

found in the Cottonian MS., the Bodleian MSS. and in a MS. found at Treves. Coroticus was a petty sovereign of Wales who in a predatory raid had carried away numbers of Patrick's flock and sold them into slavery. When a demand for their restoration was disregarded, then Patrick wrote this letter, in which the Welshman is excommunicated. These documents carry internal evidence of genuineness in addition to satisfactory external evidence and are undoubtedly authentic. There is also a hymn ascribed to Patrick. It is called by Dr. Todd: "The oldest undoubted monument of the Irish language remaining." Though of great antiquity, and having internal evidence in its favor, it cannot be ranked with the other two writings in point of authenticity. Thus far of purely Patrician documents.

We now advert to another class of writings. The earliest notice which we have of the Apostle of Ireland is found in a letter of Cummian, addressed to Segienus, Abbot of Iona, and written in 634, A.D., in which he speaks of Patrick as "Holy Patrick, our Pope." As the Book of Armagh is a collection of writings by different authors and from different sources, the date 807, A.D., appended to one of them—the Gospel of Matthew—does not fix the date of any of the rest. Some were later, and some were earlier. It contains a piece called: "Tirechan's Annotations on St. Patrick's life." Tirechan was a disciple of Ultan, who died in 657, A.D. Ultan appears to have written a life of Patrick upon which Tirechan makes annotations. As these annotations would be made after Ultan's death, the work of Tirechan's was written two hundred years after the death of Patrick—if we take the most common date for his death of 463—thirty years less, if we take the other date of 493, A.D. The next life in this Collection was written by Muirchu Maccumatherie at the dictation of Aedh, bishop of Sleibhte. Muirchu was the son of Cogitosus, who died A.D., 670. This life, then, belongs to the close of the 7th century, or two centuries from the later date of Patrick's death. These, with Patrick's own writings, are, says Dr. George T. Stokes, "the only documents on which a historical critic can rely." The two lives contain much that is legendary, and in this respect they lay the foundation for the mediaeval creations. The real matter in them is, however separable from the fictitious, and they give us all that we really