

Behind The Veil

Three months in the forests of France : a pilgrimage in search of vestiges of the Irish saints in France

Margaret Stokes

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Hitherto the main interest in our studies of these lives of our early Irish missionaries has been confined to the light they cast upon the customs and primitive conditions of life in early Christian times. A new feature, and one bearing on the history of Christian literature, is presented in this volume in the visions of heaven and hell seen by St. Fursa, patron of Killfursa in Galway, and of the churches of Lagny and Péronne in France. Such visions, apocalypses, and allegorical poems form one of the most striking features in ancient literature. Springing from the heart and brain of man at moments when the thoughts are with the dead rather than the living, and the desire to pierce “behind the veil” seems irresistible, we find in many of these writings the most profound religious convictions of the day, while no small amount of imaginative power is brought to bear upon the subject. Octave Delepierre seems to have been the first to collect together such of these visions as were not merely developments of the poetical faculty, but also were objects of religious belief, and which were only seen by persons convinced of their reality, not mere mystic romances. Among these he enumerates the visions of St. Salvius (A.D. 584), related by Gregory of Tours ; that of the monk Drihthelm, A.D. 696, related by Bede ; of Wettinus in 824 ; of St. Anschar, A.D. 865 ; Alberic, A.D. 1150 ; Tundal, A.D. 1149 ; Owen Miles, A.D. 1153, and Thurcill, 1206. To these names we may add the Irish Brendan (died A.D. 576) and Adamnan. I shall now endeavour to indicate the main points of interest, as compared with those of Fursa, which seem to illustrate the growth of various ideas regarding the state of the soul after death.

Adamnán's Vision

(Reprinted, with a few corrections and additions, from “Fraser's Magazine” for February, 1871, pp. 184-194.)

THE original of the following piece is found in pp. 27*a*-31*b* of the *Lebor na huidre* (“Book of the Dun Cow”), a manuscript in the library of the Royal Irish Academy, the scribe of which was murdered at Clonmacnois in the year 1106. The Irish text has been edited by Prof. Windisch in his “*Irische Texte*,” i., 169-196.

There are two other copies of Adamnán's Vision—one in the *Leabhar Breacc*, a manuscript of the fifteenth century, also in the Academy's library; another in the Bibliothèque Impériale, Ancien Fonds, No. 8175. Extracts from the *Leabhar Breacc* copy are printed in O'Donovan's Grammar, pp. 119, 341, 349, 350, 370, 381, 382, 440-442, and in Petrie's “Round Towers,” p. 439. The whole is edited in the “*Irische Texte*” above cited. The first two sentences of the copy now translated are a paraphrase of Psal. cxlvi. 5, 6, and the piece may be regarded as a sermon on that text. It has, however, some literary merit, and is, besides, one of the strangest of those mediaeval visions which begin with that of the Irish saint Fursae (Beda, “H. E.,” iii., 19), and culminate in the “*Divina Commedia*.”

Though the Old-Irish tenues are, as a rule, still untouched, the language of our Vision is marked by many of the characteristics of Middle-Irish—confusion of *e* and *i* in desinence : putting *ae* for *oe*, *nd* for *mn*, *ur* for *air*, *er*, and *il* for *Id*, *In* : prosthesis of *f* : metathesis of *cs* and *ts* : verbal endings in *-enn* ; and other such corruptions which need not now be specified. The piece cannot therefore be older than the eleventh century. Its composition has been ascribed to Adamnán, ninth abbot of Iona, who died in the year 703. But that such ascription is erroneous appears first, from the philological

evidence above adduced ; next, from the author's mention of tithes, which (according to the late Bishop Reeves) were unknown in Ireland until after 703 ; thirdly, from his reference to the imperial edict of donation, a forgery (according to Muratori) of the period between 755 and 766 ; and, fourthly, from his anachronism about the meeting at which Irishwomen were freed from liability to go to battle.

In the translation everything has been sacrificed to literalness.

MAC DÁ CHERDA

Adamnán's Vision This Below.

HIGH and admirable is the Lord of the Elements, and great and marvellous are His power and His might. He is gentle and He is kindly, He is merciful and He is loving ; for He calls up to Him unto Heaven the folk of charity and of mercy, of gentleness and of forgivingness. But He bows down and prostrates to Hell the impious, unprofitable flock of the sons of cursing. Hidden things and divers rewards of Heaven He gives to the Blessed, and He bestows a many divers torments on the sons of Death.

