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THE
Confession of St. Patrick
TRANSLATED;
WITH
AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES.
BY
REV. THOMAS OLDEN, A.B.

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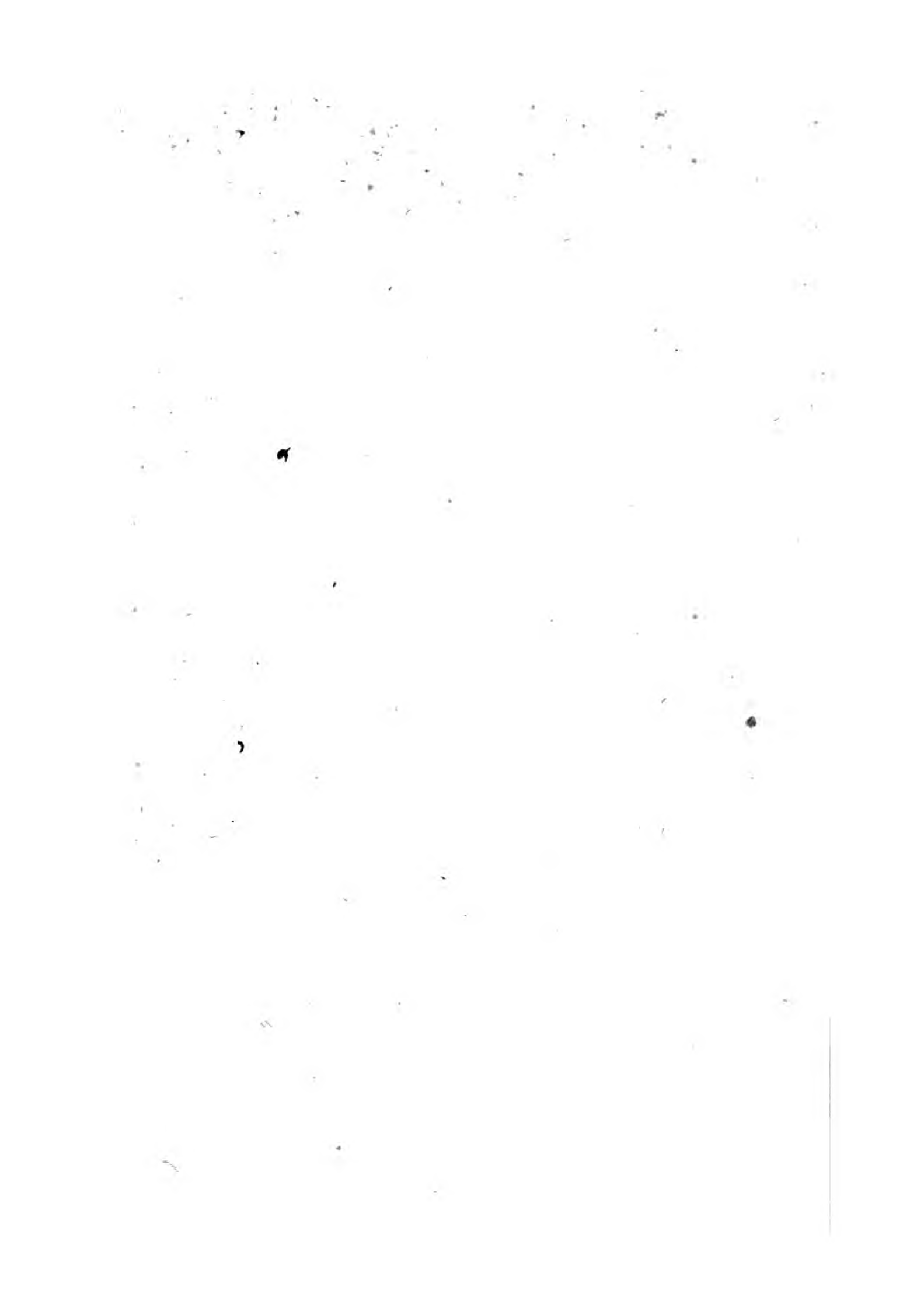
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THE
CONFESSION OF ST. PATRICK,

[TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL LATIN];

WITH

An Introduction and Notes.

BY THE

REV. THOMAS OLDEN, A.B.,

Curate of Knocktemple, in the Diocese of Cloyne.



“On y voit beaucoup le caractere de S. Paul. Il possedoit assurément fort bien l'Ecriture.”—TILLEMONT.

DUBLIN

JAMES M^cGLASHAN, 50 UPPER SACKVILLE-STREET.

JAMES NISBET AND CO., BERNERS-STREET, LONDON.

1853.

110. d. 351.

Dublin: Printed by GEORGE DROUGHT, 6. Bachelor's-walk.

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Preface.

It has been remarked by Lord Bacon, in one of his happy illustrations, that time is like a river, which, as it flows on, bears on its surface only what is light and trivial, while all that is solid and valuable sinks beneath its waters. The history of St. Patrick is an instance of the truth of this observation; his real character was for ages unknown; his name was associated, in the popular belief, only with puerile fables and ridiculous miracles, and no one thought of doubting that the doctrines which he taught were those of the modern Church of Rome.

Of late years, however, it has been otherwise, for extracts from his writings have been published, and other proofs given, that the popular traditions were unfounded, and he has been shown to have higher claims on our esteem and admiration than was at one time supposed.

The source from which the most important evidence has been derived, is the Confession, which has been brought out of its obscurity, and many passages of great interest quoted from it, by various writers. But as these, however accurate they may be, will not supply the place

of the work itself nor afford as satisfactory evidence to the inquirer, it cannot but be useful to render it accessible to the general reader, by means of an English translation; and to enable every one to judge for himself of the purity of the faith originally planted in Ireland.

It was with this object that the following work was undertaken. The translator is conscious of its many imperfections; yet, when it is remembered that the Confession is of great antiquity—that the Latin is admitted by the writer himself to be very bad, and that the mistakes of transcribers are numerous, he feels himself in some degree entitled to claim the indulgence of the critical reader, for any faults which he may discover in this attempt to illustrate the text, and to render it faithfully into English.

The highest authorities at home and abroad consider it the genuine composition of St. Patrick. To this effect the learned Dr. O'Connor, when quoting the testimony of Mabillon in its favour, says, “with him agree Tillemont, Dupin, Ussher, and others, from whose judgment one should be rash, or rather mad, who would dissent, without the strongest reasons.”^a To these may be added Sir H. Spelman, Dr. Petrie, who states it to be the general opinion of the learned,^b and Dr. Neander, whose valuable testimony is given in these words: “This work bears, in its simple, rude style, an impress that corresponds entirely to Patricius’s stage of culture. There

^a *Scriptores Rer. Hib. Proleg.* i. 105.

^b *History of Tara Hill*, p. 107, in *Trans. R. I. A.* vol. xviii.

are to be found in it none of the traditions which, perhaps, proceeded only from English monks — nothing wonderful, except what may be very easily explained on psychological principles. All this vouches for the authenticity of the piece.”^e

The only writer of any learning who held a different opinion from these authorities, was Dr. Ledwich, who, having in his “Antiquities of Ireland,” maintained the strange position, that no such person as St. Patrick ever existed, was obliged to treat this work as a forgery. His reasons for denying its authenticity are thus expressed: “No notice is taken of the education of our Apostle under St. Martin, Bishop of Tours, or his relationship to him; of his journeys on the Continent, and his advancement to the episcopate of Ireland by Pope Celestine.”^d Now, to the former objections it is easy to reply, that the Confession is not a history of his life; and, therefore, we ought not to expect such details: and as to the last, so far from affording any ground for suspicion, it is one of the most satisfactory internal proofs of its authenticity; for,

^e History of the Christian Religion and Church, by Dr. A. Neander, vol. iii. p. 173. Bohn. The learned writer appears to mean, not that there is “nothing wonderful” in it, but that it contains no notice of the performance of any miracles by St. Patrick, and nothing of a miraculous character (*nichts wunderbares*) which does not admit of an explanation. The allusion is probably to the dreams mentioned in the Confession, of which the editor offers an explanation on the above principles (Introd. p. 35). It may be as well to notice another inaccuracy with respect to St. Patrick, in this translation of Neander, as it seems to contradict the passage above quoted. It is said, at page 172: “His father gave him a careful education;” which exactly reverses the statement of the original (*keine sorgfältige erziehung*).

^d Chapter xxii. p. 348.

had it been a forgery of those later ages, when the mission of St. Patrick from Rome was invented, so important a circumstance in his history would not have been omitted. As Dr. Ledwich, when in search of objections to the Confession, could not find any better than these, it is evident that he was led to deny its authenticity, not by such frivolous pretences, but by his fancy that there was no such person as St. Patrick.

There are five manuscripts of the Confession. One of these is contained in the Book of Armagh, a compilation generally assigned to the seventh century, though this has been doubted by a late writer;^e another in the Cotton Library, which is considered to belong to the tenth century; two are in the Cathedral Library of Salisbury, and one in the French monastery of St. Vedastus. It has been published in the original language several times: by Sir James Ware,^f from the first four of these MSS.; by the Bollandists,^g from the last, which appears not to be a valuable one; by Dr. O'Connor,^h from the Cotton MS., collated with Ware's edition; by Sir W. Betham,ⁱ from the copy in the Book of Armagh; this

^e Dr. Reeves' *Eccles. Antiquities of Down and Connor*, p. 224, who assigns one of the treatises in it to the tenth century.

^f *Opuscula Patricii*. London, 1656.

^g *Acta Sanctorum*, at March 17.

^h *Scriptores Rerum Hibernicarum*, vol. i.

ⁱ *Irish Antiquarian Researches*. Dublin, 1827. The authorities quoted before, in evidence of the genuineness of the Confession, had reference to the text, as generally printed, which, with slight alterations, is the same as that of the four last MSS.; yet it should be mentioned that some have thought the Armagh copy the purest, considering as interpolations those passages in the others which it wants. But this is not by any means certain, for the recurrence of the note, "incertus liber hic" (the book uncertain here), in the

MS. does not contain more than one-half the matter of the others; and, as the translation which accompanies the original, in Sir W. Betham's edition, was made directly from it, without correction from other sources, and, moreover, as literally as possible, it has not been of much assistance in preparing the present edition. It was last published by S. Villanueva,^k from the text of the "Acta Sanctorum." The text used in the present edition was that of Dr. O'Connor, compared with the "Book of Armagh," as given in Sir W. Betham's "Antiquarian Researches."

The passages of Holy Scripture are not quoted from the Latin Vulgate, and Sir James Ware says they are nearer to the Septuagint version. They are probably taken from one of the translations from the Septuagint, which were in common use before the edition of Jerome.^l In many cases, also, without intending to quote texts, his thoughts, flowing from a mind thoroughly familiar with the Word of God, seem to clothe themselves naturally in Scripture language. He sometimes quotes from the Apocrypha, as do many other ancient writers; for

margin of that copy, proves that the MS. from which it was taken, was in some places illegible or mutilated; and therefore cannot be altogether relied on as giving us the original text in its integrity; and, moreover, it was the opinion of Tillemont that, even in the fuller text of the other copies, some passages are wanting ("Il y manque apparemment bien des choses en un endroit"). There may be interpolations, for there are few works of the same antiquity into which passages have not crept, either by the mistakes of transcribers or by design, and one has been noticed (ch. iv. s. 18); but, even if there should be others, they do not impair the evidence which the document affords as to St. Patrick's faith and character.

^k *Opuscula Patricii*. Dublin, 1835.

^l Bingham's *Antiq. of the Christian Church*, book xiv. ch. iii. s. 17.

it was read formerly, as in the Reformed Church at this day, “for example of life and instruction of manners, as Jerome saith.” On the subject of these quotations, Archbishop Ussher remarks: “Now for those books, true it is, that in our Irish and British writers some of them are alleged as parcels of Scripture and prophetic writings; those especially that commonly bear the name of Solomon. But so also is the fourth book of Esdras, cited by Gildas, in the name of ‘blessed Esdras the Prophet;’ which yet our Romanists will not admit to be canonical. Neither do our writers mention any of the rest with more titles of respect than we find given unto them by other of the ancient fathers, who yet in express terms, do exclude them out of the number of those books which properly are to be esteemed canonical.”^m

There are other works attributed to St. Patrick, the evidence for which is not quite satisfactory. Of these the letter to Coroticus is generally printed with the Confession, but Dr. Masonⁿ does not consider it genuine; and, independently of the words of St. Patrick (chap. i. sec. 3, 4), from which we gather that he had never written anything before, it may be added that there are some internal proofs that it was not written by the

^m Religion of the Ancient Irish, ch. i.

ⁿ Testimony of St. Patrick, p. 173. The writer says his father was a Decurio, which can hardly be reconciled with the account given (Confession, ch. i. sec. 1); and admitting that it can, “it would be difficult,” says Dr. Lanigan, “for the sticklers for St. Patrick’s birth in North Britain to find a Curia or Decurions in Kilpatrick, or any place near it, in the fourth century.”—(Eccles. Hist. i. 125.) Again, the writer says he was born in Ireland, and he also seems to quote from the Confession.

author of the Confession. It was the fashion, in early times, for those who wished to gain attention to their compositions, to publish them under some eminent name; hence the number of spurious writings which have come down to us, with the genuine works of the great lights of the Christian Church.

