

which occurred some time ago. I was walking in Phoenix Park, one of the most beautiful of its kind in all Europe. The park has an extent of three square miles. It is beautifully laid out in a way to please the eye of all. Groves, gardens, lakes, trees and plants of the rarest kind are found within its inclosure. It also contains a zoological garden with collections of animals from every clime. The residences of the Viceroy, of the Chief and Under-secretary situated here are palatial buildings. All the national sports and military reviews are held here. I met an old and venerable man one day in the park. He stopped to address me. After discussing the usual topics on the fine weather, the beautiful surroundings etc., I asked him his name and place of his birth. "I am ninety," he said. "I was born in Dublin and never left it. Eighty years ago I hunted the wren on Saint Stephens' Day in this park. I remember Waterloo, and how we used to pray that "Bony," as Napoleon was called, might beat the English. "Why did they hunt the wren on St. Stephens' Day?" I asked. "That is more than any man can tell," he replied. "The usual account is this:—Once upon a time when the Irish were at war with the English, the enemy had quietly gone to sleep in camp. The Irish took advantage of this and planned an attack. The Irish were approaching the Saxon quarters when a number of wrens flew from a bush into the tents of the English and awoke the troops. An old chronicler of two hundred years ago, described the field where this occurred, and said that the birds aroused the English by picking at the drums. But this could be hardly true since the Welsh and the Manx likewise hunt the wren, therefore it must be of Celtic origin. The custom probably symbolizes the shortest day of the year and the change of season, which was likewise a pagan custom."

"The red-breast," he continued, is differently treated. The old people respect it, and the young would consider it a sin to rob its nest. The legend runs that of old when the Jews were pursuing our Lord in order to kill Him, the robin covered Him with moss, and would have concealed our Saviour had not the water-wagtail (called the devil's bird) plucked away the covering. Another saying is that at the Crucifixion a robin, out of compassion, rested on the crown of thorns and thus received his scarlet breast. Other stories say that the feet of the blessed Virgin, when fleeing through the woods with the Holy infant, were so lacerated that she left a bloody track behind her. The robin tried to cover the bloody stains with leaves and whilst pressing them down received its crimson breast."

These and other interesting stories of the bird family were related to me by my new and venerable acquaintance. Is it not strange that a non-Catholic invariably blesses himself with the Sign of the Cross when he sees a magpie? The great Isaac Butt always did it.

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A WRITER in the *Humanitarian* in speaking of the duty of women to become attractive says, that one of the great drawbacks is, that the sex has been "too steeped in ecclesiasticism." Quite the contrary. The more the fair sex is steeped in religion the more attractive they are. The use of the many artificial beautifiers do not bring out the best in any woman. What attracts most is modesty, gentleness and other christian virtues conspicuous in those who strive to model themselves after the most beautiful and attractive of women, at whose sight, even a saint, (Denis the Areopagite) felt inclined to fall down in adoration—namely the humble Virgin of Nazareth.

HE who fears God avoids all occasions of offending Him.—ST. TERESA.