

CELTIC SOURCES OF DIVINE COMEDY.

Most Popular Visions in Dante's Work Came From Ireland.

Dr. J. Dunn, formerly of New Haven, now professor of the Gaelic language and literature at the Catholic University of America, delivered recently at the institution a lecture on "The Celtic Sources of the Divine Comedy," of which the following is a synopsis:

It is little more than a century ago that the question of the sources of the Divine Comedy began to be agitated. Up to that time it was generally believed, as it was wished to be believed, that Dante constructed his divine poem out of his own rich imagination. Historians of Italian literature were slow to perceive that the great poet had drawn from an almost inexhaustible mine of material, and when this opinion was first made public, namely, that Dante was in some measure indebted to the legendary material of the Middle Ages, the literary world arose to defend him against the charge and proclaim against the scandal. To have borrowed from classical literature might easily have been pardoned and even added to the value of his poem in the opinion of the day, but that Dante owed anything to the obscure legends of the Middle Ages, never.

HOW TO HAVE PROPER INTEREST. It is from Celtic lands, and above all from Ireland, that most and the most popular of the visions of the other world have come. Too much symbolism has been read into the Divine Comedy. The material existence of Hell, Purgatory and Heaven, as the popular legends describe them, as the physical tortures of the lost, the bodily penances of Purgatory, were believed in literally by all Western Christendom. If we keep this in mind when reading the Divine Comedy, the poem will have an additional interest and reality for us.

Of the Celtic Christian legends which preceded the Divine Comedy, the best known are the Voyage of St. Brendan and the Purgatory of Saint Patrick. It is the vision of the Tundale, however, that has a greater right than any of the others to be regarded as a prototype of the Divine Comedy, and offers the greatest number of instances in which the two works agree. The chief points of difference between the Purgatory of Saint Patrick and the other visions of the time is that it assigns the entrance to Purgatory to a certain place and that it is, strictly speaking, the narration of a vision, but of the experiences of men who in their lifetime and in the flesh, were granted a glimpse of the invisible world.

LEGENDARY LORE USEFUL. However childish and extravagant these simple mediaeval legends of the other world may be, they are still of the greatest value. Much better than the annals and chronicles, they show the social, moral and poetic ideal of the time, an ideal that was not without its influence on the real life of the day, and has exercised a very considerable influence on literature. We may smile at the credulity of the men of which they are written, and of the men who took pleasure in reading them, but this much we must admit, that they had succeeded in that age in making the unseen world actual, a faculty which we have lost, and in reducing the distance between the world in which we live and the other.

It is too soon to decide the relation of these pre-Dantean visions to the Divine Comedy, for there are still inedited among the Irish manuscripts a number of works belonging to this class which may throw considerable light on the question. It may never be proved, however, that Dante did or did not know of any of these visions directly. It would be most surprising if Dante, who made his own all the learning of his time, did not know of these

Celtic legends which were then at the height of their popularity. POPULAR SOURCES DRAWN FROM.

Nor could it have been that he knew them but despised them and deemed them unworthy to find them a place in his Comedy, for the sources from which Dante drew were above all popular. If he did know them, it is most extraordinary that he does not mention any of them, which had he known them, could not, have failed to win his admiration for their brilliancy of color and fertility of imagination. On the other hand, if we deny that Dante knew these visions, it becomes extremely difficult to account for the many and closer resemblances which are found in his and the earlier works. Mere chance, independent invention, will not suffice to explain them.

That Dante was familiar with other Celtic themes, is seen from his reference to tales of the Round Table, especially to the story of Lancelotto, the reading of whose love for Ginevra led to the destruction of Paolo and Francesca da Rimini. It is no small glory for the Celt that his romance of love, the pearl of the trilogy, the most beautiful passage in all literature, on which Dante lavished all his art, is a theme from the fund of Celtic lore. The visions, chiefly of Irish origin, were like the sparks of which Dante speaks in the first Canto of Paradiso: "Poca favilla gran flamma seconda." "A few sparks create a great fire," and it is perhaps the greatest glory of these modest Celtic legends that they led to and resemble, if only in a distant way, the Divine Comedy of Dante.—Western Watchman.

MY LADY HOPE.

