

the VIIIth century, and contains the most ancient materials for the history of St Patrick. Such indeed was the fame of the Church of Rome in Ireland that St Columban at the beginning of the VIIth century could say (in Ep. ad Bonif. IV.) of his fellow-countrymen: « We are closely bound to the Chair of Holy Peter, for though Rome is great and famous, yet among us it is great and renowned through this Chair alone. » Nor does he scruple to represent the relation between himself and the Roman Church as that of disciple and teacher. Just as a few years later St Cumian, when he sent « wise and humble men » to Rome respecting the keeping of Easter, declares that he sent them « as children to their mother » (Ep. ad Segen. Abc. Jona.) Whereupon Alford observes: « See, the Irish send to Rome not to teach what is the faith to be held, what the Sacraments to be celebrated, but to learn what they themselves must observe. » In the Pope, too, St Columban recognised, as he tells us (in Ep. ad Bonif. IV.) the « Pastor of Pastors, » and « the head of all the Churches of the whole of Europe, » « the chief of the leaders of the army of the Lord, and to whom pertains the danger of the whole army ; on whom it entirely waits, who has the power of regulating all things, of ordering the battle, of summoning the leaders ; who is powerful by the office of Holy Peter the Apostle. » The lapse of many centuries did not efface the genuine tradition from the minds of the Irish : two Irish writers of the IXth century, and one of the Xth, bear witness to it, and show that even when the great glory of their Church was departing, Rome had a hold on their affections, and claimed their veneration. The author of the so-called Vita Tertia of St Patrick speaks of « Rome, the head, that is to say, of all the Churches whither Christians from all parts of the world congregate. » Finally, in the Tripartite Life of the great Saint, a composition in its present form of the IXth century, tells us that « Rome is the citadel and the teacher of Christian doctrine and faith, and that the See of Holy Peter is the teacher of our faith, and the source of the whole Apostolate. »

Therefore, my friend, on that point, at least, there seems to be a pretty wide gulf between the doctrine prevalent in the old Church of St Patrick and that of the High Church in the An-