

Poetry.

MISSIONS.

Light for the dreary vale
Of ice-bound Labrador!
Where the frost-kings breathe on the slippery sails,

THE CALDEES.

(From the "Church in Ireland," by the Very Rev. Dean Murray.)

It is stated by O'Connor, that there existed in Ireland, nearly a hundred years before the mission of St. Patrick, and independent of the see of Rome, an order of monks called Caldees.

This order was in many things very remarkable, and one of its most eminent members was our far-famed Columba, or St. Columbkille, who is considered in the martyrology of Donegal, and by Colgan, as joint patron with St. Patrick of Ireland, and whose name is as familiar to every Irish ear as that of St. Patrick himself.

In such a remote corner of the world as Ireland was then considered, this celebrated monastic order commenced. Distinguished for letters, and an inviolable attachment to their religion, their adversaries (men indeed devoted to the see of Rome) had endeavoured to consign their names and tenets to oblivion, while others of inferior merit are pompously brought forward and extolled for virtues which they never possessed, and for actions which they never performed.

The origin of their name has given rise to various conjectures. Toland says it is derived from Celli de, the separated, or espoused of God. Bishop Nicholson, from Cou-du, a black hood, which, without authority, he supposes to have been the principal part of their dress; whereas, from a passage in Bede, it is probable their garments were white. Shaw's opinion is, that Celli-de or servant of God, was latinized into Caldeus and Caldees, from whence we derive the English name Caldees.

Columba the founder, or rather the reviver of this order, was born of illustrious parents, A.D. 522.—The fashion of the times, and his own propensity, led him to the cultivation of ascetic virtues, and his preparatory exercises. Monachism had taken root in this kingdom, and was already flourishing in its numerous seminaries, and supported by their learned professors; the most remarkable of the former was that of St. Finian at Clonard, where at the age of twenty-five we find St. Columba engaged in study, and acquiring the rudiments of that knowledge, and exercising that discipline which were afterwards productive of such eminent advantages to Christianity, not only in Ireland, but in Scotland and England.

Having completed his monastic education in 546, he founded the monastery of Durrough, and established such admirable rules for his monks, that they soon became as conspicuous for erudition, as for sanctity of manners. The Scots have claimed these monks as their own, and as springing up in their country so early as the beginning of the fourth century, but Bishop Nicholson, no friend of the order, expressly says, "The Caldees were of the Irish rule, and carried into Scotland by St. Columba, and from thence dispersed into the northern parts of England."

Brilliant parts, and an untiring zeal in the service of religion, with a strain of powerful eloquence, exalted Columba's reputation among his countrymen to a degree scarcely inferior to that of an apostle. Such talents were too large to be confined within the narrow pale of a monkish cell; they were called forth to the regulation of state affairs, and in these he held as decided a superiority as in the cloister. Amidst this splendour of authority and of parts, it would have been miraculous if human weakness did not sometimes betray him into error, from which his biographers do not attempt to exculpate him.

In his early youth he instigated a bloody war without just cause, of which being made sensible, he abandoned his native land by a voluntary exile, and imposed on himself a mission to the unconverted Picts.

Of this event Bede thus speaks:—"In the year of our Lord's incarnation 565, there came out of Ireland Columba the great Nial, King of Ireland; and the mother of Felin was Aithne, daughter of Lorn, who first reigned in conjunction with his brother Fergus, who was slain in Argyleshire."

In those times, noblemen were not seldom the preachers of the gospel, and it is probable, they may be so again, when they shall find that neither their persons nor their property can be secure without it.—Smith's Life of St. Columba.

into Britain, a presbyter and abbot,—a monk in life and habit, very famous, by name Columba, to preach the word of God to the provinces of the northern Picts. This Columba came to Britain, when King Brideus, son of Meliochem, reigned over the Picts.—It was in the ninth year of his reign, that by his preaching and example he converted this nation to the faith of Christ."

From this passage it appears evident, that Columba and his disciples have clearly the merit of promulgating the gospel with effect in Scotland, notwithstanding the partial labours of earlier missionaries; by it also the date of the arrival of the Caldees is immovably fixed.

In consequence of Columba's preaching, his example and success, the Isle of Ely\* was given to him, where to construct a monastery. This isle is one of the Hebrides; not large, "but sufficient," says Bede, "for the maintenance of five families, according to the computation of the English."

