

HOW ROBIN BREAST CAME TO IRELAND.

It was an Eastern land. The air was full of the scent of flowers and aromatic shrubs, and the bees were humming. There were little butterflies among the anemones, and the tall palm trees cast short shadows on the grass.

High in the air, near to the city walls, a white-breasted robin sang. Some strange force drew him thither to Calvary, and he fluttered to the foot of the cross.

And now the hour of man's redemption has come. The great sacrifice was consummated, and Jesus died. In that hour darkness spread all over the land; the sea rose; the rocks burst asunder; the earth opened, and the dead arose.

Robinson Redbreast's song was heard no more in Palestine. He sought a land where such things as he had seen on that dread Friday might not be.

With a great bird sign Robin turned his course and travelled a weary space on an island in the Adriatic. Now and then he rested his tired wing on some friendly mast. In the fair Italian cities, in the sunny land of France, he carried not nor rested upon one morning he saw a man in golden sun-tide, like an emerald set in the ocean.

A brilliant sunshine lighted up the grey walls of the Palace of Esmahan, its ramparts, turrets, and domes, and the sun shone brightly on the towers of the Kings of Uliada.

Yet long amidst the people who love him King Connor Mac Nessa in my reign. It always the high pale of a plover to keep from his heart and his brain.

And take heed that the bright eyes of woman be kept from his sight, above all.

Connor Mac Nessa obeyed; but soon he wearied of inaction. He longed again to be foremost in the battle, the strong champion of right and the terror of his foes.

In the king's chamber deep silence reigned, and footsteps moved with tread. Without the birds twittered a gay carillon; soft breezes played among the flowers and the grasses; sweet sunshine and the glory of early summer were everywhere.

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glory. He saw her as the land of saints and scholars, of kings and chiefs, of high renown.

The scene changed. Her princes were aliens, and her people slaves. Her temple and her altars were razed; her fair lands and valleys were the prey of the spoiler, and the Royal Sunburst set in gloom.

MORAL ASPECTS OF SUICIDE.

In the January issue of the Century Magazine, Cardinal Gibbons writes on "The Moral Aspect of Suicide." In the course of the article he says: "I have now lying before me the official record of suicides in the United States from 1885 to 1903, which is calculated to excite in every patriotic and humane breast a sentiment of compassion and deep concern."

"Virgil, the great Mantua poet, following the traditional belief of the ancient Romans, consigns to Tartarus a victim of self-destruction, though she was stained with no other crime. Suicide was, however, regarded as a heinous crime among the Stoics of pagan Rome."

"As to the causes of suicide, there is no doubt that a considerable number of them are due to a disordered and unbalanced mind, for which it is hoped the members of victims are not fully responsible. But after making all due allowances for suicide mania, the great bulk of those who compass their own death act with deliberation and are accountable to God and man for the deed they commit."

"As to moral aspects, suicide is manifestly forbidden by the divine law. One of the Commandments of the decalogue declares: 'Thou shalt not kill thy neighbor,' which qualifying phrase is employed in some of the other Commandments. For instance, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor; thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house.' The prohibition to kill is therefore absolute. It forbids the taking of human life whether by suicide or homicide."

"Voluntary self-murder is not only a violation of the divine law, but is also a crime against society, we being social beings. We owe a duty to the commonwealth as well as to ourselves. We must depend on one another like the limbs of a body. For none of us liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself. Human society may be compared to a grand army, every member of which has a special place and mission assigned to him by his sovereign commander. To abandon the post of duty intrusted to a sentinel is regarded by the military code as a most cowardly act which is punished with the extreme rigor. What less does the suicide do than to basely abandon the situation assigned to him in the warfare of life?"

"And there is no vice more contagious than our cowardly desertion. It is often followed by a general mutiny. The same is true of suicide. When a few deeds of self-murder are widely circulated by the press, they are not infrequently followed by numerous voluntary slaughters. A suicidal wave rolls over the land."

