

WHO WAS IRELAND'S PATRON SAINT—ST. PATRICK?

BY DINOSAUR.

Special to London Advertiser.
Who was St. Patrick?
An old ballad, full of native Irish wit, informs us that

"St. Patrick was a gentleman,
And came of decent people."

and it is notable that the tradition, preserved in its quaint doggerel, should bear directly on recent researches of French savants—researches of fascinating interest to the average reader and which give a wider view, even, to be learned.

Numerous and popular as are the legends of Ireland's patron saint, it has been generally conceded that most of the authentic information concerning him is found in two Latin works: St. Patrick's "Letters to Coroticus" and his "Confessions," which are a kind of autobiography of his public and official life. Yet there are reasons why modern learning, digging deep in old French and Roman sources, may fill gaps or throw new light on things known or surmised; and those who have access to the "Confessions" in their completeness, will find paragraphs, here and there, that will no longer seem obscure.

The popular accounts begin, regularly, with a little slave boy who herded sheep on the mountain slopes of County Antrim, Ireland. Yet the boy had not been born in slavery. Noble blood flowed in his veins. As son of Calpurnius, Roman patrician and magistrate, freedom was his birthright. "And," as a popular



biography continues, "we are safe in surmising that his childhood's home afforded every comfort known to the luxury loving Romans of his day."

One should say so! I have known of these researches since 1911. How I regret that they are not my own, to spread before you! Another man, more capable than I, is making a book about them; and he fears that the French government may lay claim to a certain dis-

covery on which he places great historic value.

But, with what he gives me, I have a luminous vision.

It is the vision of a cultured and cosmopolitan family of patrician government functionaries intermar-



ried with the army, habituated to travel, shifting luxurious residence over all Europe, in a period that still inherited the good roads, splendid cities, baths, forums, promenades, seaside resorts and mountain baths, arts, industries and commerce of the august Roman Peace.

How, otherwise, could Concessa, St. Patrick's mother, have been born in what has become the present Hungarian city of Kothburg; lived a young wife and bore her illustrious son near Dumbarton, Scotland, and died in the rich Gallo-Roman city of Tours, today the center of the Garden of France.

Yet all becomes simple and understandable when you remember that Concessa was the niece of St. Martin of Tours, himself born in that Pannonian city of Kothburg, which modern Hungarians still call Sarwar—from Sabaria, its antique name as Martin and Concessa knew it.

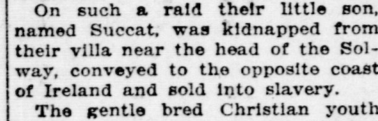
Martin's father was military tribune there (most of these outline facts are generally admitted; and part of this Frenchman's work is to put them together and reinforce them). The family of the military tribune evidently made a long and happy station down there on the south bank of the Danube, near the Hercules baths, where the Emperor Trajan soaked his rheumatism. What a picture it gives of long settled civilization, before Franks, Goths and Hun barbarians overran the empire! Regular mails on horseback and quick freight by canal boat—modern tourists see parts of road and tow-path hewn in rocks hundreds of miles apart.

St. Martin's youngest son quit the military tribune's palace, down there, at the age of 15, to go off as a Roman lieutenant. His elder sister was already married in the natural course

of things, so that his baby niece Concessa, born likewise down there, grew up in a society like that so beautifully attributed to the sisters of Parthenius by Kipling in his "Puck of Pook's Hill," shifted residence, as those girls had to do, and finally married Calpurnius, young military magistrate, whose post was the luxurious Roman city (most extraordinary in the empire, a single street thirty miles long!) which Kipling makes his heroes defend in that epic "Holding of the Wall!"

It was the Wall of Severus—away up in North England! To the south was all England and Roman civilization. To the north were Picts and Scots, not entirely uncivilized in their way, but certainly raiders. Kipling's story may be used as a perfect picture of the situation of Calpurnius and Concessa, after the withdrawal of too many legions and growing neglect of the wall permitted raids through breaches in it by "the Painted People."

On such a raid their little son, named Suscat, was kidnapped from their villa near the head of the Solway, conveyed to the opposite coast of Ireland and sold into slavery. The gentle bred Christian youth became the property of Milcho, wealthy cattle breeder of North Ireland. There everybody called the



boy Patrickus, "the young patrician"—whence Patrick.

