

"Nay, nay, friend," said the king, rising from his seat and leading the way to the palace, "let us hear what he has to say for himself before we condemn him. Justice is the noblest attribute of kings, and Laogaire will not depart from it."

At noon next day, when St. Patrick made his appearance in the great council-hall of the (even then) ancient palace of Tara, accompanied by Benignus, Auxilius and Isernius, he was at first dazzled by the novelty and splendor of what he saw, and looked around in silent amazement. "The monarch," says an ancient manuscript preserved in Trinity College, "occupied an elevated seat in the centre of the hall, with his face towards the west. Facing him sat the king of Leinster, the king of Ulster on his right, the king of Munster on his left, and the king of Connaught behind him. Long-extended seats were disposed in rows; in the first of which were the Druids and bards, or philosophers, and in the other rows were respectively placed the antiquaries and genealogists, the musicians, and after them the chiefs and *beatachs*, or representatives of the towns and villages." Each order had its own distinctive costume, varying in color as well as in material, the monarch himself having no less than seven different colors, while others of the orders of the state had but one. This great variety of colors, together with the profusion of gold and silver ornaments worn by the princes and nobles, contributed much to the gaiety and magnificence of the scene. But St. Patrick and his Christian companions were not the men to quail before any display of earthly power or glory, and they quickly recovered their recollection and composure. The monarch had previously laid his commands on all present that none should salute the stranger, or receive him with any mark of respect. His mandate was faithfully observed, save in one remarkable instance. This exception was no other than the arch-pope, Dubtach, who, struck with the dignity of Patrick's mien and the gracious benevolence of his aspect, arose on his entrance, and remained standing, in honor of his presence. This act of disobedience offended the king for the moment; but long before Patrick's discourse or sermon was at an end, the monarch's displeasure was obliterated by his profound admiration of the speaker, and the marvelous religion thus clearly and eloquently explained.—The whole court and all the assembled princes shared in the king's admiration of the venerable stranger; the Druids themselves, though secretly filled with envy, and resolved to oppose Patrick by every means in their power, were still forced to admit that he was a man of more than mortal power. The king listened with rapt attention to the Saint's elucidation of the Christian faith, and was evidently more than half convinced. But the pride of the pagan monarch and the stern fanaticism of the Druid were united in his person, and he felt that it was not for him, the supreme ruler of Ireland, to cast away the time-honored gods of the nation, or bow to the proffered yoke of a strange Divinity. Still when Dubtach, whom he both loved and honored, declared himself a convert to the Christian religion, the king silenced the Druids who would have anathematized the bard, commanding them not to interfere with the consciences of his subjects.

"For ourselves," said he, "we shall remain as we have ever been the faithful votary and ardent supporter of our national deities; but as we do see in this man's religion nothing but what is good, and wise, and salutary, so have we no mind to hinder him from preaching to our subjects, and bringing over as many as he can to his own doctrines. If his God be powerful, as he says, and I think he is, it would be neither wise nor politic to anger him by sending his ambassador contumeliously from our presence. Surely this new God of his has chosen a worthy and discreet messenger, and we will not that he be insulted in our presence."

St. Patrick was then politely dismissed, and the business of the council resumed.

#### ST. PATRICK AND THE DAUGHTERS OF LAOGAIRE.

St. Patrick, in the course of his evangelical wanderings, met with many a strange adventure. Being on his way from the neighborhood of Tara to the distant wilds of Connaught, whether he was attracted by the remembrance of that remarkable vision in which he heard the mournful voice of the Irish issuing from a wood by the Western Sea, he had reached in the evening of a summer day an extensive plain within the territory of Connaught, and was induced to take up his quarters for the night by the margin of a limpid fountain. This fountain was contiguous to one of the royal palaces, and altogether the place had an inviting aspect. Having taken a few hours' rest, as was his wont, on the bare ground, the Saint summoned his companions at the dawn of day to unite with him in prayer. The gray mists of morning still shrouded the lovely features of the landscape, and the eastern sky began to assume that roseate hue which heralds the approach of the day-star. Patrick and his companions were seated near the fountain chanting the matin service, and each being rapt in his own pious meditations, and their eyes bent on the books before them, they were for some time unaware of the presence of two ladies who stood regarding them with wonder. At length St. Patrick raised his eyes, and, seeing the ladies, arose from his grassy seat, greeting them with a courteous bow. His companions instantly followed his example, Benignus whispering: "They are the daughters of Laogaire—Ethnea the swan-like, and the dark-eyed Fethlimia. God grant they may hear the word, for men speak of them as mild and good."