"The fallacy of the assertion that the suicide injures no one but himself is manifest when we consider the dire consequences which such a statement may involve. Suppose that a number of the leading men of a community were to blow out their brains in the height of a financial crisis. The whole town would be thrown into confusion, and a reign of quiet and uncertainty would prevail before confidence was restored, and then consider the legacy of sorrow and of suffering which the self-destrorying father leaves to the inner circle of his wife and children."

"It would be a painful, fruitless task to discuss the moral diseases of suicide, unless a ready were suggested, which is the chief purpose of these reflections. It is a significant fact that in countries and districts where the Christian religion exercises a dominant sway, and where its teachings are faithfully practiced, self-murder is almost unknown, and when such a tragedy occurs it excites unwarmed horror throughout the community."

good deal of attention in general, and especially from learned quarters, such as the Bibliotheca, the Louvain Review, "Histoire Ecclesiastique," etc.

He has now finished his researches and put them in book form. The whole will appear in the Seven Hills Magazine, but it is not known if it will afterwards come out as a book. In the December issue of the magazine are the Introduction and Chapters I and 2. The installment forms as if an article by itself, for the introduction deals with the problems still present and making difficulties in the literature about St. Patrick for any who really wish to understand the apostle's career, and proposes to pass in review and criticize all this literature in chronological order, and try to dissipate the more serious difficulties. Then, in the first two chapters, the position of Prosper of Aquitaine, the first witness about the conversion of the Irish to Christianity, is sketched and studied.

That the assertions of Prosper of Aquitaine about the conversion of the island should have found reputation at the hands of later Irish writers interested in the matter is as natural as that the original fact should have been reported by him because of his sympathy with happenings of this order. But the same reason applied inversely, it need hardly surprise us if his statements found no reflex in the pages of early writers on the continent. Ireland was far off and little known. It lay outside the Empire.

The Christianization of its a-dominant, and emotional people had but the most meagre significance for the churches of Europe until the migration of Irish saints and scholars to the continent, and these carried with them the version current at home. Yet Prosper's sole authority might be measurably weakened, if the emigrant were Irish and historians of the Irish Church, or the writers of British writers interested in the matter is as natural as that the original fact should have been reported by him because of his sympathy with happenings of this order. But the same reason applied inversely, it need hardly surprise us if his statements found no reflex in the pages of early writers on the continent. Ireland was far off and little known. It lay outside the Empire.

The attitude and methods of hagiographical writers in such cases justify liberty of criticism in returning to primitive sources and in disentangling problems. As to historians, Niebuhr pointed out that chroniclers who wrote before the invention of printing generally copied one predecessor at a time, and knew little about sitting or combining." (Lord Acton, A Lecture on the Study of History, p. 51). They did very much less sitting than combining, and the Irish adaptation of Prosper is a perfect instance. We shall find later that it was a practice of Irish writers to embody the work of forerunners more or less wholesale.

PATRICK OR PALLADIUS?

No work on St. Patrick has ever come from Rome. Lanigan, Colgan, and the rest of the great workers on the saint's history may have associations with the continent; thus, Colgan's "Trias," which was the first notable biographical effort about the Apostle, bears the name of a Flemish publishing house, for at the time he was writing he resided in Ireland. Manuscripts about St. Patrick and his mission abound at Rome and in Italy, but they were known little or not at all in the past, and even a writer like Cardinal Moran, though he worked in Rome, never took up Patrician study. The same may be said of the Celtic manuscripts of Rome which do not deal with the great saint of the Celts; Nigra and others have published those of North Italy, but no one those of Rome.

But now we have a complete biography of St. Patrick issued from Rome under the highest auspices, that of the Irish College, which, as it befitting the national institution, is dedicated to the apostle and patron saint of the race. The college edits a quarterly, under the inviting title of the Seven Hills Magazine, and in the third number of this issue is published a most interesting "Life and Literature of St. Patrick," by Dr. William J. D. Croke.

The writer has in past years published a good deal about his subject, and his publications have attracted a

good deal of attention in general, and especially from learned quarters, such as the Bibliotheca, the Louvain Review, "Histoire Ecclesiastique," etc.

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