with true kindness and Irish hospitality, Dicho invited the apostle to his residence.

It was a golden opportunity. Nor did the Saint permit it to escape. He announced the bright truths of the Gospel. Dicho and all his household heard, believed, and were baptized. The Bishop celebrated Holy Mass in a barn, and the church which the good, kind-hearted chief erected on its site was afterwards known as Sabhall-Patrick, or Patrick's Barn. Thus Dicho was Patrick's first convert in Ireland.

The glorious work was commenced. In that beautiful isle the cross was destined to triumph over paganism, and ever more to reign on its ruins. The great missionary next set out to visit his old master, hoping to gain him over to the faith. But when Melcho heard of the Saint's approach his hard heathen soul revolted at the idea that he might have to submit in some way to the doctrine of his former slave. The old man's rage and grief, it is related, induced him to commit suicide. "This son of perdition," says the ancient monk Jocelin, "gathered together all his household effects and cast them into the fire, and then, throwing himself on the flames, he made himself a holocaust for the infernal demons."

At this time Laegrius, supreme monarch of Ireland, was holding an assembly, or congress, of all the Druids, bards, and princes of the nation in his palace at Tara. St. Patrick resolved to be present at this great meeting of chiefs and wise men, and to celebrate in its midst the festival of Easter, which was now approaching.

He resolved with one bold stroke to paralyze the efforts of the Druids by sapping the very centre of their power. He resolved to plant the glorious standard of the Cross on the far-famed Hill of Tara, the citadel of Ireland. Nor did he fail.

It was the eve of Easter when the Saint arrived at Slane and pitched his tent. At the same hour the regal halls of Tara were filled with all the princes of the land. It was the feast of Baal-tien, or sun-worship; and the laws of the Druids ordained that no fire should be lighted in the whole country till the great fire flamed upon the royal Hill of Tara. It so happened, however, that Patrick's Paschal light was seen from the king's palace. The Druids were alarmed. The monarch and his courtiers were indignant. The Apostle was ordered to appear before the assembly on the day following.

"Gleamed the sun-ray, soft and yellow, On the gentle plains of Meath; Spring's low breezes, fresh and melow, I Through the woods scarce seemed to breathe; And on Tara, proud and olden, Circled round with radiance fair, Decked in splendor bright and golden, Sat the court of Laeghaire—

"Chieftains with the collar of glory And the long hair flowing free; Priest and Brehon, bent and hoary, Soft-tongued Bard and Seanachie. Silence filled the sunny ether, Eager light in every eye, As in banded ranks together Stranger forms approacheth nigh. 'Tall and stately—white beards flowing In bright streaks adown the breast— Cheeks with summer beauty glowing, Eyes of thoughtful, holy rest: And in front their saintly leader, Patrick, walked with cross in hand, Which from Arran to Ben Eadar Soon rose high above the land."

The Apostle preached before Laegrius and the great ones of Tara. "The sun which you behold," said he, "rises and sets by God's decree for our benefit; but it shall never reign, nor shall its splendor be immortal. All who adore it shall perish miserably. But we adore the true Sun—Jesus Christ."

The chief bard, Dubtach, was the first of the converts of Tara; and from that hour he consecrated his genius to Christianity. A few days after Conall, the king's brother, embraced the faith. Thus Irish genius and royalty began to bow to the Cross. The heathen Laegrius blindly persevered in his errors, but feared openly to oppose the holy Apostle. The scene at Tara recalls to mind the preaching of St. Paul before the assembled wisdom and learning of the Areopagus.

A court magician named Lochu attempted to oppose St. Patrick. He mocked Christ, and declared that he himself was a god. The people were dazzled with his infamous tricks. The hardy impostor even promised to raise himself from the earth and ascend to the clouds, and before the king and people he one day made the attempt. The Saint was present. "O Almighty God!" he prayed, "destroy this blasphemer of thy holy Name, nor let him hinder those who now return, or may hereafter return, to Thee." The words were scarcely uttered when Lochu took a downward flight. The wretch fell at the Apostle's feet, dashed his head against a stone, and immediately expired.

After a short stay at various points, St. Patrick penetrated into Connaught. In the county of Cavan he overthrew the great idol called Crom-Cruach, and on its ruins erected a stately church. It was about this time that he baptized the two daughters of King Laegrius. The fair royal converts soon after received the veil at his hands.

The Apostle held his first synod in 445, near Elphin, during which he consecrated several Bishops for the growing Church of Ireland. It was in the Lent of this year that he returned to Cruach-Patrick, a mountain in Mayo, and spent forty days, praying, fasting, and beseeching heaven to make beautiful Erin an isle of saints.