Now (there were) multitudes of Saints and of just ones of the Lord of the Elements and of Apostles and disciples of Jesus Christ unto whom were shown mysteries and hidden things of the kingdom of Heaven in that wise, and the all-golden rewards of the Just, and unto whom besides were shown Hell's divers torments with those that are therein. To Apostle Peter sooth was shown the four-cornered vessel that was let down from Heaven with four ropes thereout. [1] Sweet as any music was the hearing of it. Apostle Paul, again, was caught up to the third heaven, and heard the unspeakable words of the Angels and the admirable converse of Heaven's family. [2] Moreover then all the Apostles were brought on the day of Mary's death, and saw the tortures and piteous punishments of unhappy men, when the Lord commanded the Angels of the Sunset to open the earth before the Apostles that they might see and contemplate Hell with its many torments as He Himself foretold to them a long while before His Passion.

Now, what is said here was shown at last to Adamnán grandson of Tinne, to a high sage of the west of the world, when his soul went forth from his body on the feast of John Baptist, and when she was taken to Paradise with angels of Heaven, and to Hell with its rabble-host.

Then, when the soul parted from the body, to her forthwith appeared an angel that had borne her fellowship while she was in flesh, and he took her with him first to behold the Kingdom of Heaven.

Now this is the first land whereto they came, the land of the Saints. A land fruitful, shining is that land. Assemblies divers, wonderful, there, with cloaks of white linen about them, with hoods pure-white over their heads. The Saints of the east of the world in their assembly apart in the East of the land of the Saints. The Saints of the west of the world likewise in the west of the same land. Furthermore, the Saints of the north of the world, and of the south of it, in their two vast assemblies south and north. Every one then, who is in the land of the Saints, is nigh unto the hearing of the melodies and to the contemplation of the Vessel wherein are nine grades of Heaven [3] according to their steps and according to their order.

As to the Saints, again, at one time they sing marvellous music, praising God. At another time they are silent at the music of Heaven's family : for the Saints need not aught else but to hear the music whereto they listen, and to contemplate the light which they see, and to sate themselves with the odour which is in the land.

A wonderful realm there is too, south-east of them, face to face with them, and a veil of crystal between them (and it), and a golden portico to the south thereof. Through this they perceive the form and separation of Heaven's family. Howbeit, there is neither veil nor darkness between

Heaven's family and the Saints, but they are in clearness and in the Saints' presence on the side over against them continually.

A fiery circle furthermore (is) round about that land, and thereinto and thereout (fareth) every one, and it hurteth not.

The twelve Apostles, however, and Mary the pure Virgin in her assembly apart around the mighty Lord. Patriarchs and Prophets and disciples of Jesus anear to the Apostles. But there are other holy virgins to Mary's right, and a space not long between them (and her). Infants and children around them on every point, and music of the birds of Heaven's family enrapturing them. Bright troops of the souls' comrade-angels in lowliness and in attendance between those assemblies in the King's presence always. Yea, no one in this present world could set forth or tell of those assemblies as of a truth they are.

The troops and the assemblies, then, that are in the land of Saints as we have said, ever are they living in that great glory until the Great Meeting of Doom, so that on the Day of the Judgment the Righteous Brehon may range them in the stations and in the places wherein they shall abide beholding God's countenance without veil, without shadow between them (and him) through the ages of ages.

But though great and though vast are the sheen and the radiance that are in the land of Saints as we have said, vaster a thousand times is the splendour that is in the plain of Heaven's family around the Throne of the Lord Himself. Thus, then, is that throne, as a canopied chair with four columns of precious stone beneath it. Yea though there should not be rapture to any one save the harmonious singing together of those four columns, enough to him there were of glory and of delightfulness. Three noble Birds in the chair before the King, with their mind on their Creator for ever : that is their office. They likewise celebrate the eight hours of prayer, praising and magnifying the Lord, with chanting of Archangels coming thereon.

From the birds, then, and from the Archangels (is) the beginning of the music, and thereafter answer them all Heaven's family, both Saints and holy virgins.

A vast Arch, furthermore, above the head of the Dignified One in His royal chair, like an adorned helmet or a king's diadem. If human eyes saw it they would melt away forthwith.

Three Zones [4] all around Him between them and the host, and what it is they are is unknown by setting-forth.

Six thousand of thousands with shapes of horses and of birds around the fiery chair flaming without limit without end.

Then, to tell of the mighty Lord who is on that throne cometh not unto any one unless He Himself should do it, or unless He should speak unto the ranks of Heaven. For none will relate His ardour and His strength. His redness [5] and His exceeding clearness. His splendour and His delightfulness. His munificence and His firmness, the multitude of His Angels and Archangels chanting music to Him, His multitudinous messengers to Him and from Him with exceeding brief answers to every troop in turn, His smoothness and His great gentleness towards some, His roughness and His great harshness towards other folk of them.

If any one were always beholding Him, around Him, from East and from West, from South and from North, he will find on every side with Him a face illustrious, more brilliant seven times than is the sun. Yea, he will not see a man's form on Him of head or of foot, but as a fiery cloud flaming throughout the universe, and every one in trembhng and in terror before Him. All-full of His light are Heaven and Earth, and radiance like a king's star all around Him. Three thousand divers

melodies (there are) of every choir that is at choir-singing about Him. Sweet as the many melodies of the world is every single melody of themselves apart.

The City, then, wherein is that throne, thus it is, and seven walls of crystal with divers colours around it. Loftier is each wall than the other. The platform and lowest base of the City are of bright crystal with the sun's countenance upon it, made changeful with blue and purple and green and every hue besides.

A family beautiful, very meek, very gentle, again, without absence of any good thing in them, are they who dwell in that City. For none reach it and none dwell in it continually save only pure saints or pilgrims devoted to God. Their array, however, and their ranging, it is hard to know how it happened, for there is not a back of any of them, or his side, towards another. But it is thus the unspeakable might of the Lord hath arranged them and kept them, face to face in their ranks and in their circles equally high all round about the throne, with splendour and with delightfulness, and their faces all towards God.

A chancel-rail of crystal (there is) between every two choirs, with excellent adornment of red gold and of silver thereon, with beautiful ranks of precious stone and with changefulness of divers gems, and with stalls and crowns of carbuncle on the rails of that chancel. Three precious stones, then, with a melodious voice and with the sweetness of music between every two chief assemblies, and their upper halves as flambeaux aflame. Seven thousand angels in the forms of chief lights irradiating and undarkening the City round about. Seven thousand others in its very midst flaming for ever round the royal City. The men of the world in one place, though they be very numerous, the odour of the top of a single light of those lights would suffice them with food.

Whosoever, then, of the men of the world do not reach that City (at once) from their life, and for whom the possession of it is destined after the Judgment of Doom, it is in these they make their dwellings, changefully and restlessly, in heights and in hills, in moors and in morasses (?), until Doom shall come to them.

Even thus are those hosts and the assemblies, with a comrade-angel of every single soul that is therein at lowliness and attendance upon her.

A veil of fire and a veil of ice in the chief gateway of the City before them, and they a-clashing top against top for ever. The sound and noises, then, of those veils coming together are heard throughout the universe. Adam's seed, if they should hear that sound, trembling and terror intolerable would seize them all before it. Sad, now, and troubled are the sinners at that sound ; but if it be on the side towards Heaven's family nought is heard of that rough thunder save full little only, and sweet as any melody that is.

Great, then, and it is a marvel to tell it, the position of that City, for little of much is that which we have told of its divers orders and of its marvels.

Rare, therefore, is it for the soul, after commune and dwelling with the flesh, with its sleep, and with its ease, and with its freedom, and with its happiness, to advance and go to the Creator's throne unless she fare with guidance of angels. For hard it is to climb the seven heavens, for not easier is one of them than another. For there are six gates of protection before the human race up to Paradise. A gatewarden, furthermore, and a guardian from Heaven's family, have been set to guard each gate of them.

The gate, then, of the heaven that is nearest hither, thereon hath been set Archangel Michael, and two virgins by him with iron rods in their laps to scourge and to beat the sinners, so that there the sinners meet with the first yell of pain, and with the first suffering of the path whereon they go.

The gate, in sooth, of the second heaven, Archangel Uriel is guardian thereto, and two virgins before him with fiery scourges in their hands. It is with these they scourge the sinners across their faces and across their eyes. A fiery river, moreover, hath been set, with great flame thereon, before that door. Abersetus, sooth, the name of the angel tending that river, which tries and washes the souls of the saints from the measure of guilt that cleaves to them, so that they become as pure and as bright as the splendour of a star. There, likewise, hath been set a shining well with bloom and odour to cleanse and purify the souls of the just. It raveneth, however, and burneth the sinners' souls and taketh nought from them, but it is an increase of pain and penance that cometh to them there. And then thereout arise the sinners with sorrow and full great gloom, the just, however, with delight and joyousness, to the gate of the third heaven.

A fiery furnace likewise, flaming continually, is there. Twelve thousand cubits it is that its flame reaches aloft. Then the souls of the righteous fare through that furnace in the twinkling of an eye. It bakes, however, and burns there the sinners' souls to the end of twelve years. Thereafter the angel of fellowship takes them to the fourth gate.

Thus, then, is the gate of entrance of the fourth heaven, with a fiery river around it like the river aforesaid. A flaming wall likewise surrounds it, the breadth of its fire is measured at twelve thousand cubits. Howbeit, the souls of the righteous pass over it as if it were not at all, and it detains the souls of the sinners for a time of twelve years, in wretchedness and in punishment, until the angel of fellowship takes them to the gate of the fifth heaven.

A fiery river moreover is there also, but different is it from the other rivers, for there is an especial whirlpool in the midst of that river, and it whirls the souls of the sinners round and round, [6] and holds them to the end of sixteen years. Howbeit, the righteous fare over it forthwith without any delay. When afterwards it is time to release the sinners thereout, the angel smites the river with a hard rod of a stony nature, and lifts the souls up with the end of the rod. Thereafter, too, Michael bears the souls to the gate of the sixth heaven.

However, it is not told (that there) is pain or punishment for the souls in that gate, but they are illumined there by a light and by radiance of precious stones. Then Michael passeth thereafter to the angel of the Trinity, and they both show forth the soul in the presence of God.

Huge, then, and innumerable the welcome of Heaven's family and of the Lord Himself to the soul at that time if she be innocent, righteous. If, however, the soul be unrighteous, and if she be imperfect, she getteth roughness and bitterness from the mighty Lord, and he saith to Heaven's angels "Seize with you, oh Heaven's angels, this impious soul, and bestow her into Lucifer's hand to drown her and to hide her away in the deep of Hell for ever and ever." [7]

There, then is severed that wretched soul, fearfully and bitterly and horribly, from the presence of Heaven's kingdom and of God's countenance. It is there, too, she casts forth the sigh that is heavier than every sigh, at coming into the Devil's presence after beholding the delight of Heaven's kingdom. It is there she is severed from the safe-keeping of the Archangels with whom she came to Heaven, and it is there, also, the twelve fiery dragons swallow every soul, each after the other, so that the undermost dragon puts her from him into the Devil's mouth. It is then she gets all-fulness of every evil with the Devil's presence for ever and ever.

Now when the angel of fellowship had shown to Adamnán's soul these visions of Heaven's kingdom and the first adventures of every soul after coming forth from her body, thereafter she took her with him to visit lower Hell with the abundance of its pains, and its tortures and its punishments.

This then is the first land whereto he came. A land black, scorched (is) it, bare, seared, without torture there at all. A glen full of fire on the hither side of it. A vast flame there that comes over its

brinks on every side. Black (is) its lowest part. Red its middle and its upper part. Eight monsters there, their eyes like fiery gledes.

A vast Bridge besides, across that glen. It stretches from the one brink to (the) other. High its middle part, low, however, its two extremities. Three hosts endeavour to wend across it, and not all pass. For host of them, broad is the bridge from beginning to end, so that they go all-safe, without terror, without dread, over the fiery glen, Another host faring towards it, narrow it is for them at the beginning, but broad at the end, so that afterwards they go over the same glen in that wise after great peril. The last host, however, broad for them at the beginning is the bridge, narrow and strait at the end, so that they fall from the middle of it into the same glen perilous, into the throats of the eight red-hot monsters there who make their abode in the glen. [8]

These are the people for whom that way was easy : folk of chastity, folk of devout penitence, folk of red martyrdom [9] willingly suffered for God. These, then, are the crowd for whom the way was narrow at the beginning and for whom thereafter it was broad at the end, the tribe who are constrained by compulsion to do God's will and thereafter turn their compulsion into willingness to serve God. But it is for these for whom the bridge was broad at the beginning and for whom it was narrow at the end, for the sinners who listen to the preaching of God's word and after hearing it fulfil it not.

Likewise there are vast hosts in weakness on the shore of the Eternal Pain at the hither side of the lightless land. Every alternate hour the pain ebbs from them, the other hour it flows over them. They, then, who are in that wise are the people whose good and whose evil are equal. And in the day of Doom it shall be judged between these, and their good shall quench their evil on that day, and thereafter they shall be borne to the Harbour of Life in presence of God for ever and ever.

Then another great crowd is there in the neighbourhood of that folk, and their pain is vast. Thus then are they : tied to fiery pillars ; a sea of fire round them up to their chins ; fiery chains round their middle in shape of serpents ; their faces blaze above the pain. It is these then that are in that pain : sinners, and parricides, and destroyers of God's Church, and merciless managers of church-lands, [10] who are in presence of the Saints' relics, over gifts and tithes of the Church, and who make of the goods possessions for themselves rather than for the guests and the needy of the Lord.

Yea, great hosts are there standing up continually in jet-black mires as far as their girdles : short icy cowls around them. They rest not and halt not for ever, but the girdles (are) burning them both in cold and heat. Hosts of fiends all around them, with fiery maces in their hands beating them on their heads, [11] and they in continual strife with the fiends. All the faces of the wretched ones towards the North, and a wind rough, bitter, right into their foreheads, along with every evil. Showers red, fiery, [12] pouring on them every night and every day, and they cannot shun them, but have to endure them for ever and ever in weeping and in lamenting.

Some of them had streams of fire in the holes of their faces. [13] Others, nails of fire through their tongues. Others, (with like nails) through their heads from the outside. It is they then who are in that pain, to wit, thieves and liars, and folk of treachery and blasphemy, and robbers, and raiders, and false-judging Brehons, and folk of contention, and witches, and satirists, men who mark themselves to the Devil, and Readers [14] who preach heresy.

There is another great multitude in islands amid the sea of fire. A silvern wall around them of their garments and of their alms. Now that host are they who do mercy without neglect, and yet who are in laxity and in lust of their flesh to the limit of their death, and their alms help them in the middle of the sea of fire till Doom, and after Doom they will be sent to the Harbour of Life.

Moreover another great multitude is there, with red fiery cloaks [15] around them reaching to the ground. Their trembling and their shout are heard throughout the firmament. An inscrutable crowd of fiends hiding them away, and having in their hands stinking dogs, half raw, commanding the

sinner to consume them and to eat them. Red, fiery wheels [16] aflaming for ever round the sinner's throats. They are brought up to the firmament every alternate hour. They are cast down into Hell's deep the other hour. [Little children (are) maiming them always.] Now they who are in that pain are men ordained who have transgressed their orders, and sham-believers, and liars who lie and befool the crowds and take on them(selves) wonders and miracles which they cannot do for them. The little children, however, who are maiming the men ordained, to wit, those are the folk that were entrusted to them (the men ordained) for teaching, and they taught not the children and rebuked them not concerning their sins.

Then another vast crowd is there, east and west of them, without standing still, over the fiery flagstones, fighting against the hosts of the fiends. Many to count then are the showers of arrows red-flaming towards them from the fiends. They come in their running without breaking off, without resting, till they reach black lochs and black rivers to quench those arrows therein. Miserable then and wretched are the shouts and the lamentations which the sinners make in those waters, for it is an increase of pain that they have. Now they that are in that pain are dishonest artisans and cloth-makers and traders, the false-judging Brehons of the Jews and of every (folk) besides, and impious kings, wrongful managers of churchlands, incestuous fosterfathers, adulterous wives, and messengers who ruin them in their misdeeds.

Then there is a wall of fire on the far side of the Land of Pains : more horrible and more bitter it is seven times than the Land of Pains itself. Howbeit souls do not possess (it) until Doom, for with fiends only is its sovereignty until the Day of Doom.

Woe then (to him who) is in those pains dwelling along with the Devil's family ! Woe (to him that) heedeth not that family ! Woe (to him) over whom shall be for lord a fiend fierce, contemptible ! Woe (to him) who shall be listening to the wail and to the lamentation of the souls in wretchedness and complaining to the Lord about the coming to them of the Day of Doom swiftly, if perchance they might get any coolness in the Judgment, for until Doom they get not any rest save three hours every Sunday ! [17] Woe (to him) unto whom that land were a rightful heritage for ever ! For thus it is. Fells hollow, thorny there : plains bare then, they are parched : and lochs stinking, monsterful : ground rough, sandy, it is exceeding rugged, icy ; flagstones broad, fiery, amidst it : seas great with awful storms, wherein are the Devil's resorts and abode continually. Four vast rivers [18] across the middle of it : a river of fire, a snowy river, a poisonous river, a river of black dark water. In those it is that the vehement hosts of the fiends bathe themselves after their delight and their enjoyment in torturing the souls.

Now when the holy hosts of Heaven's family sing the harmonious choir-song of the eight times of prayer, [19] joyfully and blithely praising the Lord, it is then the souls utter shouts wretched, miserable, at the ceaseless striking of them by the troops of the fiends.

Those then are the tortures and the punishments which the Angel of fellowship showed unto Adamnán's soul after visiting the kingdom of Heaven.

Then the soul was borne in the twinkling of an eye through the golden portico [20] and through the crystalline veil to the land of the Saints, into which she was first taken when she left her body.

Then when she bent her mind on staying and on tarrying in that land, she heard behind her through the veil the voice of the Angel who was ordering her to fare back again to the same body whence she had come, and to relate in meetings and assemblies, and in gatherings of laymen and clerics. Heaven's rewards and Hell's pains, as the Angel of fellowship had shown unto her.

This, then, is the teaching that Adamnán was wont to use to the hosts from that time forth whilst he was in his life.

This, then, is what he used to preach in the great meeting of the men of Erin, when Adamnán's law [21] was set on the Gaels and when the women were freed by Adamnán and by Finnachta the Festive, [22] the king of Erin, and by the chiefs of Erin moreover.

These then are the first tidings which Patrick son of Calpurn [23] was wont to use, (to wit) Heaven's rewards and Hell's pains to relate unto those who believed in the Lord through his teaching, and who received their soul-friendship from him at the rising of the Gospel.

This, then, is the teaching that Peter and Paul, and the other Apostles, oftenest made. Namely, to relate the pains and rewards, for they had been shown unto them in the same wise.

This then did Silvester, Abbot of Rome, to Constantine son of Helena, chief king of the world, in the great meeting when he granted [24] the Rome [25] to Paul and to Peter.

This then is what Fabian [26] Peter's successor, did for Philip, son of Gordian, for the king of the Romans, when he believed in the Lord and when many other thousands believed at that time. This is the first king of the Romans who believed in the Saviour Jesus Christ. [27]

These are the tidings which Eli is wont to relate to the souls of the righteous, and he under the Tree of Life in Paradise. [28] Then from the time that Eli opens the book to teach the souls, the souls of the righteous in shapes of pure-white birds [29] come there to him from every point. He relates to them then, first, the rewards of the righteous, the delightfulness and pleasures of Heaven's kingdom, and they are right glad at that time. Thereafter he relates to them Hell's pains and punishments and the banes of the Day of Doom ; and greatly manifest is a countenance of sorrow upon himself and upon Enoch, so that those are the Two Sorrows of Heaven's Kingdom. Thereafter Eli shuts the book, and the birds utter a great cry of lamentation at that time, and beat their wings against their bodies, so that streams of blood come from them for fear of the pains of Hell and of the Day of Doom.

Since, then, it is the souls of the Saints unto whom is appointed eternal possession of the kingdom of Heaven, that make that lamentation, meeter were it for the men of the world though it were tears of blood that they shed in having heed of Doomsday and the pains of Hell.

It is then the Lord will pay His own wage to every one in the world, to wit, rewards to the righteous and pains to the sinners.

Then, in that wise the sinners will be plunged in a depth of eternal pain, into which the lock of God's word will shut them [30] under the hatred of the Judge of Doom for ever and ever.

But the Saints and the Righteous, the folk of charity and of mercy, shall be set on God's right hand to possess eternally the Kingdom of Heaven. To wit, a place wherein they shall be in that great glory, without age, without waning, without limit, without end, for ever and ever.

Thus, then, is that City, to wit, a Kingdom without pride, without haughtiness, without falsehood, without blasphemy, without fraud, without pretence, without reddening, without blushing, without disgrace, without deceit, without envy, without arrogance, without disease, without sickness, without poverty, without nakedness, without destruction, without extinction, without hail, without snow, without wind, without wet, without noise, without thunder, without darkness, without coldness—a Kingdom noble, admirable, delightful, with knowledge, with light, with odour of a plenteous Earth, wherein is delight of every goodness.

Finit. Amen. Finit.

[1] See Acts x. 11.

- [2] Corinthians xii. 2, 4.
- [3] Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones : Dominions, Virtues, Powers : Principalities, Archangels, Angels —a celestial aristocracy created by the pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, whose works the author of the Vision may have known through the Latin translation of his countryman Johannes Scotus Erigena.
- [4] They symbolize, probably, the Three Persons of the Trinity : cf. the Divina' Commedia, ed. Carlo Witte, "Paradiso," xxxiii. 115 :
- " Nella profonda e chiara sussistenza
Dell' alto lume parvemi *tre giri*
Di tre colori e d'una continenza."
- [5] God's redness symbolizes Divine love, creative power, royalty.
- [6] Cf. "Inferno," vii. 22: ,
- " Come fa l'onda là sovra Cariddi,
Che si frange con quella in cui s'intoppa,
Cosi convien che qui la gente riddi."
- [7] Cf. "Seize ye him and drag him into the midfire," Koran, sura xlv. 47.
- [8] This bridge has already been compared by M. Pictet ("*Origines indo-européennes*," ii. 521) with the *Chuivatô peretus* ("bridge of the gatherer") of the Zend-Avesta, "which the souls of the pious alone can pass, while the wicked fall down from it into Hell" (see Haug's "Essays on the Sacred Language . . . of the Parsees," pp. 156, 169, 213, 216, 217, 266, his account of the "Ardâi vîrâf-nâmeš" in Trübner's "Record," April 25, 1870, and Justi's "Handbuch der Zendsprache," III). M. Pictet also mentions the bridge over Giöll, across which Hermódhr rode to rescue Baldr from Hel : cf. The "brigge of paradis." *Sir Owain* cited by Scott, "Minstrely," 1830, ii. 360, and see Grimm, "Deutsche Mythologie," 2te Aufl. 794 : Milman, "History of Latin Christianity," i. 474 : "Des Vaters letzter Wille, Volks-mährchen der Serben," Berlin, 1854, s. 131 : Delepierre, "Le Livre des Visions," pp. 24, 52, 66 ; and Sale's Koran, 65. The bridge in Frate Alberico's vision is more like that in Adamnán's : "He saw here a great burning pitchy river, issuing from hell, and an iron bridge over it, which appeared very broad and easy for the virtuous to pass ; but when sinners attempted it, it became narrow as a thread, and they fell over into the river, and afterwards attempted it again, but were not allowed to pass until they had been sufficiently boiled to purge them of their sins," Longfellow's "Divine Comedy," London, 1867, p. 235. No mention is made of this bridge in the Tidings of Doomsday (*scéla lái brátha*), *Lebor na huidre*, 31b—34a. According to this homily, after having been a thousand years in the fire of Doom ("for that is the duration of Doomsday, as the commentators on the holy canon declare"), the sinners part from Heaven's family :—"Not happy, now, is the road of those sinners : they get not drink nor food, but constant hunger, and great thirst, and great cold. It is they that are thereafter borne to the Devil's house with sound of despair, with heavy, yearning sighs. Miserable is the cry and shout, wailing and shrieking, woe and hand-smiting of those sinful folks there, at the dragging of them to hell's torment. . . . They will sit there-after a merciless seat on glowing coals of great fire before the King of Evil in the Glen of Pains, a place wherein they shall have heavy punishments."—*Revue Celtique*, iv. 253.
- [9] "Red martyrdom."—"This is the red martyrdom : to endure a cross and destruction for Christ, as happened to the apostles in the evil ones' persecution and in teaching God's law."—Cambray Sermon, Zeuss, G. C. 1008, where *bán-martre* ("white martyrdom") and *glas-martre* ("blue martyrdom") are also explained.
- [10] *Airchinnig*. Hence it seems that the *airchinnech* (= W. *arbennig*) sometimes performed not only the functions of the mansionarius, or manager of Church glebes (Todd, "St. Patrick," pp. 160-165), but also those of the *sacrista* or keeper of sacred things. Note that a *ban-airchinnech cilli caillech* (princeps femina cellæ sanctimonialium) is mentioned in LU. 22a. (woman-presidents are mentioned in the Laodicean canons), and that in the Tripartite Life, Eg. 2. a. B, it is said of Pope Celestine *isé immorro airchindech róbae hi Roim isindaimsirsin* ("he is the *airchinnech* who was in Rome at that time").
- [11] Cf. "Inferno," xviii. 35 :

“ Vidi demon cornuti con gran ferze,
Che li battean emdelmente di retro.”

So in the Koran, sura xxii. 21 : “ All that is their bowels, and their skins, shall be dissolved, *and there are maces of iron for them.*”

- [12] *Frassa derga tentide* : cf. “ He shall rain upon the ungodly snares, fire and brimstone,” Ps. xi. 7, and “ Inferno,” xiv. 28, 40 :

“ Sopra tutto il sabbion d’un cader lento
Piovean di foco dilatate falde,
Come di neve in alpe senza vento.

Senza riposo mai era la tresca
Delle misere mani, or quindi or quinci
Iscotendo da sè l’arsura fresca.”

- [13] Cf. summe ther wepeth and alle heore teres beolh berninde gleden, “ Old English Homilies,” 1st ser. 43.
- [14] *Fir léigind* = viri legendi. The *fer léigind* seems to correspond with the anapiostes and lector of the Greek and Latin Churches. The *fer-legirm* of Turbrud (Turriff) is mentioned in a charter in the “ Book of Deir” [Goidilica, 51]. See also Reeves’ “ Columba,” 196, 365.
- [15] *Cassia derga tentide*. So in the Koran, sura xxii. 20 : “ but for those who have disbelieved, garments of fire shall be cut out.”
- [16] The fiery wheels (*rotha*) remind one of the description of Charon (“ Inferno,” iii. 99), “ che intorno agli occhi avea *di fiamme rote.*”
- [17] See “ Old English Homilies,” 1st series, p. 44, for a legend of St. Paul and Michael the Arch-angel obtaining from the Lord rest for the souls in hell “ from non on saterdei a tha cume monedeis lihting.”
- [18] *Cethri srotha*, a reminiscence, perhaps, of the classical four (Phlegethon, Styx, Acheron, Cocytus), which both Dante and Milton have recognized in their geography of Hell, and with which the scholiast on the “ Liber Hymnorum” (ed. Todd, p. 214) was slightly acquainted. “ The four rivers around Mount Zion burning the souls” are mentioned in LU. 17*a*. So in the Tripartite Life, Eg. 7*a*. na .iiii. srotha tened immon sliab.
- [19] The eight canonical hours are also mentioned above. They were matins, prime, terce, sext, none, vespers, compline, nocturn.
- [20] *Erdam*, Cormac’s *aurdam*, gen. *erdaim*, seems to have been in the Irish ecclesiastical architecture what the *pronaos* or *narthex* was in the Greek. If so, there were three doors from it into the nave, and through these the saints might well perceive the family of heaven. See Petrie’s “ Round Towers,” 424; and Reeves’ “ Columba,” 224*n*.
- [21] *Recht Adomnáin*, commonly called the *Cáin Adamnáin*, of which copies are preserved in the Bodleian Library, Rawl. B. 505, p. 305, and in the Bibliothque Royale, Brussels, No. 2324-2340, fo. 78*a*. The Bodleian copy begins thus :—“ Five periods before Christ’s birth, *i.e.* From Adam to the Flood : from the Flood to Abraham : from Abraham to David : from David to the Captivity in Babylon : from the Captivity of Babylon to Christ’s birth. Women were in slavery and in oppression at that time till Adamnán, son of Ronan, etc., came.” The woman that was best of women [*in ben ba deck de mnaiph*) had to go to battle, “ her wallet of food on one side of her, her baby on the other side, her lance at her back, thirty feet in height, a sickle of iron at one end thereof, the which she used to put on the tress of the other woman, into the other battle : her husband behind her, a hedge-stake in his hand, beating her to battle.” The MS. then tells at length how Adamnán’s mother extorted from him a promise to exempt women from such liabilities. See Petrie’s “ Tara,” p. 147, Reeves’ “ Columba,” p. 179.
- [22] Finnachta the Festive was *ardri* (overlord) of Ireland from 675 to 695. The date of the imposition of Adamnan’s law was 697, two years after Finnachta’s death. Bishop Reeves (“ Columba,” liii.) has already pointed out the anachronism here committed by the author of the

Vision.

- [23] *Patraic mac calpuirnd*. So in Fiacc's hymn, 4, macCalpuirn (.i. *qui fuit sacerdos*) maic otide (leg. Fhótide), ho a deochain Odissi. Concess was his mother's name : she is said to have been of France, and a kinswoman of S. Martin of Tours : see Todd, " St. Patrick," 353, 354. She is called Concess, daughter of Ocbass of Gaul, in the Tripartite Life, B. 156*b*.
- [24] See as to Silvester (*il prima ricco patre*) and Constantine's gift of Rome, " Inferno," xix. 115 ; and Milman, " History of Latin Christianity," i. 57. The legend of the Donation is told in a note to the " Félire" of Oengus the Culdee, January 18. Constantine sickens, and is taken to the great City. Leeches prescribe the blood-cure (" bathing by way of his joints in 300 innocent children's blood"). Peter and Paul appear to save the children, alter the treatment, order, instead, baptism and " going under the hand" of Abbot Silvester. The Emperor obeys, is, apparently, healed ; and Rome thence-forward belongs to the two Apostles.
- [25] *In Róim* : an instance of the individualizing article : so nom. sg. *ind Róm* " the (well-known) Rome," gen. *inna Romæ*, Z. 888.
- [26] Fabian was martyred under Decius, A.D. 249. " *Philip mac Gordián*." This is a blunder : Philip the Arab was the murderer, not the son, of Gordian the younger, and succeeded him A.D. 244.
- [27] As to Philip's supposed conversion, see Gibbon, cap. xvi.
- [28] As to the tree of life in Paradise and its fruits, see Apoc. ii. 7, xxii. 2, 14. As to Enoch and Elijah, see more in Grimm, " Deutsche Mythologie," 2te Aufl. 771, in the " Voyage of Snedgus and Mac Riagla," H. 21.6 (edited in " Revue Celtique," ix. 14), and in Norris's " Cornish Drama," ii. 16-22.
- [29] As to the belief that souls assume the forms of doves and other birds, see Grimm, " Deutsche Mythologie," 788. Thorpe, " Northern Mythol.," i. 289. The souls of Mael-suthain's three pupils come to him *i rechtaib tri colum ngeal* (" in forms of three white doves"), O'Curry, " Lectures," 530.
- [30] Cf. The " Tidings of Doomsday," LU. 33 *a* : " then will be shut the sinners' three locks ; to wit, a shutting of hell for ever upon them, a shutting of their eyes on the world to which they gave love, and a shutting of the heavenly kingdom against them." In a Breton canticle (" Barzaz Breiz," ii. 456) the singer says that the gates of hell have been shut and barred by God, and He will never open them, for the key is lost !

" Ann noriou zo bet sarret ha prennet gand Doue,
Ha n 'ho digoro biken ; kollet eo ann alc'houe."

Three months in the forests of France : a pilgrimage in search of vestiges of the Irish saints in France (1895)

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