At first it was intended simply to give notes in illustration of the text, where they were required; but, owing to the quantity of matter which accumulated, it appeared more advisable to prefix it in the form of an introduction, and to direct the reader's attention to it by references from the text.

It only remains for the translator to add his earnest hope that the perusal of this genuine work of St. Patrick, while it confirms members of the Reformed Church in the belief that their doctrines are not only those of Scripture but of antiquity, may, through the Divine blessing, lead those who have been brought up in ignorance of the truth, to "ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and find rest for their souls."^o

^o Jeremiah, vi. 16.

Introduction.

IRELAND, in the fifth century, was divided into five provinces, each governed by a king, under whom were several lesser chieftains. These provincial kings were themselves subject to the supreme monarch, who resided in the royal palace of Tara; but they appear not to have shown much regard to his authority beyond the payment of a regulated tribute. It might be supposed, from the way in which some writers have spoken of the Irish, that even some centuries later than this period they were mere savages; but there is no authority for such a representation as this, and if we admitted it to be well founded, it would be impossible to account for the fact, that Ptolemy,^a who wrote in the second century, has laid down many towns on his map of Ireland, and that another writer^b of the third century says it had “eleven important cities.” And we have the less reason to doubt Ptolemy’s accuracy in this particular, when we find that his map of Ireland is much more correct than that of England, both with respect to the outline of the country and the position of the rivers and towns which have been identified. The observation of Tacitus, made nearly a century before, may help to account for this:—“The channels and harbours [of Ireland] were better known (he informs us) through the resort of commerce and

^a O’Conor, *Scriptores Rerum Hibernicarum*. Prolegomena, i. 37.

^b Marcianus of Heraclea, quoted in O’Conor as above, i. 38.

traders than those of Britain.”^c Considerable proof can also be given from native authorities, that, at the period at present referred to, the Irish had not only a regular government, but a system of laws, and judges;^d that they were to some extent acquainted with the use of letters,^e and that the country was intersected by roads^f on which vehicles travelled; that there were various grades of society; and we have evidence of their skill in the arts, in the elegant workmanship of the gold ornaments^g which are found in such numbers throughout Ireland. These and other facts which might be mentioned cannot be easily reconciled with the account given above of the Irish. Their institutions did not in all respects agree with those of modern civilisation, and it would be strange to expect that they should; but whatever may be said of them, they indicate a people by no means in a state of barbarism. It will be expected that something should be said here of the pagan religion of the Irish, as it is twice alluded to in the Confession, and notices of it frequently occur in the lives of St. Patrick. A full account of it would, indeed, be both instructive and interesting; but in the present state of our knowledge this is impossible. The reader must therefore be content with illustrations taken from our ancient records, of some of the most prominent of their superstitions. He will be enabled, by means of these, to form a somewhat correct judgment of the times in which St. Patrick lived, and thus arrive at a just appreciation of his character and missionary labours.

^c Tacitus, *Vit. Agric.* ch. xxiv.

^d *Dissertations on the History of Ireland*, by C. O’Conor, Esq.

^e *Essay on the History and Antiquities of Tara Hill*, by G. Petrie, LL.D.

^f *Preface to the Book of Rights*, by Professor O’Donovan.

^g *Confession*, ch. v. sec. 21, note; and *Tara Hill*, pp. 181, 184.

The worship of the sun, which was almost universal in early times, held a prominent place among the religious rites of the ancient Irish. They considered it a god, and accordingly assigned to it the power of rewarding and punishing, together with the other attributes of Deity. We have an instance of this in the following passage from the "Annals of the Four Masters," at the year 457 A.D.:—"Laogaire (the king) was taken captive in battle, and gave guarantees of the sun, and of the wind, and of the elements, to the people of Leinster, that he would never come against them any more, if they gave him his liberty." And in the next year, A.D. 458, it is recorded: "The sun and the wind killed him, because he had violated his oath by them."

A practice connected with the worship of the sun, which still survives in this country, is the lighting of bonfires on the 24th of June; in heathen times these fires were made on the 1st of May, which is called, to the present day, in the Irish language, "the day of Baal's fire" (La Bealltaine), the sun having been worshipped under the name of Baal.^h A very ancient notice of this day occurs, in which it is said — "The Druids used to make two goodly [lucky] fires, with great incantations on them, and they were used to bring the cattle between them against the diseases of each year."ⁱ The change from May to June is popularly attributed to St. Patrick, and said to have been made in honour of St. John the Baptist. We have in this practice a strange proof of the tenacity with which the rites of superstition retain their

^h "Baal and Apollo, or the sun, were one and the same among the Celtæ."—O'Connor, *Prolegomena*, i. 24, note.

ⁱ Cormac's Glossary, quoted in *Essay on Tara Hill*, p. 84.

hold on the human mind; for at this day, after the lapse of fourteen centuries, the same custom continues, and the same power of preserving the cattle from evil is attributed to it.

Besides the sun, the Irish had other objects of idolatry. "They worshipped," St. Patrick tells us, "idols and unclean things."—(ch. iv. sec. 17.) It has been said that the Irish had few idols, in the proper sense of the word, and that their religion was of a more refined kind than that of the inhabitants of Gaul and Britain; yet the words of the Confession expressly charge the nation with idolatry, and this is confirmed by a very old life of St. Patrick, called the "Hymn of Fiech," supposed to have been written in the sixth century—

"Over the tribes of Ireland lay a gloom—
Tribes who worshipped idols;
 They believed not in the true God,
 Nor in his proper Trinity."^j

But after all, it is only a dispute about words; for Dr. Lanigan, who makes the above statement,^k admits that, in many cases, they worshipped the rude pillar stones which are so common throughout the country, and are generally known by the name of "Dallauns" (properly, gallán), and hence the Christian missionaries used to carve crosses^l on these in order to draw away the attention

^j Stanza xxi.

^k Ecc. Hist. i. 230.

^l For an instance of St. Patrick's having done so, see Dr. Petrie's Essay on the Round Towers, p. 132; see also Smith's History of Cork, vol. i. p. 287. The worship of rude stones existed amongst the nations of antiquity. Thus the Ephesians worshipped an object which fell down from heaven (*το Διοπετης*), probably an aërolite, but not an image as our translators have given it.—Acts, xix. 35.

of the people from their superstition, and turn it to the Gospel of Christ. This worship of pillars was, of course, as plainly idolatry as the bowing down to images graven by art and man's device ; but that the Irish had at least some idols of the latter kind, we have sufficient proof. They are described in the following extract, which also contains an account of the cruelties by which their favour was supposed to be conciliated:—

“Magh Sleacht (the plain of slaughter) is so called because the chief of the idols of Ireland was there—namely, Cromm Cruach, and twelve idols of stone standing round it, and its head was of gold ; and this was the god of all the people who possessed Ireland before the arrival of St. Patrick : to this they sacrificed the first born of every offspring, and the first born of their own sons. Tighernmhas, the son of Follan King of Ireland, accompanied by the men and women of Ireland, supplicated this idol on Samin's day [the 1st of November], with such adoration, that they lacerated their elbows by falling and adoring, until they inflicted wounds on their foreheads, and bruised their noses and cheeks even till the blood came ; hence it is called Magh Sleacht, or the plain of slaughter.”

The worship of wells is another heathen practice, which is often alluded to in the lives of St. Patrick ; he is said to have preached earnestly against it, whenever he found the people engaged in it, “because,” says an old writer, “he had a zeal for God, even for the living God.” A description of one of these wells by an ancient author is here given. It possesses considerable interest,

^m The Dinnseanchus quoted in O'Conor, Proleg. i. 22. Magh Sleacht was in the county of Leitrim.

as well for the light which it throws on the state of religion among the people, as for the evidence which it affords of the earnest and fearless tone of St. Patrick's preaching. He found the people assembled with the Druids, "to offer gifts to it as gifts to God;" and having gone into the midst of them, and shown them the folly of their superstition, he preached the Gospel of Christ; and, we are told, "they believed in the Most High God."ⁿ The words of the writer are as follows:—

"St. Patrick came to a well, in a place called Finn Magh, which the credulous vulgar called the King of Waters, and in the Irish language, 'slán,' that is, 'healing,' giving it a name from the virtue which they believed to reside in it; for the ignorant vulgar thought there was a divinity in the well, or rather that the well itself was a divinity, and hence they called it the King of Waters, and worshipped it as a god. The well was square, and carefully made, and a large stone of corresponding square shape covered the opening. It seems to have afforded an encouragement, if it was not the very cause of the superstition of the people, that a certain magus [or Druid], who served water as a propitious deity, and accounted fire hostile, had, when dying, ordered his bones to be laid under that rock."^o


It would appear from this and other notices that they believed in an inferior deity who presided over the well; that they attributed healing powers to it; and that they prayed beside it, and offered gifts to it, as gifts to God. Such was the well-worship of the heathen Irish; nor has

ⁿ Tirechan's Annotations in Betham, Appx. xxix. xxx.

^o Colgan, Trias Thau.naturga, ch. lxx. p. 138.

it died out, as we might have supposed it would, when the power of the Gospel was brought to bear on it. It may have been that succeeding preachers of the truth were not so zealous for God's honour as the first missionary, or that having for a while disappeared, it revived again in times of ignorance; yet certain it is that at this day the superstition of the Roman Catholic peasantry respecting wells is identical with that which St. Patrick so earnestly opposed. They believe that a saint presides over the well;^p they believe in the healing power of its waters; they worship at its margin, looking down into it; and before they leave, they fasten a piece of rag as a votive offering on the tree which overhangs it. It would even seem that they have a confused notion that the well itself is a divinity, for in passing by a holy well they kneel down, and sometimes even bare the knee, as if to abase themselves to the utmost. Nor is this merely the assertion of one prejudiced against the Roman Catholic Church, for the same thing has been said, and ample proof given of it, by writers of high character, belonging to that Church. It will be sufficient to mention Dr. O'Connor, a Roman Catholic priest, and one of the most

^p It is a curious fact that the saints who are popularly worshipped at wells and other sacred places are scarcely in any instance really saints of the Church of Rome. Some of them were the founders of churches, or had some other claim to be remembered; but they belonged to the early Irish Church, which was stigmatized by the Church of Rome as schismatical, and which, paying little regard to this denunciation, firmly maintained its independence. It is a significant proof of the nationality of the Irish Church, that there is no instance of any church having been called after a foreign saint until the twelfth century, the time of the English invasion. It should be remembered, too, that the first Irishman ever canonized by the Pope was Malachy, Archbishop of Armagh (A.D. 1190), eighteen years after the English invasion. But the Irish peasantry, taught to consider it a sin to reason or inquire, worship with equal veneration the spirits of the schismatical dead and the orthodox saints of the Pope.



learned Irishmen of modern times. This eminent writer, when Dr. Milner, an English Roman Catholic Bishop, ventured to defend the well-worship of the Irish, denounced it as "one of the vilest practices of Druidic superstition,"^q and again warmly condemned Dr. Milner for "coming forward in the nineteenth century to canonize Druidism, and mix it up with the doctrines of Christianity."^r It would not, perhaps, be correct to say that the Church of Rome teaches this practice; but its existence and prevalence are an illustration of the readiness of that Church to permit and encourage any superstition which does not interfere with her pretensions; and it is perfectly certain that the Roman Catholic priesthood, in silently permitting, to say the least, such a degrading superstition, are not animated by the spirit of St. Patrick, and do not share in his jealousy for the honour of God.

The heathen Irish "had also their mountain and river-gods, which, after the custom of the Britons, they adored." They had likewise many other superstitions, the nature of which is imperfectly known, and which are not important to the purpose in hand; but there is a curious story of St. Patrick's having been mistaken for one of these mountain-gods, which deserves to be set down here. He and his companions having arrived before sunrise at a fountain near Cruachan, a royal residence (now Croghan, in Elphin), sat down there; "and behold in the morning the two daughters of King Laogaire came to the fountain after the manner of women to bathe." On arriving at the fountain, and finding the missionaries seated there, and perhaps dressed in a manner different from the natives of the country, they concluded that they

^q Third Letter of Columbanus, Appx. iii.