Although he had led a slave's life, Patrick found his owners, the rich Irish of the day, had a civilization of their own, superior to that of the Picts who stole him, and a valuable literature; and they remain remarkable as the only Pagan people who were made Christian without wholesale martyrdoms of apostles and neophytes.

There were chiefs and serfs; strong houses and big banquet halls; huge herds of horses, cattle, sheep and swine; and the kings and queens, lords and ladies, and their famous fighting men and their wives wore garments of crimson and blue, green and saffron, plain or checkered, plaid

or striped. They had rings, clasps and torques of gold, urns, mugs, troughs and vessels of silver and iron. They played chess by the fires in their great halls, and they feasted and drank and quarreled, while the ladies sat ladylike in their sun parlors.

The 16-year-old boy of patrician Rome got to like these Irish people well, in the six years of his slavery; which explains his return to them, later, as a missionary.

Even while escaping from them, he thought of them tenderly; so that the cry—"We pray thee, come and henceforth walk among us!" which Patrick heard in exalted moments, seemed always as proceeding from the woods near Killala Bay, where he is supposed to have lain hidden while waiting to embark on a Britain bound vessel.

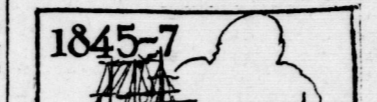
Patrick got home safely. The overjoyed Calpurnius and Concessa wished to keep him with them. The self-reliant, hard trained hero of 21 obeyed them; but taking risks had become natural to him in Ireland; and the breach in the wall of Severus was badly guarded. Twice again he was captured while fighting against Pict raids—or when he adventured into the Picts' country, which is more likely; and twice, again, he escaped. It was all his mother could stand. She and Calpurnius had some influence at Rome. They had done service in the chilly north of England! So Patrick's mamma used political pull to get them shifted to fair France.

Did all three go to Tours? Or did Calpurnius die en route and Patrick, then remove his mother to the protection of her powerful Uncle Martin, for the preceding fifteen years Bishop of Tours? This, I understand, is a point that will be cleared up.

In any case, it is plain history that Patrick went to Tours, where he embraced the monastic life. And Martin, wealthy bishop of that brilliant center, obeyed and venerated like a king for all his simple life, was able to settle his widowed niece,

a lady by birth and breeding, in cultured society that would cherish her after his own death—which was to take place soon enough, while on an episcopal voyage in Touraine.

It was not the first time that Concessa had seen her uncle Martin since he quit the palace of the military tribune on the Danube, when he was a youth of 15 and she a little girl. How they traveled in those days is shown by the fact that less than a year after leaving home on the Danube, Martin arrived with his legion at the gates of Amiens in north France. There, at the gate, occurred the incident so celebrated in Christian art and story. Noticing a poor man, insufficiently clothed in the snow, young Martin cut his own heavy blue military cloak in half and gave him one of the two pieces!



Between then and his twentieth year Martin was baptized, had sent in his resignation as army officer and had gone to study under St. Hilary, bishop of Poitiers. When Hilary was exiled to north Italy he prepared to start off with him; but the great man had said: "First pay a visit to your family. You have not seen them for a long time."

Thus Martin had seen, once again, the old home on the Danube, where his mother and grandmother still lived—because he then and there converted them. They were good people already under Christian influences. Had not Martin, fresh from



were patricians like himself) gave uncle Martin an extraordinary influence throughout Gaul. Far away tyrants like Valentinian I of Milan and the usurper Maximus at Treves, set free their worst enemies at his simple request!

This is the kind of uncle that Concessa found again when, after many years of mingled happiness and sorrow in north England, she was brought to Tours by her son Patrick," says my French research man.

"What shall I say of the frivolity of these times?" wrote Gregory of Tours, in his Historia Francorum, Book II, Chapter 32. "The sight of a new gown come from Rome makes women quit their hearts. They call to each other, they crowd and jostle, they fill the town with rumor. Oh, vanity of vanities! A few yards of silk can put a city in revolution!"