"Before Columba came into Britain," continues Bede, "he formed a noble monastery in Ireland called Dearmach, from which and Iona, many others have been established by his disciples in Britain and Ireland; over all these the island abbey, where he lies interred, has supreme rule. It is always wont to have a presbyter abbot for its rector, and even the bishops themselves, after an unusual and inverted order, ought to be subject, according to the example of that first doctor, who was no bishop, but a presbyter and monk."

In the observation of Easter, Columba was a quatordeciman. He left it in charge to the monks of Iona, to keep it from the 14th to the 20th of the moon, which they continued to do until the year 716. This eminent missionary, worn out in the service of his divine master, died at Iona, A.D. 597, aged 75 years. To distinguish him from others of the same name, he was called Colum-cille, from having been the father of above one hundred monasteries.

Bede, though sincerely attached to the See of Rome, yet with candour and truth confesses the merits of the Caldees. "Whatever he was himself, (speaking of Columba), we know of him for certain, that he left a succession renowned for much continence, the love of God and regular observance. It is true, they followed uncertain rules in the observation of the great festival, as having none to bring them the synodal decrees for the keeping of Easter, by reason of their being seated so far from the rest of the world, therefore only practising such works of charity and piety, as they could learn from the PROPHETICAL, EVANGELICAL, AND APOSTOLIC WRITINGS."

Their warmest panegyrist could not pronounce a finer eulogium on the purity of their faith and integrity of their practice. It is true, they did not adopt the corruptions of the Romish Church, nor the superstitions which had corrupted Christianity. For centuries they preserved their countrymen from the baneful contagion, and at length fell a sacrifice in defence of their ancient faith.

No sooner had the papal power got footing in England, than it made attempts on the Irish Church, which had so successfully established itself in that kingdom; but the vigorous opposition of the Caldees delayed for some time, though it could not finally prevent its establishment. "It was not a doubtful ray of science and superstition," as the elegant, though infidel historian of the Roman empire remarks, "that those monks diffused over the northern regions; superstition on the contrary found them her most determined foes."

In 635, Oswald, king of Northumberland, who had been converted to the faith of Christ, among the Irish, and was no admirer of Roman innovations, sent to Iona for a Caldee bishop to instruct his people in evangelical truth. In consequence of which, Aiden, an Irishman, and a Caldee of Iona, was consecrated and sent over to him.

"He was a man," says Bede, "of the greatest modesty, piety, and moderation, having a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge, for he kept the Lord's day of Easter, according to the custom of his country." This abstinence of his merit could not be passed over by a votary of Rome, but it is conveyed in no rancorous nor intolerant language.

"The king," continues Bede, "gave the bishop the Isle of Lindisfern, on the coast of Northumberland, for his episcopal see. York was fixed upon by Pope Gregory before this time, but this nomination Aiden rejected, for two reasons, first, it was not agreeable to the spirit of Caldeeism, which chose Islands in preference to the mainland, in imitation of their master Columba; and, secondly, he considered it would be an acquiescence in the decision of the Roman Pontiff, which the Irish hierarchy, complete and independent in itself, had not submitted to.

"Oswald personally attended Aiden's ministry—when the latter preached, but not perfectly understanding the Anglo-Saxon tongue, the king was his interpreter; for during his exile in Ireland, he had learned the language of the isle. Numbers of Caldees daily arrived from Ireland; those who were priests baptized the converted. Aiden gave a luminous example of charity, piety, and abstinence, and recommended his doctrine by his practice."

Thus far we have followed Bede, whose third book of ecclesiastical history, is principally employed in praise of the Caldees; wherever he mentions their dissent from Rome (and this was their only crime) he does it with great delicacy.

Aiden died in 671, and was succeeded by Finan, an Irishman, and Caldee of Iona. He baptized Peada, Prince of the middle Angles, and gave him Dinna, a Caldee, for his bishop. After Dinna, Ceolla, another Caldee, was advanced to the episcopate of Mercia, but he resigned and returned to Iona. To the apostolic labours of the Caldee missionaries were the northern English indebted for their conversion, and Dr. Innet, in his learned "Origines Anglicanæ," records their exertions in highly honourable terms.