(Continued from page 3) swung in started forward with a joyous grunt. Eleanor heard the guttural "yap, yap," of pleasure, and her nervous grasp upon her husband's arm tightened. She hurried him past, and he, unconscious of the little creature who had been his care, went with her undisturbed. Dr. Morrison laid strong, but not unkindly fingers upon the shoulders of the hapless being, and drew him aside.

"Poor little Frank!" he said, looking down at him, for his heart was very tender just then. "Poor little chap, you have lost your only friend."

And in his heart, his somewhat hardened, worldly heart, he said, "Thank God!" But Frank did not understand. He was staring, open mouthed as usual, after his protector. A blank, puzzled look shut down over his face. He struggled a little to free himself, but finding the struggle vain, gave up, and watched the form of Hubert Satterlee disappear. When he had gone, Dr. Morrison released him. He fell to the floor, inert and helpless, moaning like a stricken thing wounded to the heart.

"Whatever became of that handsome young sculptor?" asked an interested visitor some six months after. "Did he die?" "Indeed no," answered Dr. Morrison. "He is as sound as ever, he was. Splendid fellow, bright as a dollar. We always expected it, more or less, but his wife finally accomplished it. She—well, she is a superb woman."

Dr. Morrison was a warm friend of both by this time. It was Eleanor Satterlee's simple trust that led him afterwards to the true faith, but that occurred a good many years subsequently, and it is not within the province of this little tale. He was apt, though, ever and always, to wax enthusiastic when he spoke of her.

"And the little dwarf, is he still here?" went on the questioner. "No," said Dr. Morrison, and the pleasant light faded out of his eyes. "He isn't here. He died a week after the young man left."

The "Famous Headland"

A reader of the Freeman's Journal sends us a copy of the Boise (Idaho) Daily Statesman which gives an account of a missionary convention and reports a speech made at it by a certain T. Headland, "the famous missionary of Peking."

It would seem that one who has been in China long enough to know something about Christian work in that country. But from what this Headland says we are forced to the conclusion that he is very ignorant of Catholic missionary work in China, or that he deliberately falsifies. Here is what he says: "Protestantism has built 40,000 schools and universities in China. Catholicism never did anything there."

Now we propose to show how false the latter portion of this statement is: Not to go farther back, Clement V. sent missionaries to China in 1307. A Bishopric was erected at Baitum in Fukien. In 1362 the fifth Bishop of Zaitun was massacred. In 1370, William de Prato was appointed to the See of Peking—five hundred years before the "famous Headland" appeared there.

As for the more modern missions, the Jesuits were in China in 1602, that is 308 years before the famous Headland. In 1746 a persecution broke out in Fuking during which Bishop Sanz and four other Spanish Dominicans were martyred. In 1748 two Jesuits were put to death at Su-chow, in 1829 Father Clef, a Lazarist, was strangled at Wu-ch'ang. In 1825 Bishop Duress was beheaded.

In 1870 ten Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul were put to death with great barbarity. We might mention many other Catholic missionary martyrs to expose the falsehood of Headland. The members of the religious orders have been working and shedding their blood in China for many years, the Jesuits, the Dominicans, the Augustinians, the Lazarists, and others. We have no room to describe their work in detail; we refer the reader interested in this matter to the Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. III, article "China."

The Catholic ecclesiastical government of the Church in China is divided into regions and provinces. In the province of southeastern Chi-li there were in 1901, 49 priests, 302 native priests, 59,646 Christians, 332 churches and chapels. In north Chi-li province there were in 1900, 40 priests, 47 native priests, 90,617 Christians, 456 churches and chapels.

And so on through the whole vast empire of China. And yet the Rev. Headland tells his hearers that Catholicism has done nothing there!—Rev. L. A. Lambert.

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and Weekly, of London, and lately the roll has been an unusually heavy one. Everything certainly has its price, and the conquest of the air threatens to exact a costly reckoning of to-day is too often but the tragedy of to-morrow, and will make the earlier chapters in the history of aviation but woeful reading when they come to be written. The untimely death of San Sebastian of the distinguished French aviator, M. Le Blon, who had won so many laurels, is by no means the least deplorable in this roll of fatalities. To his fellow-Catholics, however, the horrors of what otherwise would have seemed a death as sudden as it was violent is mitigated by the knowledge that the deceased was so devoted a Catholic that he never failed to approach the sacraments when he was essaying a fresh flight, and that he had been to confession and heard Mass the very morning of his death.