"There seems little doubt that the King, Laogaire, with that spirit of tolerance which then pervaded all ranks, and so singularly directed the way to the reception of the Gospel in Ireland, gave full leave to the Saint to promulgate his new creed to the people, on condition of his not infringing the laws or peace of the kingdom."—*Moore's History of Ireland, Vol. I., p. 217.*

St. Patrick waited till the royal sisters had sufficiently gratified their curiosity, by leisurely surveying the grave and venerable company; he then accosted them:

"God save you, noble ladies! I am sorry we have prevented you from taking your bath; but I hope instead thereof to bathe you in the water of eternal life."

"We know not what you mean," said Ethnea, the elder sister; "but your words are sweet, and the music that we heard you sing even now entered into our hearts. What manner of beings may you be?—We pray you tell us, for we have seen none like to you."

"We are poor sinful creatures," replied the Saint mildly; "the work of God's right hand even as yourselves, sweet sisters, and we were singing the praises of our Maker when ye first heard us."

The sisters looked timidly at the strangers, exchanged a few words in a low whisper, and then Ethnea turned again to St. Patrick.

"If thou art indeed a mortal like ourselves, we pray thee tell us who that God is of whom thou speakest—where dwells he?"

"His principal dwelling is in heaven, fair lady, far above that sky which you behold. But He is also present in every place, and there is no spot wherein He is not."

"What a strange story!—and you say He is every where present—why do we not see Him if He be here now?"

"Because He is a Spirit, and has no body. Even as the air filleth all places, so does the majesty and glory of God."

"And you say it was this God who made you and us"—she paused.

"Yea, and all other creatures. All that has life He made, and all that has not life. The heavens and the earth are His, and He ordains all things even as He will. Praised for ever be His Name."

The exalted enthusiasm of the Saint's manner, the light which sparkled in his eye, and the flush that glowed on his furrowed cheek, as he fixed his gaze on the heavens—none of these escaped the scrutinizing glance of the sisters; and they said again to each other: "Surely this man is greater than the Druids, and his God must be greater than Samhin, or even Bel himself." Addressing the Saint, Fethlimia the younger sister said: "We will that you tell us yet more about your God—by what name is He known—what is His title?"

"He is called Jehovah, and His title is King of kings and Lord of lords."

"Nay," cried the princess hastily, "our father is king of kings; in all the land there is no prince or king that can withstand his power—from the eastern even unto the western sea, Laogaire is monarch of all. It is well for you that he is not within hearing of what you say."

St. Patrick smiled, and so did his companions, but the Saint hastened to reply. "You mistake my meaning, fair daughter of Laogaire. I know the king, your father, is, as you say, chief ruler of all Ireland, and I have no mind to doubt the greatness of his power and glory; but my Master is still his master, and the master of all the children of men, from the monarch even to the serf that does his bidding."

"Tell us, then, all you know about this King who is greater than Laogaire—this Spirit-King—did you not say he was a Spirit?"

"Yea, lady, it is even so. Will you bumble yourselves so far as to sit down on this grassy hillock—I wish I had a better seat to offer you; but it matters not;" he added, "you will soon learn to despise luxury and love mortification. Grace be yours, most precious flowers of the royal garden!"

