

The Disbelief of Milcho.



AMONG the writings of Aubrey de Vere most widely commented upon and perhaps oftenest read are his Legends of St. Patrick. Remarkable among the poems that compose this work is that entitled, "The Disbelief of Milcho," the story of which is, briefly, as follows:

St. Patrick having landed as a missionary in Ireland, determined to convert his old master, Milcho, to Christianity. On his way, the saint performed many miracles which combined with his preaching, effected many conversions. Milcho learns these tidings but rather than bear the ignoring of being taught by his former slave, he sets fire to his buildings and leaps into the flames.

The poem is divided into two parts. In the first the poet describes the voyage of St. Patrick along the coast of Ireland, to the land of Milcho; at the same time he pictures the many scenes which are passed, and narrates the incidents which occur.

First, St. Patrick lands at Imber Dea in a humble but precious bark, from which "he stept forth and knelt and blessed his God." The place seems to harmonize with the occasion.

"The peace of those green meads
Cradled 'twixt purple hills and purple deep,
Seemed as the peace of heaven."

Patrick spends the whole night in prayer. His thoughts continually go back to Milcho, who was his former master and he resolves that before he spreads the word of God throughout the land he must convert him. While he does not expect failure he is

"Not ignorant that from low beginnings rise
Oftenest the works of greatness."

The saint and his band again embark on their voyage. They land at a certain place and here De Vere takes occasion to describe the sociableness and hospitality of the Irish: