

to-night. I have something else to do." He rose and moved heavily forward as if walking in his sleep. Remorse had quickened the girl's instincts and she caught hold of his arm.

"Sir, don't take on so; I won't plague you any more. Don't look like that for goodness sake, you look as if you were going to die."

"In about an hour, Polly, I shall be dead," he said with a feeble smile, and then—because all young people crave for sympathy, and he saw it in the honest face before him—he told her in a few words of the awful dilemma his folly had placed him. The lethargy of death was spreading over him; he had lost the power of resistance, realizing how he was hemmed in by every direction.

Not so, Polly. That such a thing could happen in civilized London appalled her, but danger only quickened her energies.

"There is no time to be lost, sir," she cried, giving him a little shake. "I must find that letter and I will. It is only cook who has hidden it from me out of jealousy. But I'll be even with her yet. Oh, sir, if you had only told the truth before, while I was wasting the precious time fooling. Now, listen to me, sir, and do as I tell you, for your poor brain is dazed. Give me some money and I'll take a murder cook for it, and I'll come on to your meeting-house. If you wait here, they will kidnap you, the wicked varnits. Give me the pass-word and I'll walk in bold as brass and dare them to do their worst. See if I don't."

Her eyes sparkled and her cheeks flushed, for Polly was a quick, warm-hearted girl, and this was an adventure after her own heart.

She put him into one hansom, she hailed another for herself, and after promising caution and secrecy she departed.

As he entered the assembly room Ernest felt the sombre character of the meeting. Every face was grave, eyes looked on him with suspicion; he knew he was doomed. The proceedings were brief. Charles Magnus had informed them of his carelessness, and he was asked for his defense. He replied that the letter had been traced, and he expected a messenger to bring it in the course of an hour or two. They consulted apart, and then the leader addressed him: "On account of your youth and former services we are willing to be as lenient as our rules permit."

Therefore, we have ordained that you sit with your eyes blindfolded and the poisoned cup by your side for an hour. If, at the end of that time, no messenger has arrived, death must be your fate as it has been of all those who have endangered the cause in any way whatever. Further, in the event of the letter arriving intact, we dispense with your services for ever, knowing that you will keep your vow of secrecy, as you understand that you cannot escape us if you act the traitor. Do you abide by this decision?"

"I do abide," said Ernest, with a firm voice, as he turned his eyes to a blindfold and himself to be conducted to a seat in the centre of the group.

The silence was only broken by the ticking of the clock as minute after minute passed away, so swiftly that Ernest lost count and thought his time had come. He heard the beating of his own heart, and in the distance the roar and hum of the never-ceasing traffic in the busy streets above. There was life outside—pulsing, throbbing life; and here his youth-tide was swiftly ebbing away in the midst of these grave, silent men.

The tension was becoming unbearable; he felt his nerves were giving way under the strain; if someone would but touch his hand, would but say a word of kindly fellow-feeling.

Ah! a voice spoke, majestic and solemn.

"My brethren, it is striking 9?"

The chairs were pushed back; he felt they were surrounding him; something was pushed into his hand—it was the cup! Well it would soon be over. No; it was a letter—the letter, and someone was saying:

"The messenger has come, she is waiting outside; you are free to go."

The bandage fell; they pointed to the door and somehow he got outside, no one saying a word of farewell or friendship or congratulation at his escape.

Polly rushed at him, half laughing, half crying: "I have got a cab, you are quite safe now."

But perhaps his first feeling of safety only came with women-like, she made him translate the cypher which he still held in his hand. It ran: "Affair postponed; Royalty got wind and sending substitutes; Continental business till next year."—Catholic Fireside.

Priests and Novel-Writing.

Father Sheehan, the author of "My New Curate," and other well-known works, finds his celebrity rather embarrassing on account of the enormous correspondence which it entails and for which his parochial duties at Doneraile leave him scarcely sufficient time. But he comforts himself, no doubt, with the belief that a novel may in its own way be a very good sermon. We judge from an interview which he has given to a representative of the "University College, Dublin," that he has had ample evidence to this effect. Numbers of letters have reached him from clergymen of various denominations in England and America, thanking him for "My New Curate," inasmuch as it gave them an entirely new idea of what a Catholic priest really is. They seem hardly to believe," said Father Sheehan, "that we priests are made of flesh and blood." The influence of "My New Curate" has also been felt on the Continent. A German Baron has written to Father Sheehan to say that the German translation of the book has created quite a sensation owing to the freshness with which Catholic truth is presented, and especially because of the revelation of the secret of the power possessed by the Catholic priest in Ireland over the people.

Father Sheehan has been so impressed with the uses to which fiction may thus be put that he has resolved—as we

gather from the interview—not to depart in the future from the intention, entertained from the first, of making his stories novels with a purpose.

STORY OF ST. BRENDAN.