Finan died, A.D. 661, and Coleman, a Caldee of Iona, succeeded him. He was an intrepid opposer of papal doctrines, as his dispute at Whitby with the Romanists fully proves. King Oswy, however, who presided at this conference at Whitby, had been too much tampered with by the Romish party, to be a fair arbitrator.

Coleman, when he found his opinions rejected, collected all the Irish Caldees at Lindisfern, and about thirty English monks, who were studying there, with whom he resorted for a short time to Iona, and at last sailed for Ireland. Immediately the Caldees were every where expelled from England by Oswy, and replaced by Benedictines. Not content with this triumph, the Romish clergy prevailed on Egfrid, king of Northumberland, to wreak their vengeance, a few years after, on the diffident Irish, "an harmless and innocent people," (says Bede, pitying their calamities), and always friendly to the English."

Johnston, in his notes on the Saxon Councils, throws some light on the transactions at Whitby—"The conference," he remarks, "was held in the presence of king Oswy, in a nunnery erected by Hilda, the abbess. The Irish bishops were there, but Coleman was the principal advocate for the British and Irish Easter, and Wilfrid chief speaker for the Roman. Oswy, who had kept the Irish mode, yielded to Wilfrid, because he was told that St. Peter was the author of the Roman manner, and that he was the key-keeper of heaven, from which Oswy desired not to be excluded."

The two Irish bishops retired unconvinced; the king pronounced sentence for himself only, and for his family, for before this, he had kept his Easter occasionally, while his queen (who was a Kentish lady, and followed the Roman manner) was keeping her Palm-Sunday. Oswy passed sentence, not in consideration of the merits of the case, but in honour of St. Peter. The controversy on this subject may be seen in Usher, and other ecclesiastical writers. At length Adamnan, the Caldee abbot of Iona, apostatized; and by the instigations of Ceolfrid, abbot of Irvy, Naitan, king of the Picts, expelled the Caldees from Iona in 717.

person and not of apostolic authority) for the Caldees only followed, as appears from Bede, what they could learn "from the prophetic, evangelical, and apostolical writings." The Anglo-Saxons accepted the Roman office, but the Britains and Irish retained their primitive forms.

The conduct of the Romanists towards the Caldees was uniformly persecuting. A charter of David, king of Scotland, recites, "that he had given to the canons of St. Andrew, the Isle of Lochleven, to institute there the canonical rule, or in other words, the Romish ritual), and that the Caldees, its ancient possessors, might continue there, if they would conform to that rule and live peaceably, and in subjection to the canons, but if they rejected these terms, they were to be expelled." This proposal being incompatible with their principles, was not acceded to, and consequently they were ejected.

In Ireland the Caldees made a noble stand against papal innovations, and all the powers of Rome, assisted by the power of England, was unable to eradicate them, for we learn from Archbishop Usher, even in his time, that "in the greater Churches in Ulster, as at Gluanninis and Damainis, and particularly at Arragh, in our memory, were Presbyters called Caldees, who celebrated divine services in the Caldee style, and were styled prior of the Caldees, who acted as precentor."

It was not easy indeed to eradicate a reverence founded on solid piety, exemplary charity, and superior learning, or to commit sudden violence on characters where such qualities were found. The Romish clergy were therefore obliged to exert their utmost energy to accomplish their designs, and where force could not, seduction often prevailed. The alternative of expulsion or acquiescence, must ever strongly operate on human infirmity. In a few instances, the latter was chosen: thus about the year 1127, Gregory, abbot of the Caldees' monastery of Dunkeld, and Andrew, his successor, were made bishops, the first of Dunkeld, the other of Caithness. The last cited intelligent antiquary (Dalrymple, p. 246.) confirms in every manner in which the Caldees were treated; by making their abbots bishops, and preserving to those who had parishes, their benefices during life.

The same policy was followed in Ireland, the president of the Caldees was made precentor, he was to have the most honourable seat at table, and every respect from the chapter. Such little distinctions, whilst they flattered and saved appearances, were fatal to the Caldees. Many breaches were made in their rights, and at last, they lost all their privileges and their pristine celebrity. Such as they were in later ages, they continued to exist, and so late even as 1625. They had considerable property in Armagh, namely, seven townlands, with smaller parcels, with a great number of rectories, vicarages, tythes, messuages, and houses. These parishes and property have been transferred to Trinity College, Dublin, an institution established for similar purposes to those of the original Caldee Seminaries, and among others, to PRESENT A DETERMINED FRONT AGAINST POPISH NOVELTIES AND INNOVATIONS.