^r *Ibid.* p. 79.

must be “men-fairies,^s or gods of the earth, or phantoms,” and began to ask them questions, by which a favourable opportunity was afforded to St. Patrick of preaching to them the Gospel of Christ.^t In this and other cases we notice the connexion of the popular superstition with hills, which probably were regarded with the same veneration as the “high places” among the Canaanites. For this reason, St. Patrick is said to have frequently made these localities the scenes of his preaching, and hence it is recorded in the Hymn of Fiech, that

“He preached of God upon the hills.”^u

The priesthood, to whom allusion has been made, as presiding over and assisting in the rites of heathenism, are called “Magi” in the Latin language, and “Druidh” (or Druids) in Irish: “they had the superintendence of religious matters, and practised the arts of divination and sorcery.” It is in allusion to the latter practices that Simon, the “magus” or sorcerer, is called “Simon the Druid” in the Irish version of the Scriptures. The word was also used for a sage or wise man, for the Druids were believed to possess the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. We have an instance of its use in this sense in Matthew, ii. 1, where the wise men are called Druids. The influence which the Druid priesthood possessed over the people in many countries was immense, and they had

^s *Viri sidhe*. The following explanation of this expression is given by Colgan:—“Imaginary spirits (*spiritus phantastici*) are called *viri sidhe* (men of the hills), because they seem as if to come forth from pleasant hills to trouble mankind, and hence the vulgar think they live in subterranean dwellings within those hills. These dwellings, and sometimes the hills themselves, are called by the Irish *sidhe*, or *siodha*.”—Vit. tert. not. 49. The female form of this compound, *bean-sidhe* (the banshee), is familiar to most readers.

^t Tirechan’s Annotations, in Betham, Appx. p. 27.

^u Stanza 14.

the power of enforcing their wishes to any extent by means of the practice of excommunication, an object at all times of the utmost terror to a superstitious multitude. Its effect has been thus powerfully described:—

“ If any one, either a private or public individual, will not submit to the decree of the Druids, they interdict him the sacrifices: this is their severest punishment. Those who are so interdicted are accounted in the number of the wicked, and accursed. Every one leaves them; every one shuns them when they approach, and refuses to speak to them, lest any misfortune should befall him. They cannot be suitors in a court of justice, nor can any honour be conferred upon them.”^v

It is generally agreed, however, that the Druids never had this extreme power in Ireland. Their religion was much less sanguinary here than in other places, and their sway over the minds of the people was less in proportion as their creed was more refined. The following remarks on this subject are full of important truth:—

“ The sway obtained by these Druids in other Celtic countries amounted to a thorough and slavish submission to all their decisions, in civil as well as religious affairs; they, in short, manned and unmanned those nations at pleasure, rendering them by their prognostics the most furious combatants or the most abject cowards. This prostitution never prevailed to so high a degree in Ireland, which we are far from attributing to a less designing set of priesthood, but rather to the constant use of letters among the people, and to that free and happy ge-

^v Cæsar, De Bello Gallico, bk. vi. ch. xiii.

nius of the laity for examining into the reason of things. . . . To this spirit, I say, they for a long time owed their manhood of mind, and not to their spiritual directors, who strove to debase it, and who, however great their influence at any one particular period, gained them but by slow and stolen steps, and by a failure in those first principles of religion and government which, when attended to, formed the happiness of this and of every other nation."^w

II.—OF ST. PATRICK'S LIFE AND PREACHING.

The overthrow of heathenism, by the preaching of the Gospel, had begun to take place very early in Britain, perhaps before the end of the first century; and there is reason to believe that the tidings of salvation were carried into Ireland not very long after. Their introduction was not owing to any one individual, or to a systematic mission, but to the operation of natural events, such as the intercourse between Ireland and Gaul,^x the persecutions of Christians by the Roman emperors, and the foreign wars of the Irish. By these means many Christians from abroad became resident in Ireland, and imparted a knowledge of the Gospel to the people. Heathenism, however, continued to maintain

^w O'Conor's Historical Dissertations, p. 102.

^x Lanigan's Eccl. Hist. vol. i. p. 14. It is now very generally admitted that the usages of the early Irish Church point to a connexion with the Churches of the East. This is particularly evident with respect to the festival of Easter, in the celebration of which the Irish differed wholly from the Church of Rome, and when attacked respecting it, defended themselves by citing the example of St. John and the Eastern Churches. See Bede's Eccl. Hist. book iii. ch. xxv. There is no difficulty in supposing this connexion to have taken place through the south of France, which was colonised by Greeks at an early period, and maintained a constant intercourse with the East.

its ascendancy for a long period; and though, when St. Patrick landed here to preach the Gospel, in the early part of the fifth century, there were Christian converts and clergy, yet the king and his chieftains with the majority of the people, were heathens, and the Druidic priesthood was still in power. All obstacles, however, gave way before his zeal and earnestness in the preaching of the Gospel; and, at the close of his career, he could rejoice that he was the instrument, in God's hand, of gaining over a nation to the Christian faith.

It will render the Confession more easily understood by those who are unacquainted with the facts of the case, to give here an outline of the life of St. Patrick; but without entering into particulars, except in a few instances of peculiar interest. The reader must not expect to find here any of what Archbishop Ussher has well called "the pack of ridiculous miracles" with which the monkish writers have filled their lives of him. He never claimed any power of doing miracles, and the most famous of those which are attributed to him are manifest and palpable forgeries.

He is supposed to have been born about A. D. 372, at Bannavan, a village of Tabernia, which, according to a generally received opinion, was Kirkpatrick, near Dumbarton, at that time within the Roman province of Britain; but the decision of this matter is of little importance, even if it were possible. His father, Calpornius, was a deacon; his grandfather, Potitus, a priest, and his great-grandfather, Odissus, a deacon. Though this last fact has scarcely been noticed hitherto, it is of some importance in the inquiry into the nature of the early British Church, and of the religion of St. Patrick, as a member of it; for it is quite clear that in the Church to which he belonged the clergy were not forbidden to

marry; and it must, therefore, have been differently constituted from the Church of Rome. In the latter, it cannot happen that the father and son, for several generations, should be in holy orders, though in a pure and apostolic Church, like the Reformed Church of these countries, it constantly occurs. Perhaps, if a conjecture may be permitted, it is in allusion to St. Patrick's having been descended from this deacon, whose son and grandson were also in holy orders, that he is sometimes termed

“The descendant of the Deacon of the goodly household.”^y

In the time of his youth, as well as for ages before, the province of Britain was harassed by the attacks of the Irish.^z Crossing the narrow sea which divides the two countries, they suddenly appeared on the British coasts, and laying waste the surrounding district, with fire and sword, hastened home, laden with captives and spoil. In one of these descents, Patrick and a multitude of his fellow-countrymen were made captive, and brought

^y Book of Rights, p. 225. Dublin, 1847. It is right to say that Professor O'Donovan, having translated the expression “hua Deocain” by “descendant of the Deacon,” adds in a note, “recte, *son* of the Deacon, *i. e.*, Calpornius;” but there can be no doubt that he overlooked the following passage in the Hymn of Fiech, where the same expression is used, and the name of the Deacon in question given, which is not Calpornius, but Odissus:—

“Mac Calpuirn mic Otidhe
Ho Deochain Odisse.”—*Stanza 2.*

The son of Calpornius, the son of Otidus (or Potitus),
The descendant of the Deacon Odissus.

The copy of the Confession in the Book of Armagh also mentions his descent from Odissus.

^z Eumenius, speaking before the Roman senate, A. D. 296, describes the Britons, before Cæsar's arrival, as “solis Pictis et Hibernis adsueti hostibus.”

to the north of Ireland.^a Here he became the property of four brothers, one of whom, said to have been a chieftain of the county of Antrim, purchased him from the others, and employed him as a shepherd. The capture and disposal of Patrick and his companions, wicked and inhuman as it was, is not to be regarded as the result of the casual inroad of some wandering tribe. It was, on the contrary, one of a series of organised expeditions,^b which proceeded from Ireland, some of them under the command of the kings of that country, and all of them under their sanction; and we can trace the connexion between the laws of the country and these predatory expeditions: for one of the ancient customs of Ireland was that the chief king gave certain presents to his provincial kings, and they again others to the chieftains under their sway, the presents for each individual being defined by the Book of Rights. Some of these presents were bondsmen, or slaves; and in many cases it is specified that they are to be captives from a foreign land, as in the following:—

“ The stipend of the King of Brughrigh,
From the King of Eire without sorrow—
Ten tunics brown-red,
Ten foreigners without Irish.”^c

^a Gibbon, generally slow to believe where Irish matters are concerned, assents to this: “ We may believe that in one of these Irish inroads, the future Apostle was led away captive.”—*Decline and Fall*, v. 228.

^b From the words of Gildas we might infer that these expeditions were made at regular intervals: “ Anniversarias prædas trans maria exaggerabant.”—*Gildas*, chap. xiv.

^c Book of Rights, p. 86. Although the work itself was compiled after the introduction of Christianity, most of the customs had existed for many ages before. The place mentioned above is Bruree, in the county of Limerick.

And again—

“ Entitled is the King of Cineal Aodha
To five shields, five slender swords,
Five bondmen brought across the bristling surface of the sea.”^d

Such was the custom to which, in all probability, the Irish nation owed their conversion to Christianity, by the introduction of St. Patrick among them; an instance of the mercy of God, in bringing good out of evil, which brings to mind the beautiful narrative of Holy Scripture, in which the captive Israelite is the means of converting her master to the worship of the true God.^e

It is unnecessary to say anything here of what occurred during his captivity, as nothing can be added to the interesting account which he gives of himself during that period. So, passing over his escape from slavery, and his second captivity and escape, we find him restored to his parents, and living with them. They hoped that, after the vicissitudes and sorrows of his youth, he would have remained with them thenceforward; but his mind was filled with other thoughts; he remembered the heathenism in which the mass of the people in Ireland were sunk, and he felt an impulse, which he knew to be from above, urging him to devote his life to their conversion. He relates with feeling the struggle between filial affection and the sense of duty, and how the latter prevailed (ch. iv. s. 15). In order to prepare himself for so great an undertaking, he set about remedying the deficiencies of his early education; and, in pursuance of this object, sought the instruction of eminent men, and spent a considerable time at seats of learning, engaged in acquiring knowledge. He visited, we are told, Germanus, Bishop of

^d Book of Rights, p. 131.

^e 2 Kings, ch. v.

Auxerre, and remained with him a considerable time, "eagerly applying his mind to the attainment of wisdom, and the learning of the Holy Scriptures."^f He also spent some time with St. Martin; and, having been ordained, became a resident among the monks of Lerins, in the Tuscan Sea, where he continued to prosecute his studies.

It appears to be impossible to determine by whom he was consecrated to the episcopal office. Roman Catholics, indeed, usually assert that he derived his consecration and mission from Pope Celestine; but Dr. Lanigan, their principal historian, admits that there is no satisfactory proof by whom he was consecrated, though he believed him to have come here with a commission from Pope Celestine. But, as Mr. King has observed, the chief argument for this notion seems to be, "he ought to have done so, therefore he must have done it."^g

So important an event in his life would certainly require stronger evidence than Roman Catholic writers have been able to produce; for no one can doubt that on their theory it would have been the most conspicuous circumstance connected with his mission to Ireland, and of all others the most likely to be recorded and remembered; yet there is no proper evidence for it, and there are strong reasons for entirely denying it. The Confession, which, among other reasons, was written to account for his coming to Ireland, and to answer the objections of those who charged him with presumption for doing so, has no mention of what would have been the most valid excuse he could offer—the Pope's commands. So far from this, it contains no trace of his

^f Colgan's second Life of St. Patrick, quoted by King, Ch. His. i. 28.

^g King's Ch. His. i. 29.

connexion with Rome; and he repeatedly declares that his only motives were the inward call which he felt, and the promises of the Gospel. Again, the Chronicle of Prosper, his contemporary, never once alludes to him, although it notices the mission of Palladius, who effected nothing; nor has Platina a word in reference to him; writers who enter minutely into the acts of the See of Rome, and who, it is quite impossible to believe, would have failed to ascribe the honour of St. Patrick's mission to Pope Celestine, if he had really sent him. It has been also well observed, that, "if Patrick came to Ireland as a deputy from Rome, it might naturally be expected that in the Irish Church a certain sense of dependence would always have been preserved towards the mother Church at Rome. But we find, on the contrary, in the Irish Church afterwards, a spirit of Church freedom similar to that shown by the ancient British Church, which struggled against the yoke of Roman ordinances."^h From these facts we may conclude that there are strong presumptions against his having had any connexion with Rome, and that the most probable account of his mission refers it altogether to the Church of France.

The Roman writers do, however, relate the sending of a bishop named Palladius to Ireland, A.D. 431, and it is acknowledged that his mission was a failure. He remained for a very short time, and died in Scotland, to which he had passed on leaving Ireland. The following year, A.D. 432, is that which is generally assigned to the arrival of St. Patrick, who, accompanied by several companions from Gaul,ⁱ landed on the shores of Ireland, to

^h Neander *ut sup.* p. 174.

ⁱ These were fifteen in number, with one woman: they afterwards obtained churches, and settled in the country. In the vicinity of the place, where one

commence the work of preaching the Gospel. He first disembarked on the coast of Wicklow, but not finding the people inclined to receive him, he set sail again, and, directing his course northward, arrived at the county of Down. Here his preaching was attended with remarkable success, and the prince of the territory, with his family, became converts to the Gospel. After a short stay here, he left his companions, and, anxious to return good for evil, travelled to the place where his former master lived, with the desire of making known the Gospel to him; but his efforts to effect his conversion not being attended with success, he returned, and again joined his companions in the county of Down.