Last week we published Dr. De Costa's evidence from Icelandic history in favor of the ancient discovery of America by Irish monks. Mention was made of the "Story of St. Brendan," an account of which should be interesting to our readers after their very successful "Ancient Eire" contest.

"America was discovered by St. Brendan of Ireland." This is the way school histories may yet have to read, said the Post-Dispatch of St. Louis, a few years ago, commenting on the revelations made by a Celtic scholar who has been delving in the misty manuscripts of an old World library, and who told the story of St. Brendan for the benefit of Western readers. This Gaelic scholar, Dr. M. J. Mulroy, of the Boston Irish school, in his researches abroad, found unquestionable confirmation of the fact that St. Brendan's voyage of discovery was made one thousand years before that of Columbus. The Irish mariner-priest (No. 29 b in our recent Contest Catalogue) named the country "Inchall It Mikla," or Ireland the Great, and as such it was known in all early traditions, as may be ascertained by referring to the "Pre-Columbian Discoveries of America," by Dr. Benjamin F. De Costa, an American claiming seven generations of New England blood and so far as he knows, "not one drop of Irish in his veins."

The Ireland of the early and Middle Ages was not only the island of saints and scholars, but also the country of explorers. In those days the Irish were independent and always energetic. As Professor Mulroy tells us, they appear to have inherited the marvelous qualities of their Phœnician ancestors. They loved change and activity, hence they did not hesitate to bear into other lands the genius of their enterprise.

The sea which surrounded the island served them admirably for their daring purposes. It spoke to their imagination, with its changing colors, its mobile horizons and its marvelous phenomena.

Being always accustomed to its scenes, waves, storms, tempests and shipwrecks, they had no fear to embark upon its bosom and sail wherever the winds drove them.

Their boats were of simple but staunch manufacture, and from their construction, the safest of floating vessels, though unlike our modern improvements, perhaps, incapable of carrying such burdens as we can now transport; but to brave and weather a storm on the roughest sea they have never been excelled. The framework or ribs were made of pine timber, of which Ireland in those ages yielded sufficient abundance of the choicest quality; and these were covered by hides of animals, heavily laid on and well stitched together. The prow and poop were of the same shape and some what resembled the "baidares" of the Esquimaux. The Irish called their currauchs, as did their forefathers, the Phœnicians, and, needless to say, these currauchs were the marvel and wonder of the ancients who lived inland.

It was when their land became Christian that the Irish made it a national anxiety to travel, to seek and to bring to remote and pagan countries their own laws, customs, faith and doctrine. Ireland, no doubt, has well deserved the title of "Island of Saints," as well from the great number of its monasteries as from the great learning and enterprising spirit of its missionaries.

The islands west of Scotland and north of Ireland seem to have been the first places which demanded their attention, and from there into the country of the Picts and Scots, who then painted their bodies for war of clothes. From there they pushed into the Faroe Islands, which lie west of Denmark, and from there into Iceland. It was but a short distance from Iceland to Greenland and Vinland, or our Canada and northern New England of modern days.

North American coast was called by the Irish missionaries Ireland It Mikla, or Greater Ireland, a name which, strangely enough, was entirely lost sight of in later times. The records of these voyages of discovery are preserved in both pagan and Christian legends and well-authenticated traditions.

Saint Brendan is the principal hero of the Christian legends. His adventures were told during the Middle Ages not only in Ireland, but throughout entire Europe. His voyages were then fresh in their minds and they contributed to turn public attention to those western seas where some savant theologians had already placed the terrestrial paradise. The tales of the laborious voyages of this explorer, who for several years wandered across the Atlantic, who discovered islands and continents, charmed all Europe for many generations.

We are told that in the time of King Robert of France there was a most abject confidence and belief in the adventures and discoveries of Brendan. They were told in Ireland, Gaul, Normandy, England, France, Germany, Italy and Spain. They were translated into all known languages, and even went so far as the East, where they were given wide circulation. They were entwined amongst the popular poems and traditions of the French people, who venerated him just as much, if not more, than did his own people. So it would be well for us at the present time to be familiar with a legend that exercised such influence upon his contemporaries and determined some of them to follow his example.

He was born about the year 460 A. D. His childhood was passed in charge of St. Ita, a pious woman who guarded to him with the greatest care both as to his instruction and education. He became learned and wise and was regarded as a seer or prophet indeed, some say he could perform miracles, but these do not count for much nowadays. However, he was consulted on various occasions and his good advice and judgment were always given freely and much sought for. He attached himself

to the Church and, as he was of a noble family it is said soon became abbot of a monastery. His ardor increased; he founded religious communities, some of which became famous. It is said that three thousand monks obeyed him. Among them was Mochutus, one of his fellow-wanderers, who gave his name to the city of St. Malo in France.