He was about to enter upon his explanation of the Christian doctrine, making the sign of the Cross over the bowed heads of the youthful listeners, when forth from a neighboring grove came three ladies, the attendants of the royal sisters. One of the ladies was of mature age, corresponding probably to the duenna of Spanish life in more modern times. The other two were young and of girlish appearance. The matron was scandalized on finding her youthful charge in conversation with some unknown men, and would have taken them away with a sharp rebuke; but the princesses, though good and gentle, were still evidently mindful that Laogaire, their father, had dominion from sea to sea, and they had clearly made up their minds on the present occasion to hear all about the strange God, of whose nature and divine perfections they had got a partial glimpse. So they told Dubthala, their governess, that if she chose to remain she might, but if not she must return to the palace without them. In vain did the wily duenna remind one in a whisper that Cuthulla, son of the king of Ulster, was to meet them at the morning meal; while to the other she said: "Thou knowest, Fethlimia, who it is that goes with your brothers and you to the chase this morning." The maidens blushed, but remained firm, and politely told Dubthala either to go her way or hold her peace.

"Yea," said the Saint, turning to his companions, "these ladies are chosen vessels—the Lord has marked them for his own. Let me hasten to place a light before their steps, that they walk no more in darkness or in the shadow of death."

He then proceeded with his instructions, skillfully making use of such illustrations as were likely to make an impression on the ductile minds of his hearers, unfolding to their raptured gaze the whole vast system of the Christian religion, yet clothing his dogmas in words so simple and in terms so precise that when he had ended, the royal sisters declared themselves fully satisfied that there was but one true and living God, whose minister stood before them. So readily, indeed, did they receive instruction, that St. Patrick, at their own request, baptised them in the waters of the fountain, and with them their three at-

tendants. History tells that the Saint's prediction was literally fulfilled in their regard. They soon after retired from the world and consecrated their lives to God. He who baptised them had the consolation of receiving their vows, and they became, as it were, the first of that long line of holy virgins who have ever since adorned the Irish Church.

#### EPISTLES OF THE "SWADDLERS."

The Dublin *Telegraph* publishes some extracts from the correspondence of the "Irish Church Missionary Society" highly creditable to the orthodoxy and orthography of these amiable "Soupers" and most devout "Swaddlers":—

MR. KING—DONEGAL MISSIONS.

Drung, decem. 18, 1854.

Since the first of August, 1854, I am getting on with my work in this dark part and have got many a hearing, they papeties particular those who are manly enough to read, and prove the test by the standard of Gods word they are beginning to doubt of thier priest that his teaching is not found on the rule laid down by Jesus and his apostles they above is those that has brains to understand, the most ignorant of all harder to impress on concerning thire pastor who is as I have told many of them is falsifying and deceiving, and ering from the truth of the bible. I thank my God for all his blessings the Irish are more favourable to me than former, those who would have persecuted me are coming to me and Speakes friendly concerning thire brother Mcgonagle who through the grace of God by coming into my house and took up the bible for his guide I am not with out hope with the blessing of God ere long but Some of the Mcgonagles will by my weak means follow thier brother to christ and leave popary, I am hapy to say, many of they romanis are coming in Spite of they priest and Sits and hears the Scriptures read, Omay the Lord bless me to the Saving of Souls Amane I have pointed out to they papeties concerning, half communion, or no cup to the laity, this papal doctrine or practice requires but few words—it is a papal innovation, tending unfairly to pull down the laity below the level of the clergy, to Squeeze the former to the ground, and to exalt the later over them.

I am hapy to say the romanis is begining to see and look after the above mentioned kind tracts the reverend Mr. William Fitzpatrick and Mr. William J. Ball Sent me after Spreading them round they neighboring villeges of drung and ballagus crehenan and ruskey carick mac Quigley and many other places they have done much good for the have Showed the people who are serving the priest is aware of all that is adoing, he warns the people against reading the Scriptures, but never the less all he can do I thank God that the people will soon see with thire own eyes and hear with thire own ears, and be no longer priest ridden I trus as fare as I can say with the blessing of God, ere long that in showne will become a garden of the Lord, planted with trees of righteousness drung Sunday School has done much good for many of the children parants are more zealous after knowlegee and I am hapy to say many Snares has been laid to prevent the young minds from attending on the Lords day, but all in vain, you would rejoice to look in at drug School it is a glorious institution in such a wile district where was no oportunity of knowledge, hapy hapy are they who promote the salvation of souls, carefully, constantly, collectively in every time in every place, by every means, from the press to the platform in the pulpit in the parlor and on their knees in private and public, prayer to God, Have gift and grace to thee been given employ them to bring Souls to heaven;—Angelic Godly Joy in heaven, will prove our head being full of light, our heart being full of love.