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Perosi a Hero in Paris. From a musical point of view the hero of Paris just now is Don Lorenzo Perosi, who visited France some ten years ago when he was choirmaster of St. Mark's under his chief, Cardinal Sarto, then Patriarch of Venice, whose first act after becoming Pope was to appoint his young friend Perosi choirmaster of the Vatican. Signor Perosi is receiving veritable ovations at the Trocadero, where he leads the performances of his oratorio, "Florence," a sort of panegyric of the Virgin, after Dante's thirty-third Song of Paradise. Signor Perosi conducted with ecstatic frenzy. The marvelous effect produced by the overwhelming combination of harps and violins caused a thrill of emotion in the fifth part, where the souls ascend to the celestial regions and is compared by French musical critics to "the gentle beating of angels' wings in the blue sky." Signor Perosi's works are produced at the Trocadero by the Societe des Grands Auditions Musicales de France, the president of which is the Comtesse du Greffuhle.

tisfy the wishes of our clients," say the librarians in this letter, "we have determined in future that we will not place in circulation any book, which, by reason of the, personally scandalous, libellous, immoral, or otherwise disagreeable nature of its contents, is, in our opinion, likely to prove offensive to any considerable section of our subscribers. We have, therefore, decided to request that in future you will submit to us copies of all novels, and any books about the character of which there can possibly be any question at least one clear week before the date of publication. Unless time is given to us to read the books before they are published, it is impossible for us to avoid that annoyance to our subscribers for which we, and not the publishers, are generally held responsible.

other agencies there may be, the press, and in particular the daily newspaper, is the most efficacious organ of publicity that we possess.—The Catholic World for May.

A BOY'S ESSAY ON RAIN. Rain comes down from heaven on the just and the unjust, but mostly upon the just because the unjust have borrowed the umbrellas of the just and have forgotten to return them.

The great broad river of mercies flows from God's throne with as full a current as ever; and the sunshine of forbearance is upon its waters incessantly. Men's crafts of pleasure, folly, lightness and self-will, run smoothly on. He must be either unwise or unbelieving who does not tremble at the slowness of God to be provoked.

A Consoling Sign. It is a consoling sign of the times that Catholic authors are multiplying and their books proving more than marketable. English writers across the sea are still giving us the best of the output. Truly some of them seem to be indefatigable and indefatigably successful. It is good to note as well that serious books are receiving better treatment than hitherto.

Wise Move Against Immoral Literature. In England the feeling against the circulation of indecent, suggestive and generally subversive books has become so strong that the great lending libraries—Mudie's, Smith's, Booklovers', the "Times" Book Club, Day's and others—have addressed a joint letter to the publishers of Great Britain in which they refuse longer to become the agencies for circulating books that offend the public taste. "In order to protect our interests and also, as far as possible, to save

The Power of the Press. Writing on Publicity and Social Reform, John J. Burke, C.S.P., says: "The greatest agency in publicity to-day is the press; and by the press we mean the printed word which includes the book, the quarterly, the monthly, the weekly, and the daily newspaper. Whatever other agencies of publicity there may be—and such agencies are almost innumerable—the curious gossip, the ordinary talk and conversation of the individual, private social committees of this kind and of that, legislative inquiries, city, state, and national investigations and reports—whatever

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WEEKS DEATH'S DOOR Kidney Pills cured Thompson's Dropsy. Backache and grew doctor said she must die. May 9.—(Special)—this here is ringing of Mrs. Satterlee, who lay at the for weeks, swollen that the doctor five decided to tap her cause, as her husband be better to let her After the doctor er up Dodd's Kidney n's terrible trouble ain in the back. She id the doctor treated ce for eight weeks, and legs began to e realized that Drop- e. For seven e. The doctor said e; she must die. The improvement at gradually her ack. To-day Mrs. well woman. She e country-side knows, e to Dodd's Kidney is of the Kidneys, eys, Dodd's Kid- ure it. y morning, and the as pursuing his his getting heavy e house of Mrs. e Johnnie opened d: "Mother and e'll you please call and why on Friday, asked the collect- "I don't know," "unless it's because eave on Thursday."