The most glorious success everywhere attended his footsteps. The heavenly seed of truth fell on good ground, and produced more than a hundredfold. Nor did miracles fail, from time to time, to come to the aid of the newly-announced doctrine. He reached Tirawley at a time when the seven sons of Amalgaith were disputing over the succession of the crown of their deceased father. Great multitudes had gathered together. The Saint made his voice heard. An enraged magician rushed at him with murderous intentions; but, in the presence of all, a sudden flash of lightning smote the would-be assassin. It was a day of victory for the true faith. The seven quarrelling princes and over twelve thousand persons were converted on the spot, and baptized in the well of Aem-Adharrac.

St. Patrick, after spending seven years in Connaught, directed his course northward. He entered Ulster once more in 442. His progress through the historic counties of Donegal, Derry, Antrim, and others was one continuous triumph. Princes and people alike heard, believed, and embraced the truth. Countless churches sprang up, new sees were established, and the Catholic religion placed on a deep, lasting foundation. The Apostle of Erin was a glorious architect, who did the work of God with matchless thoroughness.

"From faith's bright camp the demon fled, The path to heaven was cleared; Religion raised her beauteous head— An Isle of Saints appeared."

The Apostle next journeyed into Leinster, and founded many churches. It is related that on reaching a hill distant about a mile from a little village, situated on the borders of a beautiful bay, he stopped, swept his eye over the calm waters and the picturesque landscape, and, raising his hand, gave the scene his benediction, saying: "This village, now so small, shall one day be renowned. It shall grow in wealth and dignity until it shall become the capital of a kingdom." It is now the city of Dublin.

In 445 St. Patrick passed to Munster, and proceeded at once to "Cashel of the Kings." Angus, who was then the royal ruler of Munster, went forth to meet the herald of the Gospel, and warmly invited him to his palace. This prince had already been instructed in the faith, and the day after the Bishop's arrival was fixed for his baptism.

During the administration of the sacrament a very touching incident occurred. The Saint planted his crosser—the Staff of Jesus—firmly in the ground by his side; but before reaching it the sharp point pierced the king's foot and pinned it to the earth. The brave convert never wincing, though the pain must have been intense. The holy ceremony was over before St. Patrick perceived the streams of blood, and he immediately expressed his deep sorrow for causing such a painful accident. The noble Angus, however, quietly replied that he had thought it was a part of the ceremony, adding that he was ready and willing to endure much more for the glory of Jesus Christ.

Thus, in less than a quarter of a century from the day St. Patrick set foot on her emerald shores, the greater part of Ireland became Catholic. The darkness of ancient superstition everywhere faded away before the celestial light of the Gospel. The groves of the pagan Druids were forsaken, and the holy sacrifice of the Mass was offered up on thousands of altars.

The annals of Christianity record not a greater triumph. It is the sublime spectacle of the people of an entire nation casting away their heathen prejudices and the cherished traditions of ages, and gladly embracing the faith of Jesus Christ, announced to them by a man who had once been a miserable captive on their hills, but now an Apostle sent to them with the plenitude of power by Pope Celestine.

Nor is it less remarkable that this glorious revolution—this happy conversion of peerless Ireland—was accomplished without the shedding of one drop of martyr blood, except, perhaps, at the baptism of Angus, when,

"The royal foot transpierced, The gushing blood Enriched the pavement with a noble flood."

While St. Patrick was meditating as to the site he should select for his metropolitan see, he was admonished by an angel that the destined spot was Armagh. Here he fixed the seat of his primacy in the year 445. A cathedral and many other religious edifices soon crowned the Hill of Macha. The whole district was the gift of King Daire, a grandson of Eoghan.

The Apostle, having thus established the Church of Ireland on a solid basis, set out for Rome to give an

account of his labors to Pope St. Leo the Great. The Holy Father confirmed whatever St. Patrick had done, appointed him his Legate and gave him many precious gifts on his departure.

The ancient biographers give many a curious legend and quaint anecdote in relation to our great Saint. Eoghan (Eugene, or Owen) was one of the sons of King Niall of the Nine Hostages. He was a bold and powerful prince, who acquired the country called after him "Tir-Owen" (Tyrone), or Owen's country. His residence was at the famous palace of Aileach, in Inishowen.

When Eoghan heard of St. Patrick's arrival in his dominions, he went forth to meet him, received him with every mark of honor, listened with humility to the word of God, and was baptized with all his household. But he had a temporal blessing to ask of the Apostle.

"I am not good-looking," said the converted but ambitious Eoghan; "my brother precedes me on account of my ugliness."

"What form do you desire?" asked the Saint. "The form of Rice, the young man who is carrying your satchel," answered the prince. St. Patrick covered them over with the same garment, the hands of each being clasped round the other. They slept thus, and afterwards awoke in the same form, with the exception of the tonsure.