[The signature of the writer is torn off the foot of the foregoing report; but in the polemical part (about the middle) his name appears to be "King."]

On the 27 Dissember 54 I had a long conversation with a sick man on many a subject with regard to his salvation a man that did not care much for his religion hereto fore he seemed to be very sorry how he lived I asked him on what terms did He stand with his maker O Dear I dont know for I was a Great sinner said i there exists no doubt that you have stood In the position of a rebel an Enemy against God, a agr that true God help me does the Assertion seem offensively sweeping It does indeed well said i are you ready to appeal against it by referring to your blameless life to your observances to your deeds of charity —there was 7 present was well pleased on same day I visited 7 families I shewed them the Plan of Salvation by Bringing them to the Law and to the Testimony.....Hugh Corrigan was a long with me, a very zealous young man in Circulating that blessed word which is Able to make one wise, a reader from Mr. Dailis I am very hapy to have him as he is a pious religious young man. We then shewed them thier right to read the word of God.....We visited 3 families this week subjects similar to the above We met three that opposed us would not Listen to us because we were Soupers they were Calling after us Soupers and ranters these people are like the Jews of old did not know What they were doing, and I am sorry there are numbers like them that has no knowledge of God we must Suffer persecution patiently as Christ himself did and his apostles.

"Apposite" Patt Smyth gives few names of persons or places, but is a most profuse quoter of the Word. On 12 January, 1855, he says "the other reader and I visited one raterly we had a long Conversation with him on different subjects particularly on Salvation."—He next held forth in the townland of Mullaghtee. On the 21st he had a Conversation with an old woman on the Ardee Road to whom he read "there is not a just man upon Earth that doeth good and sinneth not."

On the 27th he reasoned with another old woman who spoke Irish, and had very "bad English"—9th February a long conversation with Widow Ward and two more—they gave him thier blessing, Whereon Patt Smyth said "Well I hope my words will take impression on you."

On the 14th Feb. a sick man, in the presence of some neighbors, said "Patt here (the Reader) got good learning, the learning of a priest, is now a protestant—if he new it was bad he would not be one."

On March 3rd he visited "many families in the Townland of Curra Valley and thereabouts" and announced the tidings of Salvation—and ends of, his Journal of 57 pages—12mo in this fashion:—

"This Journal is to be forwarded to Miss Roe after to Miss Mason. I commend both and all Ladies and their children to God and to the words of his Grace

that is all connected with the good Work Which is able for to build them up and give them Inheritance among all them that are sanctified, may they all Live a long and prosperous life on this earth, and may be Heirs of everlasting Glory In that kingdom which is to Come, for the sake of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Yours truly in Christ,  
"Irish

"reader Carrickmacross,"

Upon these interesting documents the *Telegraph* comments as under:—

The authenticity of these documents is indubitable; and the originals can be produced. They were purchased a short time since at an old book stall, along with a report of the Irish Church Missions for the year 1855.

It appears that it is upon such miserable trash the reports of the Irish Church Mission are founded—that the nonsense, the absurdity, the ignorance, and the falsehoods, to be found in such specimens as we this day publish, form the basis of "the stories" told in public meetings at the Rotunda, at Exeter Hall, and throughout England.

Let the public judge of the anti-Catholic Missionary Societies by the men they employ. Let it be remembered that the "Scripture Readers," who do not know how to write English—whose own pens convict them of brutal ignorance—are described to bigot dupes as persons so well instructed as to be capable of conducting controversies on religious topics.

The English believe this, and give their money, and so aid in keeping up strife and heart-burning in this country. The English send money to Ireland to convert the Irish, overlooking the utter degradation to which their religion and their talk about Bible reading have reduced themselves; and of which we have the latest testimony in the following extract from the *Times* of last Monday:—

"The calendars at the various assize towns evince such a lamentable condition of public morality that a firm and clear-headed man, resolved at all costs to do his duty as a criminal judge, would, at the present moment, be an invaluable public servant. Murder is rife in the land in its most violent and its most insidious forms, and the astounding disclosures of fraudulent dealing among our mercantile classes—the thousand ingenious shapes which crime has assumed in the hands of the regular criminal practitioners—are all tokens which point to the necessity of stern repression.

The Scotch, too, who think the Irish require the aid of Scripture Readers, are quite forgetful of the condition to which their religion and their talk about Bible reading have reduced them, and of which we have the latest testimony in the following extract from the last number of the *Weekly Register*, in an article entitled "Edinburg on New Year's Day":—

"Now universal Scotland getteth drunk! To day the one festival permitted by the canons of Calvinism is celebrated. In this land of Bibles, Christ's Nativity is forgotten; His Passion, His Crucifixion, His Resurrection, His Ascension, are ignored. Yet man's nature needs some festival; and the New Year's Day is solemnised by national intoxication. In tipsy communion all sorts and conditions of men unite as in some great saving act of their religion. First Vespers of this Devil's Sabbath commence on New Year's Eve; and for the twenty-four hours following the screech and roar of drunkenness fill the city. The usual drunkard is contented for to-night by the habitually sober. The streets are everywhere in a ferment.

Men rush about carrying flasks and kettles of the liquid fire, and compel all they meet to drink and be drunken. In every domestic circle bumpers of ardent spirits are presented to the casual visitor, and must be swallowed on pain of mortal offence. For to-day, intemperance halts the steady march of avarice; and holds in abeyance even the common decencies of life. For to-day, there is license to insult, with rude tipsy salute, women, on the public street—aye, and in private dwellings of the most "respectable." For all redress or apology "the custom of the country" stands valid. For to-day, the police retire despairing from their natural warfare with "drunk and disorderly," and from their legal tutelage over "drunk and incapable." Increased tenfold numerically, and reinforced with the advantage of sobriety, they would still be unequal to their duties of to-night. At each street's corner you stumble over bodies that wallow helpless in the miry snow. The coma of the epidemic inebriety has struck them down, and no man lifts them up. The passerby, insured to the sight, heeds them as little as a hard campaigner the slain of yesterday's skirmish. And if, as it might happen, the sleeper awakes not on earth, no coroner's jury here delays the claims of the dead house or the dissecting table. Such are a few touches—and an eye-witness will vouch their truth—towards a mitigated picture of the metropolis of pure Protestantism, on its New Year's Saturnalia of 1856.

Peruse, we say, the extracts from the Scripture Readers, published in this day's paper; and then let it be borne in mind that these men are paid to disturb and harass a poor people—to worry them about their adherence to a religion which preserves them from the crimes of England and the degradation of Scotland; and then let this question be asked—Was there ever a country so treated as Ireland has been, and is, by insolent, impudent, and shameless heretics?

There is but one mode of accounting for all this. Ireland is the only country in which there is to be found an Established Church, which professes a religion abjured by the great body of the people upon whom it is imposed.

Until that anomaly is done away with—until that iniquity is abolished—until that badge of conquest is removed—persecution will thrive, and insolent wealth will employ corrupt ignorance, and send it through the country as a missionary of mischief, and call it—a Scripture Reader!

#### IRISH INTELLIGENCE.

The Lord Bishop and Catholic clergyman of the diocese of Cloyne have entered into subscriptions, amounting in the aggregate to nearly £1,000, to found a diocesan seminary. The Right Rev. Dr. Murphy and the Rev. John Cahill, P. P., Inniscarra, subscribe each £100.—*Munster News.*

The Right Rev. Dr. Keane, Bishop of Ross, has contributed the sum of £50 towards the Diocesan Seminary of Cloyne.

The Christian Brothers, Cork, respectfully acknowledge having received from a friend £50, to aid them in the completion of their establishment in Peacock-lane.

The Very Rev. Michael McDermott and his parishioners in the neighborhood of Strokestown are resolved to complete the new Catholic chapel in that town. They hope to receive large contributions from the landlords of the district, Protestant and Catholic.—*Roscommon Messenger.*