

them with their chariots and horses into a spacious house and showed them Christian hospitality, washing their feet, repairing their strength by an abundant nourishment, and preparing couches, where they soon sank into gentle slumbers. They believed, therefore, that Bridget was in the midst of them, and really received them into her house. Yet, Bridget was afar off; and when morning came, they beheld around them the forest and the spot where they halted the night before, and Bridget coming, really with her virgins, to offer them a real hospitality in her real home; for all that had passed in the night was but an illusion, miraculously effected by her prayer.

Amid this hospitable race, in this land where every house was open to the stranger, where every tribe had its guest master, its Biatach, whose lavish hospitality it generously supported, where the harp and the minstrel's song, and the joyous salutation of the host welcomed whoever knocked at the door, how could the saints but be hospitable? Happier than many others, they could pour out, without exhausting, wine and hydromel; their wealth, inexhaustible like the faith which created it, defied all prodigality. Hence, frequently we find kings with their suits, their armies even, sit down and eat their fill at the ordinary frugal, but ever miraculously renewed, table of a poor bishop or anchoret. Sometimes, even, a holy traveller would come to the succor of his host taken by surprise, and the guests, after a moment's disquiet, beheld the viands reappear on the platter, and the wine foam again around the goblet's brim. Then they blessed God, and the feast went on more joyful and more Christian than before. Nor was the verse or music wanting there, for all, austere hermits,

mystic virgins, grave abbots, venerable bishops, all were children of Erin, and the metallic chords of the national harp vibrated harmoniously to Irish ears. Bridget entered the dwelling of a king of the country of Blioch, and while awaiting the lord of the mansion, Bridget saw harps hanging on the walls: "Let us hear some chants," said she. The foster-father of the prince and his sons, who were present, excused themselves, the minstrels were away. "But, if the virgin will bless our hands," said they, "perhaps they will become skilful." Bridget blessed their hands, and they took the harps and drew forth sweet accords; and the king, as he approached his home, asked with surprise who could perform so well. Nor did they ever after forget the art which Bridget had taught them. Such had been her welcome gift, a present as gracious as the sweet and amiable virgin who offered it.

And such were always the graces obtained of her. Who would have dared to cover himself with her blessing, in order to do evil?

Such are the accounts of the legends. And while some gathered these fantastic stories, others related the daily wonders of her life and the benefits which her solicitous mercy unceasingly scattered over the little and poor. She had passed everywhere, everywhere her charity had left ineffaceable traces, and the country of Kildare had not a rivulet, a house, or a stone, which did not relate a virtue or a miracle of Bridget. Can we wonder that so alluring a history charmed the imagination and the heart of a poetic race, and that the sweet form of the heroine shines radiantly amid the saints of the legend as the most beautiful star in the sky of Ireland.

## A GEM.

SPEAK not harshly—much of care  
Every human heart must bear;  
Enough of shadows darkly lie  
Veiled within the sunniest eye.  
By thy childhood's gushing tears,  
By thy griefs of after years;  
By the anguish thou dost know,  
Add not to another's woe.  
Speak not harshly, much of sin

Dwelleth every heart within;  
In its closely covered cells  
Many a wayward passion dwells.  
By the many hours misspent,  
By the gifts to errors lent,  
By the wrong thou didst not shun,  
By the good thou hast not done,  
With a lenient spirit scan,  
The weakness of thy fellow man.