Soon after this, having heard that the princes and authorities of the kingdom were to be assembled at the Royal Palace of Tara, to celebrate the festival of the King's nativity,^j he saw that an excellent opportunity was afforded him of preaching the Gospel; and availing himself of the circumstance that the festival of Easter happened at the same time, he resolved to celebrate it publicly in the vicinity of Tara, "judging," says an old writer, "that this invincible wedge should be driven into the head of the whole system of idolatry, by the hammer of his strong labour joined with faith, and by the spiritual hands of his followers, so that it could never more rise up against the faith of Christ."^k He and his companions, ac-

of them named Lugnat fixed his residence, a sepulchral inscription has been found, of undoubted antiquity, recording his death. The words are—"Lie Lugnaedon Macc Limenuh"—("The Stone of Lugnat the Son of Limenuh.")—*Essay on Tara Hill*, p. 164. In after times, when the invocation of saints came to be practised, these Gauls were invoked in Litanies.

^j O'Donovan. Preface to the Book of Rights, p. 50.

^k Mocutenius in Book of Armagh. Betham, App. p. 4. The doctrine of the resurrection, which the Gospel alone brought to light, was a leading theme

cordingly, sailing southward, arrived at the mouth of the Boyne. From this they set out for the plain on which Tara is situated; and, while on their journey, a circumstance occurred which impresses us with a favourable opinion of the amiable and winning character of St. Patrick, and indicates, as has been observed, "the way in which he is said to have drawn to him those who were to be his successors in the guidance of the Irish Church." They had gone to the house of a person of rank, where they were hospitably received, and invited to pass the night. Their host with his family became converts to the Gospel, and when they were retiring to rest, "his young son gathered St. Patrick's feet between his bosom and his hands, and would not sleep with his father and mother, but cried to be allowed to sleep with Patrick." In the morning, when Patrick was getting into his chariot to leave, and "had one foot in, and the other on the ground, the child Benignus held his foot tightly with both hands, and cried out, 'let me go with Patrick, my real father.'"¹ He was allowed to go, and became his constant companion, and afterwards his successor in the see of Armagh.

Having arrived in the vicinity of Tara on the eve of Easter, he proceeded to make preparations for celebrating the festival, and lighted a large fire about nightfall

of the Apostles' preaching. It was thus St. Paul introduced the Gospel in heathen Athens.—Acts, xvii. 18. See also Acts, iv. 2; 1 Cor. xv. Perhaps it was a sense of the importance of this doctrine which rendered the early British and Irish Churches so sensitive with respect to the festival of Easter, and caused them to offer so determined a resistance to any change in it. The circumstances attendant on the festival seemed to derive importance from the doctrine to which it referred; and when, moreover, it was used as a means of preaching that doctrine, as in the present instance, they were naturally unwilling to alter what they considered an apostolic practice.

¹ Tirechan's Annotations. Betham, Appendix, p. 19.

In doing this he violated one of the laws of the kingdom; and the King's attention having been drawn to it, he sent and had him brought before him, at the instigation of the Magi, who declared that the fire should be immediately extinguished, or else it would "get the better of their fires, and bring about the downfall of the kingdom." The Druids had, no doubt, heard of the triumph of the Gospel in other lands, and rightly anticipated that the new religion, which was spreading throughout the world, would eventually become diffused in Ireland also, and cause the overthrow of their superstition.

The next day, which was Easter Sunday, he preached before the King and his assembled princes—refuted the arguments of the Druids, and made several converts, although the King himself remained an unbeliever. It was on this occasion of his being seized and brought before the King, at the instigation of the Druids, and when in immediate expectation of death, that he is said to have composed the beautiful hymn afterwards called "St. Patrick's Armour." It is too long to give entire in this place, but the conclusion of it affords so clear an evidence of the purity of St. Patrick's faith, that it ought not to be omitted. It runs thus: "Christ be with me; Christ before me; Christ after me; Christ in me; Christ under me; Christ over me; Christ at my right; Christ at my left; Christ at this side; Christ at that side; Christ at my back; Christ be in the heart of each person whom I speak to; Christ in the mouth of each person who speaks to me; Christ in each eye which sees me; Christ in each ear which hears me. At Tara, to-day, I invoke the mighty power of the Trinity. I believe in the Trinity, under the unity of the God of the elements: Salvation is the Lord's, salvation is the Lord's; salvation is Christ's. May thy salvation, O Lord, be always with

us."^m Leaving Tara, he travelled westward, and reaching Westmeath, he preached the Gospel to two brothers, Fiach and Enda, princes of that territory; the latter of whom became a convert, and entrusted his son to St. Patrick, who undertook to educate him.ⁿ Proceeding still to the west, he preached in several parts of Connaught, with various success. Arriving, at length, at the sea coast, he ascended the mountain called Cruachán Aichle (Mount Eagle), and remained there in retirement for some days. He seems to have had this visit in view when setting out for Connaught; and, in order to provide for his security in the districts through which he had to pass, he made an agreement with the sons of a chieftain in the vicinity, "paying the price of twelve armed men, that he might be certain of not being obstructed in his journey across Ireland by any ill-disposed people."^o His chief object in undertaking this journey was to preach the Gospel to the people of Foclud, about whom he had dreamed when with his parents, on his return from his captivity in Ireland; "for necessity required that they should go to the wood of Foclud before the beginning of the year at the second Easter, on account of the children, who cried, with a loud voice, saying, 'come, holy Patrick, save us;'"^p and his design, in visiting this mountain probably was to do away with the superstition of the Irish regarding it; for we are told that it was esteemed a sacred mountain in heathen times.^q In consequence of this visit, the name of the mountain was changed to Croagh Patrick, by which it is known to this day. There is a tradition relating to the

^m Tara Hill, p. 67.

ⁿ Lanigan, Eccl. Hist. i. 238.

^o Annotations of Tirechan. Betham, Appendix, p. 24.

^p Tirechan, as before.

^q Betham's Antiquarian Researches, p. 292.

proceedings of St. Patrick in this place, which deserves to be noticed, as an example of the way in which Roman Catholic miracles come into existence. One of his biographers states, that when he arrived at the top of the mountain he was surrounded by vast numbers of birds; other writers, improving on this simple fact, transformed the birds into demons, and described him as driving them into the sea at the foot of the mountain. Another, again, perhaps believing reptiles and demons to belong to the same genus, adds, that all the venomous reptiles were collected there from every part of Ireland, and "in the deep bosom of the ocean buried."^r This is firmly believed by the peasantry at the present day; and it is from such lying wonders they derive their ideas of the character and acts of St. Patrick.

Having left Croagh Patrick, he proceeded to Tirawley (county Mayo), in which the wood of Foclud^s was situated; and here remarkable success was granted to the preaching of the Gospel, the seven princes and twelve thousand persons having become converts to the Christian faith. His preaching was not, however, unattended with danger; for, before the general conversion took place, a conspiracy, headed by the Druids, was formed against him, and he must have been slain had not one of the princes protected him. In this general reception of the Gospel was fulfilled the wish of the people of Foclud, whom he had heard in a dream inviting him to come over and teach them. Leaving Connaught, he next visited Ulster. Among the occurrences which took place here, one deserves especial mention, for the light which it throws on his character. One time, we are

^r Ianigan, i. 250, 252.

^s This wood was in and near the present parish of Killala.

told, when he was resting, on the Lord's day, by the sea side, he heard a noise and tumult, caused by the heathen, who were working on that day, making a rath; and, having called them, St. Patrick forbade them to work on the Lord's day;^t but they disregarded the words of the saint, and mocked him. The same writer states that his reverence for the Lord's day was habitual, and that "he would not travel on any Lord's day, reverencing that holy season."^u From Ulster he proceeded to Meath. Soon after he turned to the south, and visited Cashel, where the King became a convert. Returning again to Ulster, he founded the Church and See of Armagh, A. D. 455. After this, he spent the rest of his days in Ulster, and died at Saul, in the county of Down, his favourite retreat, in the year 492, according to many authorities.

The outline here given of the life and labours of St. Patrick, is taken from the accounts most generally received; but it should be mentioned that the dates are very confused and uncertain, and his monkish biographers have filled their narratives with so many fables and miracles, as to throw discredit on his entire history. This uncertainty led one or two persons of little eminence to doubt the existence of St. Patrick; and Dr. Ledwich, taking the same ground, ventured to deny it altogether; but in this rash and unphilosophical proceeding, he has not been followed by any one. The arguments on which he relied are, in many instances, quite trifling; and it would be needlessly occupying the time of the reader to notice here more than one or two

^t Mocutenius, Appendix, p. 11. The rath was one of those enclosures, generally surrounded by a circular rampart, which are erroneously called Danish forts.

^u *Ibid.* p. 14.

of the most plausible. He adopts the argument of Dr. Ryves, who preceded him in his doubts, and which is drawn from the fact that Platina, an author of the fifteenth century, who wrote the lives of the Popes, does not mention St. Patrick in his life of Pope Celestine: but this is only good against those who assert that St. Patrick had a commission from Rome, an opinion which has been shown to have no foundation; and, even on any supposition, "you may easily see," says Archbishop Ussher, "what little credit the testimony, or the silence rather, of so late an author as Platina is, may carry to bear down the constant agreement of all our own writers."^v Dr. Ledwich again says: "St. Patrick is not mentioned by any author, or in any work of veracity, from the fifth to the eighth century;" but "this objection would have more weight," as Mr. King has observed, "if any native authors of those ages could be pointed to, who ought to have mentioned him, and did not."^w However, it is not true, for the Confession, written by himself, is considered, by all the learned, genuine. He is mentioned in the letter of Cummian to Segienus, Abbot of Iona, A. D. 634; by Adamnanus, in his life of St. Columba, in the same century, to which period the life of St. Patrick by Mocutenius, in the Book of Armagh, is generally assigned; again, in a manuscript in the Cotton Library, earlier than the time of Bede; and, finally, in the Martyrology of Bede.^x There are then as many notices of him in the scanty records of those ages, as we ought to expect; but even if this were not so, and if, as the learned Dr. O'Connor has well observed,

^v Ussher's Letters, No. 33, quoted in Lanigan.

^w King's Church History, vol. i. p. 15.

^x See Lanigan, Eccl. Hist. vol. i. ch. ii.

“all these authorities and manuscripts in which St. Patrick is expressly mentioned, were destroyed, the laws of just criticism forbid that, after the lapse of so many ages, and the destruction of so many monasteries and libraries as formerly existed in Ireland, before the Danish invasions, the silence alone of such authors as remain (supposing such silence), should be admitted in evidence to overthrow a national tradition so universal in every part of Ireland, Scotland, and Mann, so immemorial and so incorporated as that of St. Patrick is with the traditional usages, names, anniversaries, monastic ruins, and popular manners of a hundred millions of Irishmen, who have existed since his time.”^y To the same purpose Dr. Petrie remarks: “The ancient churches and other monumental remains connected with his name, found in all parts of Ireland, as well as the vivid traditions still universally current, are sufficient to satisfy any candid inquirer that such a personage must have existed, whatever may have been the period at which he flourished.”^z Some late writers, instead of rashly denying his existence, have endeavoured to clear up the difficulties of the subject, by a critical examination of ancient documents; and it has been shown, by Dr. Petrie and others, that there were in early times two eminent persons of the name of Patrick, who are mentioned in the most ancient lives, and whose arrivals and deaths are recorded in the Irish annals. One of these, called Sen-Patrick, he considers to have been the real Apostle of Ireland; and the other, called Patrick the Archbishop, he identifies with the Palladius who was sent here by Celestine, and whose mission was a failure; and it is almost certain

^y Columbanus's Letters, No. 3, quoted in King's Ch. His. vol. i. p. 16.

^z Dr. Petrie's Essay on Tara Hill, p. 106.

that the monkish writers of the middle ages, in their desire to ascribe the honour of the conversion of Ireland to a Pope, have blended the acts of the real Patrick, who had no connexion with Rome, with those of Palladius, and thus caused a confusion which is now, perhaps, inextricable.

III.—OF THE CONFESSION.

It was towards the close of his eventful life, that he set about the composition of his Confession. His object in writing it was to set before his contemporaries, and to record for the benefit of posterity, the mercies of God to himself, and through him to the Irish nation; to put them in mind of the faith which he had preached, and to impress on their minds that he was influenced only by the Gospel and its promises, and by a call from Christ, to undertake the work of the conversion of the Irish. In doing this, he gives an account of his own conversion; of the obstacles and difficulties which he encountered before and after his entrance on the mission; and answers the charges which had been brought against him, one of which was that of presumption in undertaking such a work, and concludes by reiterating, that he had no other motive but the Gospel and its promises for coming to Ireland. There is not a trace of any of the errors of the Church of Rome throughout the Confession; and though we cannot expect to find tenets spoken against which had at that time no existence, the reader will notice many things which he could not have written if he held erroneous doctrine. His confession of faith is strictly in accordance with Scripture, and with those ancient creeds which expressed the belief of Christians in the days when the Church was pure, and which the Reformed Church

acknowledges as the standard of doctrine,^a and his frequent references to the Word of God show a habitual regard for its authority on all matters connected with Christian doctrine and practice. He says nothing whatever about performing miracles: it is, therefore, quite clear that all the stories regarding them with which his lives are filled, are the invention of late writers, for which he is not in any way responsible.