Brendan resolved to follow in the track of his pagan predecessors, of whom traditions told, across the ocean, there to plant the seeds of Christianity. He arranged everything for a long expedition.

From the very earliest times the monks and priests who sacrificed wore an outside long white garment or alb, and it was this garment which especially distinguished these monks in the ages we are referring to. One of these white-robed monks, Mernoe, a companion, and another, Barintus, the teacher of Brendan, had established themselves with others on one of the Western Atlantic islands. They lived upon fruit, roots and pods, and left their cloister only to attend their work, which being finished they repaired back to their devotions.

On one occasion Mernoe was absent for some weeks, where it is not stated, but it might have been in some other community, and when he came back he was astonished at the most delicious odor that pervaded everywhere. It was then thought to have come from heaven, but was as fresh and just as truly described almost one thousand years afterwards by the Spanish sailors who visited the tropical regions of America and sniffed the fragrant breezes long before they reached the land.

Mernoe did not forget his native land and made several voyages back and forth, but on one of these he lost his way, and, beyond the river landed, it would appear, on the American continent. They traveled for fifteen days through a country full of great plains, covered with flowers and trees laden with fruit. They finally reached a large river which rolled from the west toward the east and attempted to cross it, but Barintus says an angel appeared to them and forbade them to cross, saying that beyond the river lay the earthly paradise. They retraced. Mernoe settled down and Barintus returned again to Ireland, and it was his glowing accounts of this transatlantic Elysium that induced Brendan to sail for the Western world.

St. Brendan took one hundred monks with him. The first voyage was unfortunate. Tempests, hunger, and cold, above all, the inexperience of the crew caused the failure of the expedition, so that he had to return to his native land without finding Mernoe or his companions. This failure, instead of depressing the spirits and hopes of Brendan, only excited them, and he soon busied himself fitting out another expedition. This time he took with him only forty monks, among whom was his disciple Maehutus, a Gaul from Brittany. These white-robed adventurers embarked so that they had upon a light barque made of pine and covered with skins. They carried provisions for forty days. At the moment of their departure three Brothers joined them, in spite of the remonstrance of Brendan and his sad presentiments.

During fifteen days the wind blew from the east, then it suddenly fell. The monks soon grew discouraged, and cause they must now propel with the oar and waded whether they knew or not, and besides they were growing short of provisions. But Brendan reassured them, and it took all his tact to maintain their sinking spirits. In about a month they came to an island, where they could find a landing place only after a three days' sail along the coast. They found there a mansion containing a table and furniture.

They landed and passed on to another island, where they found large animals like oxen. Here a man brought them food and sprinkled it with water before they ate. After a few days' sailing they found another island, where they thought they would take a little repose. Here they performed their night and morning duties and took food and repose, but all at once to their astonishment the island sailed away. The island was in effect a fish, perhaps a whale, that the monks had taken for a solitary rock.

Some few days after this curious incident the monks landed on a verdant island, watered by beautiful streams. The trees and rocks were covered with birds that came very familiarly and perched themselves on their shoulders. They chanted in chorus the most beautiful strains. The voyagers stood here for many days and called it the Paradise of Birds.

It may be mentioned that the Spanish navigators who first discovered the Azores centuries after Brendan, were astonished at the number and familiarity of the birds in this group of islands, and called the land Azores, which signifies "birds." Another navigator speaks of the astonishing sweetness of the melody of these birds, and that he himself assisted at a concert given by these birds.

Brendan and his companions left this island and next landed on the Isle of Albano, so called from a monk who had settled there nearly a century before, leaving Ireland and the cares of the world to live an anchorite.

The next place they landed was on an island covered with forests, and they hailed a most delicious odor, but further on they imagined themselves approaching the infernal regions, for they saw the sea boil at a distance and found the air full of a sulphurous odor. Later on they came to a land over which they wandered for forty days without coming to any of its confines. They received some admonition that they should go no farther, after which they returned to Ireland, where Brendan died in his ninety-sixth year.

Among Brendan's company Malo, his favorite disciple, could not rest at home after tasting the glories of the Western lands, but set sail again to revisit it. His currauch was driven by a storm on the coast of Armorica Gaul, where he settled down and became a Bishop. It was through St. Malo, the French and Spaniards got their first information of a Western world.

THE LIFE OF A SOUL.

A notable sermon was made by a priest in the pulpit last Sunday. He was preaching on the sentence of the Gospel of the day—"Not by bread alone does man live, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." And he said substantially:

We have two lives—the life of the body and the life of the soul. But most people do not feed the soul, do not nourish its strength, do not keep it from the weakness that comes from starvation, do not check its disease, and take no thought when, as regards its supernatural life of grace, it dies. They live for the body. They want to dwell in a fine house, to possess hand-some furniture, to use rich food, to wear costly clothes—to have every comfort and luxury that money can buy. Their thoughts are all on style, on beauty, of sense, of time. Nothing for the soul. Nothing for God. Nothing for eternity.