Ten years now passed. Patrick did not spend them all at Tours, because he made trips, one to a monastery in the Isle of Lerins, opposite Cannes, in the Mediterranean, and once as far as Italy; but his settled monastery was that of Tours—until his ordination and departure to Ireland, in answer to the call that rang always in his ears—"We pray thee, come and henceforth walk among us!"

At Tours, during all this time and after, St. Patrick left his mother, Concessa, cherished and cared for to her end by a whole Christian population—"as the only living relative of St. Martin, who came to be venerated as a saint immediately after his death," says my French informant. "Sulpicius Severus and Gregory of Tours have passages on the subject which are unmistakable in the light of my researches. I do not be-

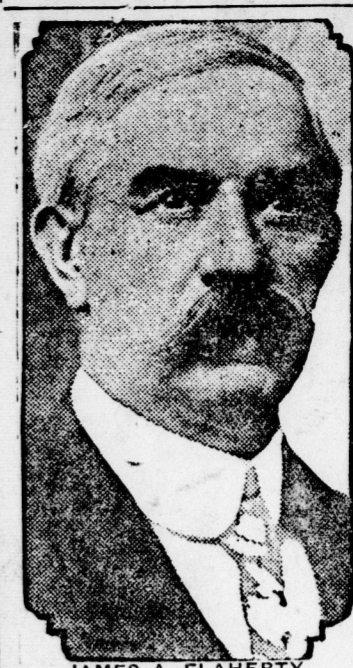
lieve that Patrick had a sister on the Isle of Lerins."

"I began my researches for St. Martin—not St. Patrick," continues my French learned man, "but it is the same family and a beautiful discovery naturally threw me back on Patrick. I think that I have recovered, positively, what I take to be the sepulchral portrait of his mother, Concessa, unearthed during the excavations made in 1860, which led to the rediscovery of St. Martin's tomb."

Like many other objects found on private ground in those extended diggings, this tombstone was concealed by a private collector who acquired it. It has never become known; and even now its present possessor fears that the French Beaux-Arts may get wind of it and claim it—"a fifth century piece, large and beautiful!"

In France this sort of archeological treasure trove is pounced on by the state. Thus, the authentic gold head of this very St. Martin, owned for 1,000 years by the town of Soudeilles, but classed as "a national monument," was seized by the Beaux-Arts. Yet what the municipality

Sees Era of Peace



JAMES A. FLAHERTY.

BY JAMES A. FLAHERTY.
Supreme Knight, Knights of Columbus.

St. Patrick's Day this year augurs more happiness for Ireland than any St. Patrick's Day I have ever known. St. Patrick is honored today, not only because of his missionary work in Ireland but on account of his contribution to civilization throughout the world.

He was past 50 years of age when he returned to Ireland with the commission to preach the gospel. No other apostle met with the same success as St. Patrick did in Ireland. The entire nation embraced Christianity without the shedding of a drop of blood.

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really started to deliver to him was only one of two counterfeit which they had caused to be made for the purpose. They would never have given up their real St. Martin for money. Nevertheless, they lost him! "Is the tombstone portrait of St. Patrick's mother equally authentic?" I asked my French authority.

"Certainly," he answered. "It was found exactly where it ought to have been; and the letters 'Conc.' are visible on it, among others."

"Where?" I asked, studying the photograph. "Ah, there is the danger, when private collectors take charge of important discoveries," he answered. "The lettering is on a broken piece, which the discoverer could not make fit, at the bottom. He hoped to find other pieces, but he never did so. The whole tombstone was found in a broken state, and he put it together himself. The head is joined at a bad angle. I shall explain all that in my book!"

Have we here an unmistakable effigy of St. Patrick's mother? As it makes her look comparatively young, she could not have lived long after Patrick went on his mission to Ireland. The palms in the right hand do not necessarily indicate martyrdom—there were no martyrs in Christian Tours in that century. Or is there, here some fascinating fact that we may never know?

In any case, the family history of these great ones comes out in fair pictures, beyond what one might expect from patient delving into the uncatalogued masses of the Vatican and the garrets of the Ecole des Chartes in France—where, among the baled spoil of abbey no unpack since the French revolution, anything may be found!

Clearly it shines out—St. Patrick was a gentleman and came of decent people!

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