He appears, indeed, to have considered the dreams which he mentions, as of Divine origin and intended for his guidance, a notion which we may account for with much probability by the belief in a particular Providence directing him in every act of his life, which he held very strongly. Carrying this doctrine to excess, he regarded a dream which harmonised with his own wishes and hopes, as a Divine encouragement, and acted on it as such. And if we assent to the common theory, that dreams are but our waking thoughts, reproduced in various forms, the instances given in the Confession will not be found to differ, in this respect, from ordinary dreams. Thus, what could be more natural than that a captive, languishing for several years in slavery, should have his thoughts occupied about flight, and should dream of his escape, as we find St. Patrick did?—(ch. ii. sec. 6.) “Our dreams,” it has been justly remarked by Professor Stewart, “are influenced by the prevailing temper of the mind. . . . Not that this observation holds without exception, but it holds so generally as must convince us that the state of our spirits has some effect on our dreams, as well as on our waking thoughts. . . . A severe misfortune, which has affected the mind deeply, influences our dreams in a similar way, and suggests to us a variety of

^a See the Eighth Article of the United Church of England and Ireland.

adventures analogous in some measure to that event from which our distress arises. Such, according to Virgil, were the dreams of the forsaken Dido—

“ ‘ Agit ipse furentem
In somnis Pius Æneas: semperque relinqui
Sola sibi: *semper longam incommitata videtur,*
Ire viam, et Tyrios desertâ quærere terrâ. ’ ”^b

We cannot wonder that dreams should present themselves in unusually vivid colours to a spirit of such impassioned zeal and high enthusiasm as St. Patrick's; and when we combine this with the fact, that he considered every impulse of his mind as an immediate result of the Divine agency, it is not difficult to see how he was led to regard even his dreams as messengers from on high.

Some Roman Catholics have endeavoured to support the invocation of saints by a passage in the Confession (ch. ii. sec. 9). In this obscure place, St. Patrick says, that one night, when asleep, he was afflicted by Satan, and it was suggested to him, he knew not how, to call “ Helias;” and he goes on to say — “ While I was calling ‘ Helias! Helias!’ with all my might, behold the splendour of the sun fell upon me, and immediately dispelled all my heaviness.” Now, in the first place, it must be observed that he says distinctly, “ and I believe that I was aided by Christ my Lord, and that his Spirit was then crying out in my behalf.” From this it is clear that he invoked no creature, but that his prayer was directed to Christ, “ who aided him.” In confirmation of this, it has been shown that the more ancient biographers of the

^b Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, by Dugald Stewart. vol. i. p. 335-6. London, 1814.

saint never understood the prophet Elias to have been the object of his adoration, but only Christ the Lord;^c and in the *Life of St. Patrick*, by Probus, which is considered the most valuable of the ancient lives, the incident is thus described—"When he had thrice invoked Christ the true sun, immediately the sun rose upon him, and its light scattered all the mists of darkness, and his strength was restored, and he feared no more the terrors of devils nor their evil designs."^d There seems to have been some allusion to Helios, the name of the sun in Greek, as connected with Malachi, iv. 2. A similar allusion occurs in another part of the Confession (ch. v. sec. 24), and both, perhaps, were suggested by the sun-worship of the ancient Irish.

It will not be out of place to offer a few remarks on the notice of monks in the Confession. In the century preceding the arrival of St. Patrick, the practice of monasticism had arisen in the East. Its origin is to be traced to the Decian persecution, when many Christians, having been compelled to flee for their lives to the deserts of Egypt, and to remain for a considerable time separated from their fellow-men, became attached to this mode of life, and voluntarily continued it when the occasion was over. It soon became a fashion, and associations of persons were formed to live together in separation from the world. Spreading from the East to the West, it became general throughout Europe; and St. Patrick himself, educated in monasteries, and chiefly in that of Lerins, which followed an Eastern rule, introduced the practice into Ireland. In stating these facts, however, it is necessary to

^c King's Church History, vol. i. p. 47. The reader will find more on the subject in this valuable work.

^d The Fifth Life in Colgan, book. i. ch. 8.

guard the reader against the mistake of supposing there was anything in common between the monasteries of this age and those of modern times, so far as the evils of the system are concerned. The difference between the two was very great, as will immediately be seen by the consideration of the following points:—

1. The early monks were generally laymen, while the monks of modern days are generally in orders for the purpose of saying masses.

2. They were bound by no vows, not even celibacy, for many monks were married.

3. Nor poverty, for many of them retained their property.

4. They wore no tonsure, which was considered a heathen practice, nor did they wear any dress distinct from that of other people.

5. Above all things, they were diligent in the study of the Holy Scriptures.^e

The monasteries established in Ireland were rather institutions for educating clergy and others, than what is now understood by the term, and they appear to have been nearly the same as our colleges, in which the professors are generally unmarried.

Though few of the objections to the monasteries of after times, would lie against the system of St. Patrick's age, the seeds of evil were in it, and in the lapse of ages they grew and flourished until the monasteries of Europe brought scandal on the very name of Christianity. It could not be expected that those evils should be foreseen by the eminent men who introduced it, but we can perceive how that foundation-truth of the Gospel, justifica-

^e Bingham's *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, book viii. chap. 3.

tion by faith, was undermined by it, and how, when this barrier was overthrown, error and corruption rushed in and mingled with Christianity: for, the outward renunciation of the world had an inevitable tendency to introduce the notion of human merit, and to render less distinct the truth, that "by grace we are saved through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God;" and when this doctrine was even partially obscured, a new impulse was given to mortification and self-torture, and thus monasticism alternately corrupting the Gospel, and flourishing on its decay, gradually arrived at such a state, that it could no longer be permitted to cumber the ground, and then the axe was laid to the root of the tree. It has not been formally condemned by the Reformed Church, yet so long as the lessons of experience are remembered, and the doctrine of justification by faith only, guarded with that care which belongs to a vital doctrine of the Gospel, it can never take root within its precincts.

On the whole, then, when we consider that in the fifth century the practice was in its infancy, and that its evils had not yet developed themselves, we may feel well assured that the monastic life as introduced into Ireland under the sanction of St. Patrick, was entirely free from that belief in the efficacy of human merit, that spiritual pride, and that vain conflict with the impulses which God has implanted in human nature, which so fatally characterise the corrupt system of modern Rome.

With these cautionary remarks, which must be borne in mind, in studying a work of such antiquity as the Confession, the reader will be able to form a correct judgment of St. Patrick from his own words, he will find, that holding in its purity, "the faith once [once for all] delivered to the saints," his doctrines corres-

ponded exactly with those of the United Church of England and Ireland, which accepts nothing as requisite or necessary to salvation, unless it may be read in Holy Scripture, or may be proved thereby. It is not meant to affirm that the Church of St. Patrick's time was identical in all respects with the present Established Church; nor is this of any importance, if the same pure and ancient faith was professed by the one, as it is by the other. On this subject, we have the express declaration of the Church, that, "It is not necessary that traditions and ceremonies be in all places one and utterly alike; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word."^r It may be said, then, with perfect truth, that the Church of Ireland is, both by direct and clear descent, and by the profession of the same faith, the ancient Church of this country. We find in this authoritative declaration of St. Patrick, no doctrines but those which she holds, and nothing whatever that she repudiates. This is evident from the language of his creed, from the fervour with which he disclaims all merit of his own, and attributes everything which was "pure, or lovely, or of good report," in his character and actions to the influence of the Spirit of God; from his mention of three orders of the ministry, and only three, bishops, priests, and deacons; from his speaking of a married clergy, and from his intimate acquaintance with Holy Scripture, and his deep reverence for its precepts; while we search in vain for any mention of the Pope, for any appeal to the paramount authority of the Church, any allusion to tradition, or notice of the Virgin Mary or the

^r Article xxxiv.

Saints, or any trace of the Seven Sacraments, or Purgatory.

It may, then, be justly anticipated, that the dispassionate reader of the Confession, who duly weighs the facts which bear upon his life and doctrines, will agree in the remark of the learned Tillemont, though, perhaps, in a different sense from what he intended, that St. Patrick was much more like the prophets and apostles, than the other saints who appeared after them.^g

^g Lanigan, vol. i. p. 53.

The Confession of St. Patrick.



CHAPTER I.

OF ST. PATRICK'S BIRTH AND CAPTIVITY, AND OF
THIS CONFESSION.

I PATRICK,^a a sinner, the rudest and the least of all the faithful, and an object of the greatest contempt to many, am the son of Calpornius, a deacon, the son of Potitus, heretofore a presbyter,^b who lived in Bannavan, a village of Tabernia,^c in the neighbourhood of which he had a small farm; and here I was taken captive. I was then nearly sixteen years old; I was ignorant of the true God, and was brought to Ireland in Patrick, a Briton, carried away

^a *Patricius*. He is said to have been called Succath at his baptism, and to have afterwards obtained the name of Patricius. It is supposed to have reference to the rank of his family; yet we cannot be certain of this, for, according to Gibbon, at this period "the meanest subjects of the Roman empire assumed the illustrious name of Patricius; which," he adds, "by the conversion of Ireland, has been communicated to a whole nation."—*Decline and Fall*, vol. vi. p. 229.

^b *A presbyter*. See Introduction, p. 20.

^c *Bannavan Taberniæ*. Dr. Lanigan (*Ecc. Hist.*) thinks this was Bononia, now Boulogne, in France, and supports his opinion with much learning and ingenuity; but his arguments are not satisfactory; and a passage occurs in the Confession (ch. iv. sec. 19), where Britain, his native land, is distinguished from Gaul, and the two

into Ireland
at sixteen
years of age,

(2 Chron.
xxix. 10.)

and there en-
lightened by
God,

confesses the
goodness of
God

and his own
faith.

captivity, with so many thousand persons, as we deserved, because we had turned away from God, and had not kept his commandments, and were disobedient to our priests, who admonished us of our salvation; and the Lord brought on us “the anger of his fury,” and scattered us among many nations, even to the uttermost parts of the earth, where now obscurity seems to be my lot, amongst a foreign people. And there the Lord brought me to a sense of my unbelief, that I might, even at a late season, call my sins to remembrance, and turn with all my heart to the Lord my God, who regarded my low estate, and, taking pity on my youth and ignorance, guarded me, before I understood anything, or had learned to distinguish between good and evil, and strengthened and comforted me as a father does his son.

Sec. 2. Wherefore I cannot, and indeed I ought not, to be silent respecting the many blessings, and the large measure of grace which the Lord vouchsafed to bestow on me in the land of my captivity; for this is the only recompense which is in our power, that after being chastened we should be raised up to the acknowledging of the Lord, and should confess his wonders before every nation under heaven; that—

There^d is no other God nor ever was nor will

countries spoken of in their relative positions to Ireland, in such a way as to indicate that Great Britain is intended. See also ch. ii. sec. 8, note, and Introduction, p. 20.

^d *There is.* The early Christian writers always stated the doctrines of the Christian faith in their own words, and when any of the articles was endangered by a prevailing error, they enlarged

be after him except God the Father, without beginning; From whom is all beginning; Who upholds all things as we have said: And his Son Jesus Christ whom together with the Father we testify to have always existed; Who before the beginning of the world was spiritually present with the Father; Begotten in an unspeakable manner before all beginning; By whom were made all things visible and invisible; Who was made man, and having overcome death was received into heaven to the Father: And he hath given him a name which is above every name:

on it, and guarded it from misconception; hence the form of these creeds differs in almost every writer, while the truths are the same (Bingham's *Antiq. of Chris. Church*, book ii. ch. vi. sec. 3, and book x. ch. iv.) The confession of faith now before us is very like the Nicene Creed, but it does not contain so many articles, and it is more diffuse on the Divinity of our Lord. Its close adherence to Holy Scripture, and the entire absence of those errors which are embodied in the present creed of the Roman Catholic Church, are a convincing proof of the purity of St. Patrick's faith. To set this in a strong light, it is only necessary to mention a few facts connected with the creed of Pope Pius IV., which at present contains the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. This creed, which was drawn up after the close of the Council of Trent, contains the Nicene Creed, and in addition to it, the doctrines of Tradition, Church-interpretation, the Seven Sacraments, Justification by Works, Transubstantiation, Purgatory, Invocation of Saints, Veneration of Images, Indulgences, and Papal Supremacy; and although none of the doctrines thus added is contained in the Word of God, the whole is said to form "the true Catholic faith, out of which none can be saved." It follows plainly from this, that any Roman Catholic who believes his to be the ancient faith, must hold that St. Patrick was excluded from salvation. It also deserves to be remarked in these days, when Divine honours are given to the Virgin Mary by members of the Church of Rome, that the creed of St. Patrick is one of the few ancient confessions of faith in which her name is entirely omitted.

that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and God:^e In whom we believe, and we await his coming who ere long shall judge the quick and dead: Who will render to every one according to his deeds, and has poured out abundantly on us the gift of the Holy Spirit, even the earnest of immortality, who makes those that believe and obey, to be the sons of God the Father, and joint-heirs with Christ; Whom we confess and adore—one God in the Trinity of the sacred name.

(Philippians, ii. 9-11.)

For he himself has said by the Prophet, “Call upon me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me;” and again he says, “It is honourable to reveal the works of God.”^f

(Psalm l. 15.)

(Tobias, xii. 7.)

Sec. 3. Although I am imperfect in many things, I wish my brethren and relatives^g to know my disposition, that they may be able to perceive the desire of my soul. I am not ignorant of the testimony of my Lord, who declares in the Psalm, “Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing” [falsehood]; and again, “The mouth that believeth slayeth the soul;” and the same Lord says in the Gospel, “Every idle word

And meditates a true confession

(Psalm v. 6.)
(Wisdom, i. 11.)

^e *Lord and God.* The reading differs somewhat from the Authorised Version and the Vulgate.

^f *It is honourable.* On this and other quotations from the Apocrypha, see Archbishop Ussher's Observations, Preface, p. 6.

^g *Brethren and relatives.* Who had opposed his coming to Ireland.

that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Therefore, I ought in great fear and trembling, to dread this sentence on that day when no one shall be able to withdraw or hide himself, but all must give an account even of the least sins before the judgment-seat of Christ the Lord. And for this reason, although I have for some time meditated writing, I have hesitated until now; for I feared that I should fall under the censure of men, because I have not studied like others who have enjoyed the great advantages of becoming acquainted with the Holy Scriptures in both ways equally,^h and have never changed their language from infancy, but have rather always approached to perfection, for I have to translate my thoughts and speech into a foreign language.ⁱ

Sec. 4. And it can be easily proved from the style of my writing, how I am instructed and learned in discourses, "for (says the Wise Man) by speech wisdom shall be known, and learning by the word of the tongue." But what does it avail to offer an excuse, however true, especially when accompanied with presumption? Since I now in my old age attempt what I did not attain in my youth, for my sins^j prevented me from

^h *Both ways equally.* "In the Greek as well as in the Latin version, or in the version of Jerome as well as in the old Italic."—*O'Conor.*

ⁱ *Foreign language.* The consciousness of his inability to write with purity and correctness had hitherto deterred him, for "whatever knowledge of Latin he possessed was very much impaired by the admixture of the Irish language."—*Tillemont.*

^j *Sins.* He appears to mean that his sinful neglect of divine

confirming what I had not before [my conversion] thoroughly examined. But, who believes me? and yet to repeat what I stated before, I was taken captive when a youth, nay, rather, when almost a beardless boy, before I knew what I ought to seek or to avoid. Wherefore, at this day I am greatly ashamed and afraid to expose my unskilfulness because I am unable to explain myself with clearness and brevity of speech, as the Spirit greatly desires, and all the feelings of my mind suggest. But if I had been gifted like others, I would not have been silent, inasmuch as a recompense was due from me. Perhaps, there are some who think that in this I put myself forward, although I am ignorant and slow of speech, but [they should remember that] it is written, "The tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak peace,"^k and how much more ought we to attempt [this work] "who (says he) are the epistle of Christ (who was set for salvation unto the ends of the earth) written in your hearts, if not eloquently, yet powerfully and enduringly, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God."

(Isaiah, xxxiii. 4.)

(Acts, xiii. 47)

(2 Cor. iii. 2, 3.)

(Eccles. vii. 15.)

Sec. 5. And, again, the Spirit testifies, "Rusticity was ordained by the Most High."¹ Where-

on account of
his unculti-
vated style.

things in early youth, had unfitted him then and long afterwards for bearing witness to the truth, that "the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation."

^k *Peace.* The Authorised Version and the Vulgate have "plainly."

¹ *Rusticity.* The Authorised Version translates it "husbandry," but I have given it the meaning which, from the context, he seems to have attached to it.

fore,^m at the first, I [undertook this work] though a rustic, a fugitive, and moreover, unlearned and incapable of providing against the future, but this I know most certainly, that—especially before I was humbled—I was like a stone that lay in the deep mire, and He, who alone is powerful, came, and in his own mercy, raised me, and lifted me up, and placed me on the top of the wall,ⁿ from which it is my duty to cry aloud, in order to make some recompense to the Lord for all the benefits temporal and eternal, beyond man's conception, which he has bestowed upon me. But, wherefore, do you wonder, O great and small, who fear God? And you, rhetoricians^o of the Gauls, who are ignorant of the Lord? Hear, then, and inquire who has stirred me up, who am a fool, out of the midst of those who are esteemed wise and skilled in law, and

That he might
not be un-
grateful to
God,

^m *Wherefore.* The connexion seems to be supported by passages of Scripture, and the reasons mentioned: "I overcame the feeling of unfitness for preaching the Gospel, which my imperfect education and unpolished manners gave rise to in my mind at the outset, and I now feel justified in repressing similar feelings respecting the Confession, by similar arguments."

ⁿ *Top of the wall.* Granted to him the high privilege of proclaiming the Gospel to the Irish people. The reader will notice the allusion to the description of Christians as "lively stones" forming the spiritual house of God.—1 Peter, ii. 5; Ephesians, ii. 21, 22. Nothing can be more opposed to the Roman Catholic doctrine of merit than this beautiful passage.

^o *Rhetoricians.* We may gather from the context that some of these men, who, as he tells us, were esteemed wise, and learned, and eloquent, had expressed astonishment that Patrick should undertake an office for which, in their eyes, he was so ill-fitted; to this, he replies with St. Paul, 1 Corinthians, i, 26–29. Gaul

powerful in eloquence, and in everything, and inspired beyond others (if haply it be so) me, the object of this world's hatred? [It was God] provided that if I were worthy, I should during my life, faithfully labour with fear and reverence and without murmuring, for the good of the nation to which the love of Christ transferred and gave me, in fine, that I should serve them with humility and truth.

by whom he
was so greatly
exalted.

was famous in early times for its rhetoricians and pleaders; Juvenal, who wrote in the first century, alludes to it, as—

“Gallia vel potius nutricula causicorum
Africa.”—*Satire*, vii. 148.

And again,

“Gallia causicides docuit facunda Britannos.”—*Satire*, xv. 11 .

CHAPTER II.

HAVING ESCAPED FROM SLAVERY BY FLIGHT,
HE RETURNS TO HIS COUNTRY.

SEC. 6. In “the measure, therefore, of the faith” of the Trinity, it is my duty to make a distinction [of persons] without regarding any censure of danger; to make known “the gift of God,” and “everlasting consolation,” and to proclaim the name of God everywhere, faithfully and fearlessly, that after my death I may leave [the knowledge of it] to my Gallican brethren,^a and my sons whom I have baptised in the Lord, many thousands in number. And I was neither worthy nor deserving that the Lord should so favour me, the least of his servants, as after such great afflictions and difficulties, after captivity, after many years, to grant me so large a measure of his grace for the conversion of this nation, [a blessing] which, in my youth, I never either hoped or thought of.

But after I had come to Ireland,^b I was employed every day in tending sheep, and I used often in the day to have recourse to prayer, and

^a *Gallican brethren.* The persons whom he brought with him from Gaul, to assist in preaching the Gospel to the Irish.—Introduction, p. 25, note.

^b *Hiberionem.* Ireland is called by this name in the Itinerary of Antoninus also.

For whom he writes this.

While in slavery he is

greatly de-
voted to
prayer,

the love of God was thus growing stronger and stronger, and the fear of Him and faith were increasing, and the Spirit, so that in a single day I have said as many as a hundred prayers, and in the night almost as many; and I used to remain even in the woods and on the mountain,^c and used to rise to prayer before daylight, in the midst of snow, and ice, and rain, and I felt no injury from it, nor was there any sloth in me; because, as I now see, the spirit was then fervent within me. And there one night, in a dream, I heard a voice saying to me, "thou dost well to fast, and shalt soon return to thy country;" and again, after a little time, I heard a response saying to me, "behold, thy ship is ready;" and the place^d was not near, but perhaps two hundred miles off, and I had never been there, nor was I acquainted with any one there.

and is ad-
monished of
his deliver-
ance.

He flees,
trusting in
God,

Sec. 7. And after this I took flight; and having left the man with whom I had been six years, I came in the strength of the Lord, who directed my way to good; and I feared nothing until I arrived at the ship; and, on the day of my arrival, the ship had moved out from her berth, and I spoke to them, saying I had money to pay for my passage with them;• and the

^c *Mountain.* Slemish (Sliabh Mis), in the county of Antrim, near which his master lived.

^d *The place.* It is useless to attempt to decide what port this was.

• *Ut haberem unde navigarem cum illis.* This is contrary, however, to the statement of Probus, who says (lib. i. ch. iv.)

master^f was displeased, and replied angrily, "don't at all think to go with us;" and when I heard this, I withdrew from them, to go to the cottage where I was lodging; and on my way I began to pray, and before I finished my prayer I heard one of them crying out loudly after me, "come back at once, for those men are calling you;" and I returned immediately to them, and they began to say to me, "come, for we receive you in good faith; make friends with us in what manner you please." And then I gave up the thought of fleeing, on account of the fear of God, yet I hoped they would [before long] say to me, "come in the faith of Jesus Christ," because they were Gentiles. And when I had thus obtained my desire, we immediately set sail.

and is admitted into a ship by the sailors.

Sec. 8. After three days we arrived at land, and for twenty-eight days^g we journeyed through

they would not admit him because he could not pay for his passage. The Book of Armagh gives *abirem* for *haberem*, the meaning of which might be that he would go to some point from which he could embark, as the ship was already under sail. Allowing the former, however, to be the correct reading, the master may have refused to receive him, knowing him to be a fugitive slave; for, according to the Irish bards, the distinction of ranks in Ireland was indicated by the colours of the dress long before the Christian era. Keating says, "Tighernmhas established it as a custom in Ireland, that there should be *only one colour in the clothing of a bondman*, two in that of a plebeian, three in that of a soldier," &c.—*Forus Feasa air Eirin*, at the year A. M. 2811.

^f *Master*. He seems to have been a kind of supercargo, and to have had but a temporary connexion with the ship.

^g *Twenty-eight days*. This fact is fatal to Dr. Lanigan's supposition that Boulogne was the native city of St. Patrick. If it were so, and if the party were going there, the easiest course

When they afterwards suffer from hunger in the desert,

he obtains food for them by his prayers,

a desert; when, their provisions becoming exhausted, they suffered severely from hunger; and one day the master said to me: "What do you say, Christian? your God is great and all-powerful; can you not then pray for us, since we are in danger of perishing by famine, for it is very improbable that we shall ever see the face of man again." And I plainly said to them: "Turn faithfully and with your whole heart to the Lord our God—for to him nothing is impossible—that he may send food into your path to-day, even until you are satiated, for it abounds everywhere to him." And, with God's help, it happened so; for lo, a herd of swine appeared in the way before our eyes, and they killed many of them, and remained there two nights, much refreshed; and they were relieved [from hungêr] by their flesh, for many of the party had sunk from exhaustion, and were left scarcely alive by the way-side. After this they gave the greatest thanks to God, and I was honoured in their eyes.

Sec. 9. And from that day forth they had food in abundance. They also found wild honey, and offered part of it to me; and one of them said, "this is offered in sacrifice^h thanks to

would have been to sail directly to Boulogne; yet, according to him, they sailed to Treguier, in Normandy, and then, at the risk of their lives, travelled for twenty-eight days through a wilderness, where there were no provisions obtainable, to reach a port which was little farther from them, in the first instance, than that to which they sailed.

^h Offered in sacrifice. This referred to the honey which the

God;" after that I tasted no more. But the same night, while I was asleep, Satan, of whom I will be mindful as long as I shall be in this body, tempted me strongly, and fell on me like a great rock, so that I was unable to move my limbs; but I know not how it was suggested to me to call Helias,ⁱ and at this moment I saw the sun rise in the heavens, and while I was calling, Helias, Helias, with all my might, behold, the splendour of the sun fell upon me, and immediately dispelled all my heaviness; and I believe that I was aided by Christ my Lord, and that his Spirit was then crying out in my behalf; and I hope it will be so in the day of my adversity, even as the Lord says in the Gospel, "it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Not many years after, I was again taken captive; and, on the first night that I remained with them, I heard a divine response saying to me, "you shall be two months with them;" and it happened so, for on the sixtieth night the Lord delivered me out of their hands. Behold, in the journey he provided for us food,

and is delivered from the assault of Satan,

by the power of Christ.

(Matt. x. 20.)

heathen offered in sacrifice to his God. The conduct of St. Patrick here proves that the Scriptures were "a lamp unto his feet, and a light unto his path;" for, in refusing to taste any more food on this occasion, he evidently had in mind the injunction of St. Paul—1 Corinthians, x. 28, 29.

ⁱ *Helias*. See Introduction, pp. 36, 37. It has been well remarked by Dr. Mason, that they who suppose St. Patrick here to have invoked Elias, make the same mistake as the Jews when they said of our Lord, "Behold, he calleth Elias."

and fire, and dry weather, daily, until on the fourteenth day we came to men. As I have above mentioned, we journeyed for twenty-eight days through a desert; and, on the night when we arrived at the abodes of men, we had no provisions remaining.

CHAPTER III.

OF HIS CALLING INTO IRELAND, AND OF MANY
IMPEDIMENTS.

SEC. 10. And again, after a few years, I was in Britain^a with my parents, who received me as a son, and besought me earnestly that then at least, after so great tribulations as I had endured, I should not go away from them any more. And there I saw in a vision of the night a man whose name was Victoricius,^b coming as if from Ireland with innumerable letters, one of which he handed to me, and I read the beginning of the letter, which ran thus, "The voice of the people of Ireland;" and while I was reading aloud the beginning of the letter, I thought at that very moment I heard the voice of those who were near the Wood of Foclud,^c which is by the Western Sea,^d and they cried out thus as if with one voice, "We entreat thee, holy youth, to come and walk still among us." And I was very much pricked to

After another
captivity,

being invited
to Ireland by
a dream,

^a *Britanniis*. The word is in the plural, as including all the islands near Britain.

^b *Victoricus*. From this simple incident has originated the fable of an angel called Victor, who held frequent conversations with him, and directed him as to his proceedings.—*Lan. i. 144*.

^c *Foclud*. This wood was situated in and near the parish of Killala, barony of Tirawley, and county of Mayo.

^d *Western Sea*. The Atlantic Ocean.

the heart, and could read no more, and so I awoke. Thanks be to God, that after very many years the Lord has granted to them according to their cry.

and by an inward voice,

(1 John, iii. 16.)

Sec. 11. And on another night [some one], I know not, God knows, whether in me or near me, spoke in most eloquent language, which I heard and could not understand, except that at the end of the speech he addressed me thus, “Who for thee laid down his life?” and so I awoke full of joy, and again I saw one praying on me, and I was as it were within my body, and I heard him over me, that is, over the inner man, and there he prayed fervently with groanings, and during this time I was full of astonishment, and was wondering and considering who it could be that was praying in me; but at the end of the prayer he declared that it was The Spirit; and so I awoke, and remembered that the Apostle says, “The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered,” that is, expressed in words: and again, “The Lord our Advocate makes intercession for us.” And when I was sorely tried by some of my elders,^e who came and [spoke of] my sins as an objection to my laborious episcopate; on that day in particular I was almost driven to fall away, not only for time, but for eternity; but the Lord spared a convert and a stranger; and

(Romans, viii. 26.)

(1 John, ii. 1.)

^e *Elders.* His elder relatives and friends.—*Lanigan.*

for the honour of his name he in his mercy powerfully succoured me in this severe affliction, ^{he overcomes trials,} because I was not entirely deserving of censure as regards the blame and disgrace now brought on me. I pray God they may not be accounted guilty of the sin of laying stumbling-blocks [in a brother's way.] After thirty years they found me, and charged against me the word which I confessed before I was a deacon.

Sec. 12. From anxiety of mind, I told my dearest friend in sorrow what I had done in my boyhood one day, nay, rather one hour, because I was not yet used to overcome [temptation]. ^{anxieties,} I know not, God knows, if I was then fifteen years of age, and from my childhood I was not a believer in the true God, but continued in death and unbelief until I was severely chastened; and in truth I have been humbled by hunger and nakedness, and on the other hand, I did not come to Ireland of my own desire,^f nor until I was almost worn out, but this proved rather a benefit to me, for thus I was corrected by the Lord, and he rendered me fit to be at this day what was once far from my thoughts, so that I should interest or concern myself for the salvation of others, for at that time I had no thoughts even about myself. And in the night succeeding the day when I was reprov'd by being reminded of the things above-mentioned,

^f *Non sponte pergebam.* He always attributes his mission to a Divine call. See ch. v. sec. 20.

I saw in a vision of the night my name written against me^s without a title of honour, and meanwhile I heard a Divine response, saying to me, "We have seen with displeasure the face of the [Bishop] elect, and his name stripped of its honours." He did not say thus, "Thou hast seen," but, "We have seen with displeasure," as if he there joined himself with me; even as he has said, "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of my eye." Therefore I give thanks to him who has comforted me in all things, that he did not hinder me from the journey which I had proposed, and also as regards my work which I had learned of Christ. From this trial I saw more clearly that I possessed no little strength, and my faith was approved before God and men.

(Zechariah,
ii. 8.)

obstructions,

Sec. 13. Wherefore I say boldly, I fear no reproaches of conscience now or hereafter. God is my witness that I have not lied in what I have stated to you, but I feel the more grieved that

^s *Scriptum erat contra faciem meam.* On this obscure passage the Bollandists say, "There seems to be an allusion here to some book against the mission of St. Patrick, in which 'his name being stripped of its honours,' he was simply designated Patrick, without any title of honour or mark of episcopal dignity."—*Acta Sanctorum*, March 17. But perhaps a more probable conjecture would be that he saw in his dream a picture of his own face, with the name Patrick written opposite. It is said that pictures with the names of all the objects written opposite, still exist in the Greek monasteries, and that many of them are as old as the fifth century. See Preface to Curzon's *Monasteries of the Levant*. It is also usual on ancient coins.

my dearest friend,^h whom I trusted even with and wrongs, my life [should have been the cause] of my being rewarded with such a response; and I learned from some brethren, that before that defence,ⁱ on an occasion when I was not present, and when I was not in Britain, and with which I had nothing to do, he defended me in my absence. He had also said to me with his own mouth, "You are to be raised to the rank of Bishop." What could have influenced him that he should afterwards before all, good and bad, and myself, publicly throw discredit on me with respect to an office which he had before spontaneously and gladly offered? There is a Lord who is greater than all—I have said enough. But yet I ought the authors of which he pardons, not to hide the gift of God, which was given me in the land of my captivity: because I sought him earnestly then, and I found him there, and he preserved me from all iniquities; so I believe, "because of his spirit that dwelleth in me," and (Romans, viii. 11—margin.) has worked in me even to this day; God knows if it were man who had spoken to me,^j I would perhaps have been silent for the love of Christ.

^h *Dearest friend.* The Bollandists suppose this to mean Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre.

ⁱ *Defensionem illam.* Perhaps he means that some prohibition was laid on him, for the Gauls used the word "defendo" and its derivatives in that sense.—*Bollandists.*

^j *Spoken to me*—i. e., in the vision before-mentioned. His meaning seems to be, that if one of his brethren had called his attention to the indignity offered to him in depriving his name of

in all things
giving thanks
to God,

who mani-
fested him-
self to him.

Sec. 14. Wherefore I give unceasing thanks to God, who preserved me faithful in the day of my temptation, so that I can this day confidently offer up my soul as "a living sacrifice" to Christ my Lord, who preserved me from all my troubles;^k so that I may say, "Who am I, O Lord, or what is my calling, that thou hast granted me so much of thy Divine presence? So that at this day I can constantly rejoice among the nations, and magnify thy name wherever I may be, not only in prosperity, but in adversity [teaching me] that I ought to accept with a contented mind whatever may befall me, whether good or evil, and always give thanks to God, who showed me that I should believe in him for ever without doubting, and who heard me that although I am ignorant, I should in these last days attempt to undertake so holy and wonderful a work, so that I should imitate those who the

its honour, he would not have noticed it, remembering the example of his Master, Christ, but in consequence of his dream, he now looked on it as an indignity offered to Christ in the person of one of his servants.

^k *Troubles.* St. Patrick is reckoned among the martyrs in the Book of Obits of Christ Church, Dublin, and his claim to the title is thus explained in Colgan: "Nor is he unfitly called a martyr who evermore bore the cross of Christ in his soul and body; who, continually warring with Druids, with idolatrous kings and chieftains, and with demons, exposed his body to a thousand kinds of death, and had a heart always ready to endure them, thus presenting himself a living sacrifice to the Lord."—*Trias. Thaum.* p. 168.

Lord long since foretold should preach his Gospel "for a witness to all nations" before the end of the world, which has been so accomplished as we have seen. So we are witnesses, that the Gospel has been preached up to the limits of human habitation. (Matthew, xxiv. 14.)

CHAPTER IV.

THE FRUITS OF HIS MISSION.

He praises
God, who pre-
served him
from sins,

SEC. 15. But it is long to detail the particulars of my labours even partially. I will briefly say how the God of piety often liberated me from slavery; how he delivered me from twelve dangers by which my soul was perilled, besides many snares and troubles which I cannot enumerate, nor will I do injustice to my readers; [yet I cannot altogether be silent], while I have a master who knows all things even before they come to pass, as he does me a poor helpless creature. Therefore, the Divine response frequently admonished me [to consider] whence I derived this wisdom, which was not in me, who neither knew the number of my days nor was acquainted with God; whence I obtained afterwards so great and salutary a gift as to know or to love God, and also that I should give up my home and parents. And many offers were made to me with weeping and tears, and I incurred displeasure there from some of my elders, contrary to my wish; but under the guidance of God I in no way consented, nor gave in to them; yet not I, but the grace of God which prevailed in me, and resisted them all, in order

and bestowed
on him the
grace of
preaching,

that I might come to preach the Gospel to the people of Ireland,^a and bear with the ill-treatment of the unbelieving, and that I should be reproached as a foreigner, and have to endure many persecutions, even to bonds, and that I should give up my free birth for the good of others.

Sec. 16. And I am ready at this moment to lay down even my life with joy for his name's sake, if I were worthy, and thus I wish to bestow it even unto death, if the Lord should so favour me. Because I am greatly a debtor to God, who has bestowed his grace so largely upon me that multitudes should be born again to God through me, and afterwards confirmed,^b and that of these, clergy should be everywhere ordained for a people lately coming to the faith, whom the Lord took from the extremities of the earth, as he promised long before by his Prophets. "The Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit;" and again, "I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth;" and thus I wish to await the promise of him who in truth

and zeal to propagate the Gospel,

and to bring the Gentiles to Christ,

(Jeremiah. xvi. 19.)

(Acts, xiii. 47.)

^a *Hibernas gentes.* The Irish nations, or tribes.

^b *Postmodum consummarentur.* These words are not in the copy of the Confession in the Book of Armagh. The word *consummare* was used in the sense of confirmation; as, *e. g.*, by Cyprian—" *ut signaculo Domini consummentur*"—quoted in Potter on Church Government, p. 190.

never deceives, which is thus given in the Gospel—“ They shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob.” So we hold that believers shall come from all the world.

(Matthew, viii. 11.)

Sec. 17. Therefore we ought to fish well and diligently, as the Lord tells us when he says, “ Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men;” and again he says by the Prophets, “ Behold I send you many fishers and hunters, saith the Lord,” &c. Wherefore there is great need that

(Matthew, iv. 19.)

(Jeremiah, xvi. 16.)

according to the command of God,

(Matthew, xxviii. 19, 20.)

(Mark, xvi. 15, 16.)

(Matthew, xxiv. 14.)

and the oracles of the prophets,

we should so set our nets that a vast assemblage and multitude may be caught to God; that there may be everywhere clergy to baptise and exhort a people who need and desire it, as the Lord admonishes and teaches us in the Gospel, saying, “ Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world;” And again he says, “ Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved.” “ And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” And again, the Lord speaking by his prophet says—“ And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall

see visions; and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit;" and in Hosea he says, "I will call her my people which was not my people, and have mercy on her that had not obtained mercy; and it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there shall they be called the children of the living God." Wherefore, behold, how the Irish who never had the knowledge of God, and hitherto worshipped only idols^c and unclean things, have lately become the people of the Lord, and are called the sons of God. (Joel, ii. 28.) (Hosea, i. 10, and ii. 23.)

Sec. 18. The sons and daughters of Scottish princes appear to be monks^d and virgins of Christ. And there was one blessed Scottish^e maiden,^f very fair, of noble birth, and of adult age, whom I baptised, and after a few days she came to me, because, as she declared, she had received a response from a messenger of God, desiring her to become a virgin of Christ, and to draw near to with such fruit that many men

^c *Idols.* See Introduction, pp. 12–13.

^d *Monks.* See Introduction, pp. 37–39.

^e *Scottish.* Ireland was called Scotia, and the people Scots, until the eleventh century. "It was," says Bede, "properly the country of the Scots" (*proprie patria Scotorum*). As to the origin of the name, Dr. Petrie observes, "The people of Ireland, according to all the Shanachies, were called Fenii, Gael, and Scoti, from three of their celebrated progenitors."—*Tara Hill*, p. 99.

^f *Maiden.* This incident, which comes in so abruptly, is not in the Armagh copy, and looks very like an interpolation; it is thought to have been inserted to favour the story that St. Brigid was baptised by St. Patrick.

and many
virgins enter
the monastic
state.

