is variously given,—the 15th and 25th December, 431, and the 27th January, and 6th July, 432. He did not suffer martyrdom, as some pretend, at Fordun, the Picts of that region having been for the most part Christians, by whom his memory has been revered.

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CHAPTER II.

EXISTENCE OF ST. PATRICK ESTABLISHED—OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

The splendid work of the general conversion of the Irish people was, in the counsels of the Almighty, reserved for the ministry of St. Patrick. Though the traditions of the country, and the constant testimony of historians, as well as the extraordinary reputation which our national Apostle has enjoyed throughout the Christian world, attribute the conversion of the Irish people to his apostolic labors, yet absurd objections have been ventured against the existence of this celebrated saint.

About the year 1618, Doctor Ryves, a Master in Chancery, entertained doubts about the time in which he flourished, but had not the temerity to question his existence. To Doctor Ledwich, in his Antiquities of Ireland, is due the merit of this extraordinary discovery; and in propounding his audacious assertion, charges Camden and Usher, both of whom admit the existence of our saint, with deviating from strict veracity. "For," continues the Doctor, "the Roman Martyrology, Erric of Auxerre, Nennius, and others, never omit St. Patrick's miracles when they name him." The first in general terms (March 17) asserts, that St. Patrick was distinguished by very great miracles and virtues. The second merely observes, that St. Patrick illustrated Ireland by his learning, miracles, and virtues; and Nennius attributes to him the healing of the blind, deaf, lepers, the casting out devils, and recalling the dead to life."

As Ryves is the first skeptic, his argument is a negative one, founded on the silence of Platina, a modern author, whom Doctor Ledwich lauds as a man of superior attainment in ecclesiastical history. However, Platina, in his meagre accounts of the Popes, is deficient, as well as in-