

THE BAPTISM OF ST PATRICK

St. Patrick was one of those upon whom God set His seal, even in infancy, manifesting by miraculous gifts and favours the designs which He had formed concerning him. The priest to whom the child was brought for baptism was blind, and no water could be procured for the sacrament; by a sudden inspiration the priest took the hand of the infant, and with it made the sign of the Cross upon the ground; forthwith a fountain broke forth, in which the priest baptized the child; then, washing his own eyes in the miraculous waters, his sight was restored.

“How can the babe baptized be
Where font is none and water none?”
Thus wept the nurse on bended knee,
And swayed the infant in the sun.

‘The blind priest took that Infant’s hand:
With that small hand above the ground
He signed the Cross. At God’s command
A fountain rose with brimming bound.

In that pure wave, from Adam’s sin
The blind priest cleansed the Babe with awe;
Then, reverently, he washed therein
His old, unseeing face, and saw!

He saw the earth; he saw the skies,
And that all-wondrous Child decreed
A pagan nation to baptize,
And give the Gentiles light indeed.’

Thus Secknall sang. Far off and nigh
The clansmen shouted loud and long;
While every mother tossed more high
Her babe, and, glorying, joined the song.

AUBREY DE VERE.