

# The Catholic Journal.

31st Year, No. 24.

Rochester, N. Y., Friday, March 12, 1920



**ISLAND AND ITS PATRON SAINT, ALIKE IMMORTAL**  
On the Famous Green Isle the seed planted by St. Patrick in the fifth century has grown into a plant that cannot be withered.

## CHRONICLES AND LEGENDS OF IRELAND

By NEIL MACDONALD

### St. Patrick in the Annals of Clonmacnois

CLONMACNOIS owes a measure of its fame to the "Annals," written in Gaelic and of very great antiquity. The earlier portion of the history is undoubtedly largely mythical, and even in the more modern part, fable and fact are so interlarded that it is extremely difficult to attain certainty. It claims to be a narration of events from the dawn of humanity down to 1408, when the record closed.

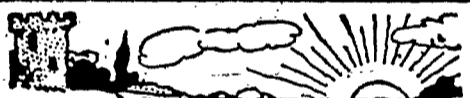
According to the old chroniclers all the heathen kings who reigned in Ireland until the time of St. Patrick numbered 136. They trace the origin of the Gaelic people anterior to the time of Noah and write of events beyond the range of human knowledge, with all the assurance of undoubting certainty.

Much is written about St. Patrick in the "Annals" but, here again, the miraculous and improbable are so commingled with reality that it is hard to determine what is truth and what is fiction.

I translate a portion of it bearing upon the life of St. Patrick, which is doubtless in the main correct:

"In the fourth year of King Leogair's reign St. Patrick, the apostle of Ireland, was sent over by commission of Pope Celestine to convert the land from paganism to Christianity, but he did not land here until after the death of Celestine, in the first year of Sixtus; his successor, in the year A. D. 432. Ardmacu was edified and made the metropolitan see of Ireland by St. Patrick. Some writers say that St. James the Apostle came to this land; others say that Palladius was sent here before St. Patrick, but he had not much success, for he converted to the faith but five parishes only, which were in Leitnster, and as he was returning to Rome he died in Pictland (Scotland)."

In the "Annals" frequent mention is made of St. Kieran, who was not only the founder of Clonmacnois, but also the patron saint of Leitnster, Connaught. The "Annals of Ivinsfa" assign the year 506 as the date of St. Kieran's birth and 548 as that of his death. So great was his reputation for sanctity that people in that part of Ireland, even now, couple his name with deity when they wish to give additional force to an assertion.



### Concerning Freedom of Land From Snakes.

THE freedom of Ireland from snakes and other venomous creatures was remarked by writers from a very early period. The popular opinion among the peasantry of Ireland was that the island is indebted to St. Patrick for the exemption. This merit is still attributed to the saint, not only by the uneducated, but also by some of those who stand in the relationship of moral and intellectual guides of the people.

Joceline, a monk of Furness, a writer of the twelfth century, was the first to give currency to this reputed miracle of St. Patrick. The old chronicler writes: "As the season of Lent approached St. Patrick withdrew into a high mountain on the western coast of Connaught, to be more at leisure for contemplation and prayer. He fasted for 40 days, without taking any sustenance. After his period of fasting was completed, to this place he gathered together the several tribes of serpents and venomous creatures, and drove them headlong into the Western ocean. From hence hath proceeded the exemption Ireland enjoys from all poisonous reptiles."

Sollinus, who wrote a few hundred years before St. Patrick arrived in Ireland, makes mention of the fact of Ireland's freedom from all venomous creatures, but assigns no cause for the exemption. The Venerable Bede, in the eighth century, notices the same fact, but says nothing of St. Patrick in this connection.

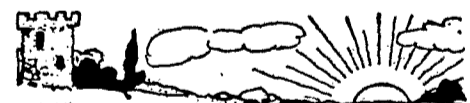
Donat, bishop of Fisluae, near Florence, who lived in the seventh century, wrote a Latin poem describing his native country, Ireland, in which he refers to the absence of snakes from the land and frogs from the lakes of this favored isle. A translation of the poem is subjoined:

Far westward lies an isle of ancient fame,  
By nature blessed, and Scotia is her name;  
Enrolled in books; exhaustless is her store  
Of velvety silver and of golden ore.  
Her fruitful soil forever teems with wealth,  
With gems her waters, and her air with health,  
Her verdant fields with milk and honey flow,  
Her woolly fleeces vie with virgin snow,  
Her living furrows float with bearded men,  
And arms and arts her envied sons adorn.  
No savage bear with lawless tury roves,  
No raynous lion through her peaceful

groves,  
No poison there infects, no scaly snake  
Creeps through the grass, nor frogs annoy  
the lake;  
An island worthy of its pious race,  
In war triumphant, and unmatched in  
peace.

This enthusiastic, expatriated Irish saint of the seventh century mentions the exemption above noted, as among the many blessings enjoyed by the highly favored isle. Had Donat believed that St. Patrick had been the active agent in securing this boon to Ireland, it is improbable that he would neglect to state the fact.

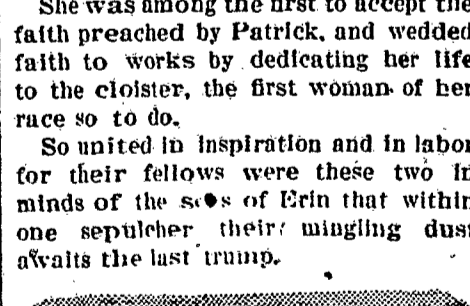
In his "Confessions," St. Patrick lays no claim to miraculous power of any kind unless it be, as the instrument of divine grace in the conversion and transforming of sinners, whereby they became the children of God. It is not known that there was any other authority for the story of St. Patrick's banishing the snakes, but Joceline.



Sharing St. Patrick's labors and his grave, why has the once loved and honored little Irish nun, Saint Bridget, been comparatively forgotten?

She was among the first to accept the faith preached by Patrick, and wedded faith to works by dedicating her life to the cloister, the first woman of her race so to do.

So united in inspiration and in labor for their fellows were these two in minds of the sons of Erin that within one sepulcher their mingling dust awaits the last trump.



### ST. PATRICK'S HOLY WELL

This holy well, known as the "Eye" well, is situated at Struell Hill near Downpatrick, and close to it are two others known as the "Bathing" and "Drinking" wells.

## THE OULD SOD

Pat Nowlan, do you mind of the stile  
That straddled the hedge by the  
whin-grown cairn,  
And the Connacht hills for many a  
mile  
A-wearin' the green of the heather  
and fern?

Do you think of the colleen laugh  
so sweet,  
With laughter and mischief a-prim-  
min' o'er?  
Do you hear the pat of her wee bare  
feet,  
When she runs to meet with you  
at the door?



Do you see her eyes of deep Irish  
blue,  
Her cheeks with her own, the  
rose's pink?  
Faix she could be coy and be cen-  
trary, too,  
And give to your rival a smile or  
a wink.

Pat Nowlan paused on his mass-ward  
way,  
And a relickin' wrinkle crept into  
his smile,  
"Arrah," says he, "how St. Patrick's  
day  
Makes an ould devil wish he was  
young for a while."

—George M. Russell in Houston Post.

demons and the naughts where evil spirits perform their dreadful orgies. This portion of the island has nine pits and if any person dares to pass a night in one of them he or she is seized by malignant spirits and tortured. Whoever has borne these agonies in discharge of penance will undergo future punishment in hell, unless persisting in atoning worse than before.

In this manner the Welsh historian writes of the other St. Patrick's purgatory. Long before his day, however, legend and myth had cast their glamour over a lovely spot which was, without doubt, at one time sanctified by the presence and the ministrations of the apostle of Ireland. It was a credulous age in which Giraldus Cambrensis lived and his narration is as of a matter of fact in which he himself believed.

The simple-minded people of the Donegal hills are not much harassed by speculative doubts, and to them generally the traditions attached to Lough Derg and St. Patrick's purgatory appeal as strongly and make no greater demands upon belief than are made by matters regarded as still more essential.

The first mention of St. Patrick's purgatory in literature was made by a monk, Joceline of Furness, in his "Vita Sancti Patricii," written about the year 1183. Giraldus Cambrensis' reference to it was made two years later, but neither he nor Joceline advanced the idea that the purgatory was an entrance into the other-world. This development of the legend first appears in a work written in Latin in 1188 by a monk, Henry, belonging to a Cistercian abbey in Huntingdonshire, England. The book relates the experience of an Irish knight named Owain, who descended into the cave of St. Patrick's purgatory to do penance for his sins. He was led alternately through hell and the terrestrial paradise and was finally permitted to view the glowing portals of the celestial paradise.

Henry's book made St. Patrick's purgatory famous throughout Europe, and accounts of other descents into purgatory followed his in quick succession. The story spreading to Spain and Italy furnished the subject of a drama to Calderon and doubtless contributed ideas utilized by Dante in the "Divina Commedia."

## STOOD FIRMLY FOR LIBERTY

How Irishmen in Revolutionary Days Contributed to the Sacred Cause of Freedom.

The following is an extract from an Irish-American almanac: In the crisis of the Revolutionary struggle, a little band of Irishmen in Philadelphia advanced the money that enabled Washington to keep his forces together in that terrible period.

The names of these generous donors for the achievement of American freedom, and the amounts given by each (which, in their purchasing value, represent nearly four times the present value of our money), were as follows:

B. McClenahan, \$10,000; John Patton, \$12,000; J. M. Nesbit & Co., \$5,000; Benjamin Fuller \$2,000; Richard Peters, \$5,000; George Meade & Co., \$2,000; James Mense, \$5,000; John Donaldson, \$2,000; Thomas Barclay, \$5,000; Henry Hill, \$5,000; Hugh Shell, \$5,000; Keane & Nichols, \$4,000; John Dunlap, \$4,000; James Caldwell, \$2,000; John Nixon, \$5,000; Samuel Caldwell, \$1,000; George Campbell, \$2,000; John Shee \$1,000; John Mease, \$4,000; Sharp Delaney, \$1,000; Banner, Murray & Co., \$6,000; Trench Francis, \$5,500; Samuel Meredith, \$5,000.

These Irishmen, by their generous donations, helped Washington to carry out his plans, to secure volunteers, clothing for the men, and munitions of war, without which America might still be a British colony.

It is also shown that the Irish also participated in all the great events of history during the Revolution.

Fulton, the inventor of the steamboat, was an Irishman, O'Reilly brothers, the inventors of telegraphy, and McCormick of the reaping machine fame were Irish.

The first history of the United States was written by an Irishman by the name of Ramsey, and thus we might go through every avenue of war, commerce, science, literature, invention and discovery, and still find Irishmen occupying prominent places in the van of each.

## CONSECRATED STANDING STONE

St. Patrick overthrew a great number of pagan standing stones with which Ireland was covered. There are still a great number to be seen. This one was consecrated to the new religion by being inscribed by a cross.

## IRELAND'S

The prestige of our Gaelic past  
Our poets and our heroes  
Oppression never costs us  
Nor dim the light of freedom.

Through centuries of cruel wrong  
Though crushed, we never  
Our love of liberty is strong  
With hope and faith we were  
dual.

The grandeur of the bygone years  
She sheds its glamour on our  
And made us smile amidst our tears  
Exult despite our foemen's wrath.

Disunion, fostered by our foes  
Left us beneath the English sway  
United, all our nation's woes  
Had never traced its blood our  
feet.

But now a brighter day has dawned  
Upon the land we love so well,  
No more shall Erin's rights be pawned  
By secretaries with purpose fell.

The ancient language of our song  
Shall be again the nation's tongue,  
And peace and comfort will arise  
The memories which our hearts  
wring.

Then rival creeds and factions  
No longer shall embroil our land  
And Ireland's children for her  
In harmony will take their stand.

In Tara's ruined, silent hall  
Where Irish monarchs once held  
Music and gladness will recall  
The times when we were  
great.

Then when our night of grief and  
Is ended and we're glad and free,  
We'll build a name to Emmet's  
Who died for Irish Liberty.

NEIL MACDONALD  
(Copyright, 1920, Western Newspaper Union)

## IRELAND AND THE SHAMROCK

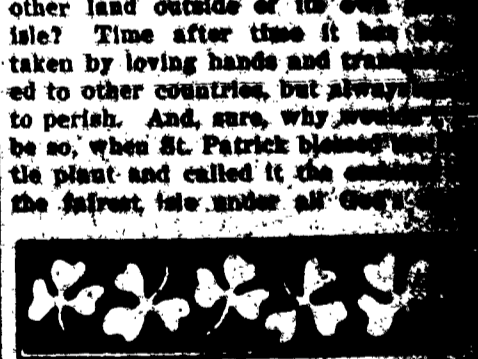
That the Two Are Inseparable  
Been Proved by Plants That  
Grew Elsewhere.

The shamrock and Ireland  
and the shamrock—the two are  
arabic, writes Katherine  
When shamrocks refuse to bloom,  
surely must Ireland die; then  
must Irish hearts cease their  
for a glimpse of the green fields of  
Erin, and then surely meet the  
poetry, of sentiment, of romance,  
thing that is no more. And the  
spirit of Ireland should die—then  
would the little green plant wither  
its stem, and refuse to bloom again.

What a wealth of memories and  
socialists is intertwined with  
precious little green plant! What  
wonderful tales and legends we have  
told about it in the good old  
when fairies roamed over every  
hillside and when Ireland was an  
enchanted land, and who can doubt  
truth when we know that the  
little plant refuses to bloom in  
other land outside of its own  
isle? Time after time it has  
taken by loving hands and trans-  
ferred to other countries, but always  
to perish. And, sure, why wonder  
be so, when St. Patrick brought  
the plant and called it the  
the fairest, the most  
the fairest, the most

## BOAT OF ST. PATRICK'S TIME

This ancient type of boat dates from St. Patrick's time. This one is still in use on the Boyne river near Slane. It has a wattle framework and is covered with hide. It is singularly like one of the round boats on the Tigris.



## ST. PATRICK'S MOUNTAIN

For some time in Ireland, wrote at some length about St. Patrick's purgatory on the Donegal Lough Derg island. "The island in the lake," he wrote, "is divided into two parts, on one side being a church of great sanctity, amid scenes of wondrous beauty, its charms heightened by the frequent visits of angels and local saints. The other side of the island is rugged and hideous and is reputed to be the resort of



## ST. PATRICK'S MOUNTAIN

For when the heart is young and  
And when the times of St. Patrick's  
the fairest, the most