"I don't like my height," said Eoghan. "What size do you desire to be?" enquired the kind-hearted Saint. The prince seized his sword and reached upwards. "I should like to be this height," he said; and all at once he grew to the wished-for stature. The Apostle afterwards blessed Eoghan and his sons.

"Which of your sons is dearest to you?" asked St. Patrick. "Muirdeach," said the prince. "Sovereignty from him for ever," said the Saint. "And next to him?" enquired St. Patrick. "Fergus," he answered. "Dignity from him," said the Saint. "And after him?" demanded the Apostle. "Eocha Bindech," said Eoghan. "Warriors from him," said the Saint. "And after him?" "They are all alike to me," replied Eoghan.

"They shall have united love," said the man of God. "My blessing," he prayed, "on the descendants of Eoghan till the day of judgment. . . . The race of Eoghan, son of Niall, bless, O fair Bridget! Provided they do good, government shall be from them for ever. The blessing of us both upon Eoghan, son of Niall, and on all who may be born to him, if they are obedient."

St. Patrick, it is told, had a favorite goat which was so well trained that it proved very serviceable. But a sly thief fixed his evil eye on the animal, stole it, and made a feast on the remains. The loss of the goat called for an investigation; and the thief, on being accused, protested that he was innocent. But little did he dream of his accuser.

"The goat which was swallowed in his stomach," says Jocelin, "bleated loudly forth, and proclaimed the merit of St. Patrick." Nor did the miracle stop here; for "at the seniority were marked with the beard tence of the Saint all the man's possessions of a goat."

About ten years before his death the venerable Apostle resigned the primacy as Archbishop of Armagh to his loved disciple St. Benignus, and retired to Saul, his favorite retreat, and the scene of his early triumphs. Here it was that he converted Dicho and built his first church. Here also he wrote his "Confessions," and drew up rules for the government of the Irish Church. When he felt that the sun of dear life was about to set on earth, that it might rise in brighter skies, and shine for ever, he asked to be taken to Armagh. He wished to breathe his last in the ecclesiastical capital of Ireland. But on the way an angel appeared to the blessed man, and told him to return—that he was to die at Saul. He returned, and at the age of seventy-eight, on the 17th of March, in the year 465, St. Patrick passed from this world.

He was buried at Downpatrick, in the county of Down; and in the same tomb were subsequently laid the sacred remains of St. Bridget and St. Columbkille. The shrine of the Apostle of Ireland was visited by Cambrensis in 1174, and upon it he found the following Latin inscription:

Hi tres Duno tumulo tumulantur in uno, Brigida, Patricius, atque Columba Pius.



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In Down three Saints one grave do all, Bridget, Patrick, and Columbkille.

This illustrious Saint was a man of work, and prayer and penance. To his last breath he ceased not to teach his people. His daily devotions were countless. It is related that he made the sign of the cross many hundred times a day. He slept little, and a stone was his pillow. He travelled on foot in his visitations till the weight of years made a carriage necessary. He accepted no gifts for himself, ever deeming it more blessed to give than to receive.

His simple dress was a white monastic habit, made from the wool of the sheep; and his bearing, speech, and countenance were but the outward expression of his kind heart and great, beautiful soul. Force and simplicity marked his discourses. He was a perfect master of the Irish, French, and Latin languages, and had some knowledge of Greek.

He consecrated three hundred and fifty bishops, erected seven hundred churches, ordained five thousand priests, and raised thirty-three persons from the dead. But it is in vain that we try to sum up his labors by the rules of arithmetic. The wear and tear of over fourteen hundred years have tested the work of St. Patrick; and in spite of all the man soul, yet this beauty is immortals of time, and the malice of men and demons, it stands to-day greater than ever—a monument to his immortal glory.

"It should ever be remembered," said the Nun of Kenmare, "that the exterior work of a saint is but a small portion of his real life, and that the success of this work is connected by a delicate chain of providences, of which the world sees little and thinks less, with this interior life. Men are ever searching for the beautiful in nature and art, but they rarely search for the beauty of a human soul, yet this beauty is immortal. Something of its radiance appears at times even to mortal sight, and men are overawed by the majesty or won by the sweetness of the saints of God; but it needs saintliness to discern sanctity, even as it needs cultivated taste to appreciate art. A thing of beauty is only a joy to those who can discern its beauty; and it needs the sight of angels to see and appreciate perfectly all the beauty of a saintly soul. Thus, while some men scorn as idle tales the miracles recorded in the Lives of the Saints, and others give scant and condescending praise to their exterior works of charity, their real life, their true nobility, is hidden and unknown. God and His angels only know the trials and the triumphs of the holy human souls."