Thus expired those illustrious seminaries of Caldees at Iona and Lindisfern, after bravely defending their tenets for more than a century, against the secret machinations and open violence of their enemies. At length they fell a sacrifice to the encroaching ambition and spiritual intolerance of the Church of Rome—"A great access," says Cressy, in a high tone of exaltation, "was made to the lustre of this year, by the conversion of the monks of Ily, and all the monasteries and churches subject to them, to the unity of the Catholic Church."

The monasteries of Columba were the bright constellations of our hemisphere, enlightening every part with the brilliant radiance of the gospel, and of true learning. Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, says, "Innet set up schools in every place to outdo the Irish, and break the interests of the quatordecimans," (for so the Caldees were called). The Caldees continued, as an excellent writer observes, until a new race of monks arose, as inferior to them in learning and piety, as they surpassed them in wealth and ceremonies, by which they captivated the eyes, and infatuated the minds of men.

The registry of St. Andrew's informs us, that the Caldees, relaxing in discipline, were deprived of their possessions, but king Alexander restored them on condition that they should be more attentive in attending divine service, which they neglected, except when the king or bishop was present; performing, however, their own office in their own way, in a small corner of the Church. This account is obscure, merely because the whole truth is not stated, for the registry acquaints us, when Alexander began the reform in the Church of St. Andrew, there was no one to serve at the altar of the blessed apostle St. Andrew, or to celebrate mass. This clearly shews, that the Caldees, who were settled there, paid no respect to these holy relics, or to the mass itself, but chose rather to forfeit their Church and property than desert their principles, preferring their ancient office with integrity of heart in a corner, to the possession of the choir and its superstitious pageantry. Their office was Gallican, and very different from the Roman; and consequently we may conclude that it was not the mass they celebrated (which Pope Gregory confesses was the work of a private

\* The ancient name was I Hy or Aoi, (as written in the annals of Ulster), which were latinized into Hyona or Iona, the common name of which is now I-Colum-Kill, (the Isle of Colum of the cells), included in one of the parishes of the Island of Mull. Its venerable ruins still command respect, and the papal bull, founded upon a prophetic which ascribed to St. Columba, is, that they may yet recover their ancient splendour:

O sacred dome, and my beloved abode,
Whose walls now echo to the praise of God;
And time shall come, when leading monks shall cease,
The living herbs here occupy their place;
But, better ages shall heretofore come,
And praise re-echo in the sacred dome.

The first part of the prophecy was literally fulfilled for ages, till the present noble proprietor, the Duke of Argyll, caused the sacred ground to be enclosed with a sufficient wall. Before that, the Cathedral was used sometimes as a pen for cattle—sic transit gloria mundi. "We were now," says Dr. Johnson, "reading that illustration, which was once the luminary of the Galenonian regions, whence savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefit of knowledge, and the blessings of religion. To abstract the mind from all local emotions, would be impossible if it were attempted; and would be foolish, if it were possible."

The Desarmach mentioned by Bede, Camden, and Walsh, is supposed to be Armagh, but improperly. The word is Duir-mach, commonly called Durrough, and which Bede and Adamnan rightly interpret the oak field.

The Christians in the second century, says Mosheim, celebrated anniversary festivals in commemoration of the death and resurrection of Christ, and of the effusion of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles. The day which was observed as the anniversary of Christ's death, was called the Paschal day, or Passover, because it was looked upon to be the same with that on which the Jews celebrated the feast of that name.

In the manner, however, of observing this solemn day, the Christians of Lesser Asia differed much from the rest, and in a more especial manner from those of Rome. They both indeed fasted during the great week, (so that was called in which Christ died), and afterwards celebrated, like the Jews, a sacred feast, at which they distributed a paschal lamb, in memory of our Saviour's last supper. But the Asiatic Christians kept the feast on the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month, at the time that the Jews celebrated their passover, and three days after commemorated the resurrection of the triumphant Redeemer. They affirmed that they had this custom from the apostles John and Philip, and pleaded moreover in its behalf the example of Christ himself, who held his paschal feast on the same day that the Jews celebrated their passover. In the Western Churches observed a different method. 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