

the King." The language of the Legends shows that their author is a man of very refined taste; as regards the selection of words and expression, and the wealth of similes to be met with throughout the work, is not a little remarkable for its extent and pleasing variety.

Unfortunately the space at our disposal forbids us to deal with each of the Legends separately; all we can do is call attention to the excellence of a few. In real poetic value it would be very hard to surpass or even to equal *The Disbelief of Milcho*, *The Strivings of Saint Patrick on Mount Cruachan*, *Saint Patrick and the Two Princesses*, *Saint Patrick and the Children of Fochluth Wood*, *Saint Patrick and the Childless Mother* and *The Arraignment of Saint Patrick*. From their very nature these Legends require a no ordinary knowledge of Catholic doctrine in one who would appreciate them at a proper value. The heaven-blest conquests of Faith, and prayer, and penance are shown in every line.

In the very first of the Legends we are at once introduced to the mysterious regions of the supernatural. The future Apostle is born, and there is no water at hand with which to wash away his inheritance of sin. The blind priest takes the little chubby hand in his own and with it signs the sultry earth in the token of man's redemption. Immediately a fountain gushes forth and in its heaven-donated waters the baby Patrick is baptised.

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!

Here the gifted author has led us at once into the land of miracles, and given us a Saint as the hero of his poem.

Such a commencement of his great work gives us an insight into the grand spirit of Faith with which Mr. De Vere is thoroughly imbued. It is a sweet leaven pervading the whole mass of his writings. The Legends afford a wide field for this eternity-penetrating virtue, and the author has made a splendid use of the opportunity. Using this spirit of Faith as a fulcrum upon which to rest the lever of

his Charity, he has made a powerful effort to raise up human nature, so powerfully drawn earthwards by the dangerous magnetism of worldliness. Here are a few lines from the Legend, *Saint Patrick at Tara*; they ought to strike a sympathetic chord in any heart.

Then Patrick discoursed of the things to be  
When time gives way to eternity,  
Of kingdoms that fall, which are dreams not  
things,  
And the kingdom built by the King of kings,  
Of Him he spake who reigns from the Cross;  
Of the death which is life, and the life which is  
loss;  
How all things were made by the Infant Lord,  
And the small hand the Magian kings adored.  
His voice sounded on like a throbbing flood  
That swells all night from some far-off wood,  
And when it ended—that wondrous strain—  
Invisible myriads breathed "Amen!"

With a swiftness not equalled by the electric fluid, which in a moment, spans the entire earth, our Irish poet snatches up our minds and hearts to God that we may contemplate the divine magnificence, the Creator's eternal love, man's future glory if he be but true. Every page of the volume before us is a manifestation of this mighty power of mystic penetration. Evidently for Mr. De Vere.]

The crown of earthly love  
Seemed but its crown of mockery.

Modern Scepticism, and we might add modern Catholic scepticism, might learn a lesson from these soul stirring echos born of a nobler world. But then it is no wonder that Erin's venerable bard should be so gifted. Is not Faith the salient characteristic of his nation? Even her lowliest sons have cherished in their hearts that greatest of treasures. They see clearly where others grope with difficulty; they move in seraph-peopled spheres where others see but nothingness.

In all poems claiming to be of epical importance delineation of character is a very important item for our consideration. We look to it as an infallible index of the author's capabilities. In *The Legends of Saint Patrick*, Mr. De Vere has delineated a character that as a man attracts our esteem, and as a saint exacts our utmost veneration. Nobody ever meets Mr. De