"I have a theory that nobody in this world is really uninteresting. All you want to find out about any individual is what he can tell you. In most cases a man can give you valuable information about his own particular calling, and that information may turn out to your advantage or your instruction—you never know. The proper study of mankind is man, and that may be supplemented by the statement that every man is worth study. There have been students of human nature who, even when they have acquired sufficient wealth to travel as they please, yet travel third class in order that they may have freer intercourse with the masses of the people, especially those who work with their hands.

I remember that when Mr. Gladstone once was on a visit to Ireland he used to go into the third class carriages in order to have a better opportunity of learning the real thoughts of the Irish masses. One day I heard Sir Michael Forster, the eminent scientific man who represented London University in the House of Commons, describe how he used to travel third class, and how he sometimes got valuable hints as to the thoughts of the masses by so doing. But there is no use going among men unless you train yourself to get rid of shyness and reserve, and unless you talk freely to those around you.

Of all the words in the language, I think the word "gent" the most admirable. So, I am glad to say, does a highly distinguished member of the bench. "Gent," this legal writer says, slyly, as well as "gentleman," has been defined. "He is an independent gent," said a witness in a case tried before Mr. Justice Wightman. "You mean a gentleman?" inquired the Judge. "Yes, a gent," repeated the witness. "O, I see," replied the Judge, "that is something short of a gentleman, isn't it?" which is really true, as well as witty.—T. P. O'Connor, in Chicago Tribune.

Money-making should be classed as a very common task devoid of ennobling attributes. Making character, which will finally be of as great benefit and blessing to others as to self, should be counted the task to be taken up here and now. Character always commands a living.—Leigh Mitchell Hodges.

LITTLE ACTS OF COURTESY.

(Continued from Page 6.)

An Irishman—to a sense of restraint, and sometimes even of discomfort, when I meet people who are not willing to reveal one thing of their inner selves. I am convinced, too, that a good deal of the unpopularity which Englishmen enjoy on the continent and elsewhere is due to this reticence which is misunderstood for pride, when it is so often but shyness, or even the idea that self-revelation might bore other people.

I astounded some friends of mine in Scotland some time ago when on a visit there by the statement that, after thirty-four years in London, I still frequently felt myself like a foreigner. But the reason is plain; it is because of that very reserve on the part of Englishmen which makes them so much a riddle to those who are not of the same nationality as themselves. They are,

perhaps, the only nationality in the world which remains so difficult to those who do not belong to them. Scotsmen have the reputation of being cautious and reserved. That may be true with regard to the deeper things of life, but it is certainly not true with regard to their ordinary and superficial feelings. I once had to make a stay of several weeks in Edinburgh, and I was struck with the readiness to enter into conversation of the Scots shopkeeper. I have exactly the same feeling in Glasgow, which I have visited often enough now to know well. The people strike me as far more communicative than the London shopkeeper.

It is the same with the people on the continent. Those who do not know Germany are in the habit of drawing quite ridiculous and false comparisons between Germans and Frenchmen. There is an idea that, being of Teuton blood—like the English race—they are reserved and self-restrained in comparison with the exuberance of the Frenchman. But it is quite untrue. If anything, the German is more emotional, more unreserved in his expressions of emotion than his neighbor across the Vosges. Have you ever travelled on a steamer on the Rhine in the summer time? If you have you will remember the bridal couples that came on board the boat, and their embarrassing frankness of endearment. They are in love with each other, and they don't mind who sees it. In that respect they are far more unreserved than French people, who are uproariously gay, hearty, and convivial in their wedding festivities, but do not think it quite decent to reveal the tenderness of their affections to the public eye.

The American is almost prudish in his self-restraint so far as the tender passion is concerned. He is not only shocked but appalled by the sights he sees even on our bank holidays. But when it comes to private conversation the American would think it wanting in good manners not to speak quite frankly about his affairs, his thoughts, his opinions and even his emotions, to the person who happened to be his fellow traveler. The result I have always found to be in my own case that within ten minutes of taking my seat at the side of an American I have felt that I thoroughly understood his character, his point of view, his place in politics, in society, in business. And I have found that experience pleasant and conducive to the enjoyment of life.

I have a theory that nobody in this world is really uninteresting. All you want to find out about any individual is what he can tell you. In most cases a man can give you valuable information about his own particular calling, and that information may turn out to your advantage or your instruction—you never know. The proper study of mankind is man, and that may be supplemented by the statement that every man is worth study. There have been students of human nature who, even when they have acquired sufficient wealth to travel as they please, yet travel third class in order that they may have freer intercourse with the masses of the people, especially those who work with their hands.

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