

sheltered by high trees, but open to noontide sun, and where a little green had been discovered, showing the first signs of early spring. There was a small stream, bordered but not covered by ice, and they were endeavoring to find a little fish or two to add to their own ration of a lump of hard salt fish, when suddenly a strange sound fell upon their ears—the chanting voice of a man, singing words in a language neither understood; but Attalus looked up as he caught the lilt, and exclaimed, "That is the 'Breastplate of St. Patrick!'" and he started forward in the direction of the sound in among the trees.

There was a great hollow tree, between several other huge primeval firs, with long sweeping branches hanging almost to the ground, and there, in the hollow, scarcely to be distinguished from the ruddy brown of the pine stems in his dark reddish dress, stood a hooded figure, freckled, red-bearded, and singing forth in his native Erse that beloved hymn—

Christ in the field,
Christ in the fold,

and by his side lay two pretty, delicate-limbed, deer.

"Gilchrist! Gilchrist!" shouted the boy, flinging out his arms.

The hermit started, the hinds sprang up, but one of them limped, and instead of bounding off shrank to Gilchrist for protection, while he exclaimed, "Blessed be the saints! Found, found! as I promised his Clemency the Bishop," and he gathered the boy into his embrace.

"Gilchrist, Gilchrist, how didst thou come here? Didst come to search for me? Milo, 'tis a pilgrim, a guest of my grandfather's. Oh, let me hear! How is he? How is my uncle? Am I ever to go home?"

Gilchrist answered each confused question as well as he could, and they gradually came on each side to an understanding of the situation. Gilchrist told of the return and repurchase of Gola in the absence of the Bishop, and how he himself had set forth on finding that Attalus was left alone, so as to discover what had become of him. His way had been very long, and much hindered, especially since he had passed Treves, and no doubt he had been nearly starved, and existed by something little short of miracle; but to that these primitive Irish saints were well used, and Gilchrist said not a word of his hardships.

Lying at the bottom of a steep place he had found the half-grown fawn, its leg broken, and its side torn by a hunter's dog, and the mother standing over it. She had darted away at first, and the creature struggled, but soon submitted under his hand when he bound it up, and both had become his fond companions ever since. The hind still had milk enough to afford him a little support when all else was lacking, and they had slept beside him and kept him warm.

They had gone a little way off, their great soft wistful eyes regarding his visitors with some alarm, but it was plain that they were not about to leave him.

Had he been at Hundingburg? Yes, some days ago he had been to the town, as he called it, but there had been a yelling forth of words that he could not understand, and he saw dogs ready to be loosed, which made him fear for his hind and her fawn, and he had retreated, endeavoring to make his approaches more warily, as indeed he had not been able to discover whether this were the place of Attalus's captivity. He had decided to wait as near as was prudent, and endeavor to find out whether this were the dwelling of Hunderik. So he had wandered on till he had found the shelter of this hollow tree, such a hermitage as many a Celtic anchorite of those centuries owned, there to rest his foot, which showed signs of renewed mischief.

He was perfectly contented there. He said he wanted for nothing—he ate the seeds out of the fir cones, and caught the little fish, and he would not even taste a piece of Milo's meat because it was Lent. Milo was far past keeping fast-days, and Attalus had forgotten the time of year. Indeed, the fresh smell of the pines, with their young scaly buds becoming visible, was very grateful.

There was much to tell and tell again on either side, till, as the sun began going down and bathing the stems of the pines with ruddy light, Gilchrist exclaimed that it was time for his evening praise and prayer, and began to chant. It was badly pronounced Latin, but the words were familiar to Attalus, and spoke of home, and to Milo they were the cadence of a long, long forgotten time, and by and by, when Gilchrist and Attalus had ceased, the rough fellow's face was covered with tears.

"Father," he sobbed, "thou wilt not go away. I will come back again to-morrow and bring thee—"

"I—I could not go if I would," said Gilchrist, smiling, and holding out a foot which frost, rocks, and dust had brought to a state that would have horrified Philetus, and made Attalus cry out with pity and dismay. Yet Gilchrist, in his solitude among the whispering pines, and with no companions save the two deer, seemed far happier than ever he had done in the household at Langres.

Milo and Attalus went back, with their two horses, both grave and sad, many a thought and yearning within them. Attalus was wakened from the indifference that had been growing on him, and felt utterly homesick and weary as the dear old faces of his grandfather, Leo, and even his stern uncle and Philetus, rose on him; the chantings in the chapel sounded in his ears, and as he looked down at his ragged and dirty tunic, supplemented by a goatskin belted