How foolish they are to neglect their soul! Suppose that, instead they would neglect their body. Suppose that they would take no food for even a month, sleep out in the streets have no home, and so on and then, while un-mindful of the life of their body, give all their attention to their soul. Instead of breakfast they would recite the Rosary; for dinner, they'd make the Stations of the Cross; and at supper they'd have a meditation on death. Instead of doing something to earn a living, they'd come to church and be on their knees for eight or ten hours. And so on.

How imprudent they'd be to neglect their bodies! In a week they'd be living skeletons; and in a short while more, they'd be dead.

But their death might be only the death of the body—instantaneous and temporary. They might find life everlasting in the next world. They might rise again, glorious, with their bodies revived.

But those who neglect the life of the soul will find eternal death. They will rise again, it is true, but their soul will be spiritually dead for eternity.

Let us think, then, of the life of the soul and of the things that minister to that life—the words that proceed from the mouth of God, His revelation, His religion, His grace, justice, truth, purity, charity, the observance of the commandments of God and the Church, at the Sacraments, prayer, fasting and alms-deeds. Let us impress on our minds the words of our Divine Saviour to the devil tempting Him: "Not by bread alone does man live, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God."

It was certainly a striking and practical discourse.—Catholic Columbian.

ST. JOSEPH.

Though St. Joseph lived in poverty and contempt he came of noble ancestry. He was the connecting link between the Old and the New Dispensation, the first dawn that announces the coming day. In his youth he belonged to the Old Law, in his later life to the New.

St. Joseph is said to have had a boyhood and youth of suffering and to have been persecuted and ill treated by his brethren. His character as known to us in Holy Scripture is eminently one of holiness, prudence and the love of God. Such patience, gentleness, and thoughtful charity cannot be learned except at a heavy price. His trade was that of a carpenter. The thought of the great Patron of the Universal Church, the husband of Mary, having been a handicraftsman ought to give us a great respect for manual labor.

At the time of his marriage to the Blessed Virgin Mary St. Joseph was in the prime of life and was always far advanced in wisdom, counsel, prudence and the love of God. Never were husband and wife so eminently suited to each other as Joseph and Mary. Never was there a union that so exactly symbolized the union between Christ and the Church.

St. Joseph and Our Lady lived in perfect chastity. Their ideas and opinions, hopes and aspirations were identical. Joseph was Mary's strong support, and Mary loved to depend on Joseph. He held the position of father to Jesus except at his rights and authority. His Divine Foster-Son from His birth depended upon him as the child naturally depends on the father, and therefore he is truly called the father of Jesus. As St. Joseph grew old and his natural powers began to fail, the beauty of his soul became more apparent. Some think that like Moses he suffered none of the infirmities of age. At all events, occupied in some sort the place of the Eternal Father upon earth, must have been an old man of incomparable beauty, the type and ideal of a saint and a patriarch. Nursed in the arms of Jesus and Mary his last hours were one long ecstasy. St. Joseph's death was only a falling asleep to waken in paradise.

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WHY NOT GO TO THE POOR HEAL-THEN?

The Protestant Episcopal Bishop Hall of Vermont, who takes pride in calling himself a Catholic, took occasion at the consecration of their new Bishop Brent, for the Philippines, to preach a sermon in which he carefully and apparently rather anxiously, apologized for their sending him to a Catholic country. In reading this sermon we were not a little surprised that he said not a word about the heathen portion of the islands. We could not help saying to ourselves, Why should these good people, who seem to be very sincere and desirous of doing good, spend all their sympathies upon the Catholic people, while there are in those islands thousands of poor heathens who are sitting in darkness and the shadow of death? There are the Mohammedans, for instance, to whom our very "liberal" government grants a handsome sum annually while it has such conscientious scruples about in any way favoring the Catholics. Are these Mohammedans not legitimate subjects for missionary labor? Have they not souls to be saved or lost as well as those unhappy tribes who are not so fortunate as their Mohammedan brethren, but are being shot down, driven out and exterminated in the name of a higher and more liberal and humane civilization?

No doubt, Bishop Brent is a good Christian gentleman, and we should be very sorry to intimate that he was not sincerely desirous of laboring for the salvation of souls. But we can not for the life of us see why all his sympathy and anxiety should be expended upon the Catholic people who, at least, have the knowledge of Christ and the means of grace, while the multitude of savages who still remain in the darkness and degradation of heathenism should be left to perish without an effort for their salvation. The same may be said of the multitude of Protestant missionaries and teachers who are flocking—shall we say?—like harpies upon the devoted Catholic people, while the last thought that seems to enter their heads is for the poor, perishing heathen in the same lands.—Sacred Heart Review.

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