God. Thanks be to God, on the sixth day from that, she with most praiseworthy eagerness, seized on that state of life which all the virgins of God likewise now adopt, not with the will of their parents, nay, they endure persecution and unfounded reproaches from their parents, and nevertheless the number increases the more; and as to those of our kind^g who are born there, we know not the number, except widows and continent persons. But those [virgins] who are detained in slavery are the most severely afflicted, yet they persevere in spite of terrors and threats. But the Lord gave grace to many of my handmaidens, for whether as much [as they ought or not] they zealously imitate him.

He declares
that he cannot
leave the
work which
he has com-
menced,

Sec. 19. Wherefore, although I could have wished to leave them, and had been ready and most desirous to go into Britain, as if to my parents,^h and country, and not that alone, but had been ready to go as far as Gaul to visit my brethren, and to see the faces of the Lord's

^g *Our kind.* Those who were converted to the Gospel, and born again of incorruptible seed; namely, "by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."

^h *Parents.* "As St. Patrick was far advanced in life at the time he wrote the Confession, it seems more probable that the term *parentes*, in this passage, is to be understood, not of parents in the English sense of the word, but of relatives. This acceptation of *parentes* had crept into use as far back as the time of St. Jerome, and hence the Italian, *parenti*, and the French, *parens*."—*Lanigan Ecc. Hist.* vol. i. p. 128.

saints;ⁱ God knows that I greatly wished it, but I am “bound in the spirit,” who “witnesseth” that if I do this he sets me down as guilty. (Acts, xx. 22.) I also fear to lose the labour which I have commenced, and yet not I, but Christ the Lord, who commanded him to come and be with them the remainder of my life. If the Lord willed it so, and guarded me against “every evil way” [it was] that I should not sin before him. I hope [to do] that which I ought, but I trust not myself so long as I shall be “in this body of death,” (Romans, vii. 24—margin.) because he is strong who daily endeavours to subvert me from the faith and chastity which I have proposed to myself, even to the end of my life, to Christ my Lord; but the carnal mind, although conscious of his own weakness, which is enmity, always draws me to death—that is, to unlawfully accomplishing desires; and I know in part why I have failed to live a perfect life, as well as other believers;^j but I confess

ⁱ *Lord's saints.* “That he stood in peculiar connexion with the religious men of the south of France is evident from this passage.”—*Neander.* The Island of Lerins, now St. Honorat, in which St. Patrick spent several years of his life, is not far from the south coast of France. It will be noticed that St. Patrick speaks in the text of Gaul as beyond Britain, and as he was writing in Ireland, it follows that the island of Great Britain is meant, and not Brittany, as some have thought.

^j *Sicut et cæteri credentes.* His meaning evidently is “while conscious that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,” I am, through Divine grace, so acquainted with my own heart, as to be in some measure aware of the cause of my failure—to know the “sin that does so easily beset me.”

to my Lord, and I lie not, from the time that I knew him (that is, from my youth), the love, and fear of God increased in me — so that up to this time, by the grace of God, “I have kept the faith.”

That *credentes* means true believers here, we may gather from other passages—as (ch. iii. sec. 12), “*Deum vivum non credebam,*” which does not mean that he was a heathen, but a nominal Christian; and again (ch. iii. 14), “*Ut eum sine fine crederem.*”

CHAPTER V.

HE DECLARES WITH HOW MUCH DISINTERESTEDNESS
HE HAD PREACHED THE GOSPEL.

SEC. 20. Let him who pleases deride and insult me,^a I will not be silent, nor will I conceal the signs and wonders which were ministered to me by the Lord, who knew all things many years before they existed, as it were, even “before the world began,” wherefore, I ought to give thanks without ceasing to God, who often pardoned my folly even out of place, and not in a single instance only; that his anger was not fierce, against me, but that he granted me the privilege of being a labourer together with Him, and I did not immediately acquiesce, as it had been pointed out to me, and as the Spirit prompted. And the Lord had compassion on me, among thousands of thousands, because he saw in me a readiness of mind. But I was perplexed as to what I should do about my condition, because many were endeavouring to hinder this mission, and were talking among themselves, behind my back, and saying, “why does he endanger his

Entering on
his mission-
ary work
after some
delay,

^a *Insult me.* “He seems to allude to a sort of murmuring against him, originating, it would appear, in a spirit of rivalry and jealousy which actuated some of the Christians, who were in Ireland before his mission.”—*Lanigan*, vol. i. p. 285.

and, somewhat moved by the objections of others,

life among enemies, who know not the Lord?" It was not with malicious intent they said this, but because they did not approve of it, as I also understood (I myself bear witness) on account of my imperfect education. And I did not immediately recognize the grace which was then in me; but now I am aware of what I should have known before.

(Prov. x. 1.)

he declares his integrity among the heathen.

Sec. 21. I have now, therefore, simply informed my brethren and fellow-servants who believed me, why I have preached and preach still, to confirm your faith. Would that you too may aim at nobler things, and succeed better in them; this shall be my glory, because "a wise son is the glory of his father." You know, and God knows, how I have lived among you from my youth^b up, faithful in the truth, and sincere in heart. I have also made known the faith to those people among whom I dwell, and I will continue to do so. God knows I have not overreached any of them, nor do I design it, from fear for the interests of God and his Church, lest I should excite persecution for them and all of us, and lest the name of God should be blasphemed by me, because it is written, "Wo

^b *Youth.* It is generally supposed that he came to Ireland to preach the Gospel in the sixtieth year of his age. Whether this was so or not, these words are no difficulty, as he may refer to the six years of his youth which he spent in captivity, when that great change was wrought in his heart which he speaks of in the earlier part of the Confession. At that period, his piety and zeal for divine truth were as conspicuous as at a later period of his life—a fact which he here appeals to their experience to confirm.

to the man by whom the name of God is blasphemed;" for, though in all things I am unskilled, yet I have endeavoured to be on my guard, even with Christian brethren and virgins of Christ, and religious women, who, of their own accord, used to bestow gifts upon me, and to place their ornaments^c on the altar; but I returned them again to them, and they were offended at me for doing this. But I was animated by the hope of immortality, to guard myself cautiously in all things, so that they should not find me unfaithful, even in a tittle, and that I should not give room to the unbelievers, even in the least, to defame or detract from the ministry of my service.

(Leviticus, xxiv. 16.)

and how he despised gifts,

Sec 22. But, perhaps, when I baptised so many thousand men, I hoped to receive from some of them even half a scriptula?^d Tell me, and I will give it back to you. Or, when the Lord ordained clergy by my weak ministry, did I confer that gift on them gratuitously? If I have asked of any of them even the value of a shoe,^e tell it—tell it against me, and I will repay it to

and baptised,

and ordained clergymen gratuitously,

1 Sam. xii. 3.

^c *Ornaments.* Large numbers of golden ornaments, of various kinds, are constantly found in Ireland, which belong to a very remote period. Dr. Petrie notices two golden torques, found on Tara Hill, which cannot be of later date than the sixth century.—*Essay on Tara Hill*, pp. 181-184.

^d *Dimidium scriptulæ.* The screapall was a coin used by the ancient Irish, which weighed twenty-four grains, and was of the value of three-pence.—*Petrie's Essay on Round Towers*, p. 214.

^e *Calceamenti.* Like Samuel (1 Sam. xii. 3), and St. Paul (Acts, xx. 33), he calls the people to witness his integrity and disinterestedness while among them.

you. I rather expended whenever it appeared requisite [money] for your sakes ; and I went among you everywhere for your sakes, in constant danger,^f even to those distant parts beyond which there were no inhabitants, and where no one had ever come to baptise, or ordain clergymen, or confirm the people ; [and] the Lord assisting me, I adopted every means for your salvation, using all diligence and zeal. And during this time, I used to give rewards to kings,^g because I gave hire to their sons, who travel with me ; and thus they abstained from seizing me with my companions. And, on one day, they desired exceedingly to kill me ; but the time had not yet come, and they carried off everything they found with us, and fettered me with iron ; but, on the fourteenth day, the Lord loosed me from their hands, and whatever was ours was restored to us, through the power of God, and by means of the attached friends whom we had before provided.

suffering the loss of his own property, as well by violence,

Sec. 23. But you know how much I expended on those who were the judges,^h through the dis-

^f *Danger.* His disregard of danger appears in the manner in which he attacked the Druidic religion not long after his arrival. (Introduction, pp. 27, 28.) On that occasion the King was almost persuaded to be a Christian, but as it frequently happens in the case of weak-minded and ignorant people, he could not bring himself to leave the religion in which he was born. "Niall, my father (he replied) commanded me not to believe, but desired me to be buried on the heights of Tara, like men in hostile array."—*Tirechan, quoted in the Book of Rights*, p. 225.

^g *Rewards to kings.* See an instance in Introduction, p. 29.

^h *Judges.* "He means the Irish Brehons, or judges, who held

tricts that I more frequently visited, for I think I paid them the hire of fifteen menⁱ—no small sum—that you might enjoy me, and I you, always in the Lord. I do not regret it, nor is it sufficient for me. I still spend, and, moreover, will spend. The Lord is able to grant me afterwards to expend even myself for your sakes. Behold, I call God to witness to my soul that I lie not, nor have I written to you to give you an opportunity of gratifying my love of flattery, or my avarice, nor that I might hope for honour from you. For sufficient to me is the honour which is not seen, but believed in from the heart; but the faithful one who has promised it never lies. But I see that now, in the present world, I am exalted beyond measure by the Lord; and I was not worthy nor fit to be thus favoured by him, since I know most certainly that poverty and calamity suit me better than luxury and riches, and Christ the Lord also was poor for us. But, wretched and unhappy that I am, even if I wished for wealth, I now have it not; neither do I judge myself [to want it], because every day I disregard either the danger of being put to death, or overreached, or brought into slavery, or of becoming a stumbling-block to any one. But I fear none of these things,

as by liberal
expenditure;

preferring to
be poor after
the manner
of Christ,

their courts on the hills, and decided causes according to the Druidic laws.”—*O’Conor*.

ⁱ *Fifteen men*. *O’Conor* thinks this refers to the eric, or pecuniary compensation for violating the law; but it may, with more probability, be referred to his having hired them as an escort.—*See Introduction*, p. 29.

relying on the promise of the Heavens ; for I have cast myself into the hands of the Omnipotent God, who reigns everywhere : as the prophet says, “ Cast thy burthen upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.”

(Ps. lv. 22.)

Sec. 24. Behold, now I commend my soul to God, who is faithful, whose mission I perform, lowly that I am. But because he accepts not the person, and has chosen me to this office, that I alone, of the very least of his people, should be his minister, “ What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me ;” and what shall I say, or what shall I promise to my Lord, for I see that I should have had nothing, unless he himself had given it to me ; but I will search my heart and reins, because I am ardently desirous and ready that he should give me to drink of his cup as he has granted to others who have loved him. Wherefore, may God never permit that I should lose his people whom I have acquired in the ends of the earth. I pray God that he may grant me perseverance, and that he may vouchsafe to permit me to bear faithful witness to him, even unto my death. And if I ever effected anything good on account of my God whom I love, I entreat him to grant me this, that with those converts and captives I may pour out my blood for his name, even though I should be deprived of burial, or my dead body be miserably torn limb from limb by dogs or wild beasts, or though the birds of the air should devour it. I believe most certainly that if this should happen to me, I have

(Psalm cxvi. 12.)

for whom he desires to suffer anything,

even martyrdom,

gained my soul with my body; for without any doubt we shall rise one day in the brightness of the sun, that is, in the glory of Christ Jesus our Redeemer, the son of the living God, "joint-^(Romans, viii. 17, 29.) heirs with Christ," and to be conformed to his image, since of him, and through him, and to him, we shall reign. For that sun which we see, rises daily at God's will for our sakes; but it shall not rule for ever, nor shall its splendor continue, and woe to its unhappy worshippers,[§] for punishment awaits them. But we believe in and adore the true sun, Christ, who never shall perish, nor shall he who does his will, but shall abide for ever, as Christ also shall abide for ever, whose reign with God the Father Omnipotent, and with the Holy Ghost, was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. Amen.

Sec. 25. Behold again and again I briefly set forth the words of my Confession. I bear witness in truth and joy of heart, before God and his holy angels, that I never had any occasion, except the Gospel and its promises, to return to that nation from which at first I escaped with difficulty. But I pray those who believe in and fear God, whoever may think fit to look into or receive this writing which I, Patrick, a sinner and unlearned, wrote in Ireland, that no one may ever say, if I have demonstrated anything, however

certain of the glory which is prepared for such persons.

He repeats his Confession.

§ *Worshippers.* On the worship of the Sun in Ireland, see Introduction, p. 11.

weak, according to the will of God, that it was my ignorance. But do you judge, and let it be most firmly believed, that it was the gift of God. And this is my Confession,^k before I shall die.

^k *Confession*—i. e., This is my declaration respecting myself, my life, my motives, and my teaching, which, in the near prospect of death, I place on record, for the use of the present and future times.

THE END.

