

Beloved Western Pilgrimage

Papers and Addresses

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Archbishop of Tuam

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WHEN it became known that in August of this year would be celebrated the Episcopal Silver Jubilee of the Archbishop of Tuam, it was felt by the Committee of the Catholic Truth Society of Ireland that they could not allow to pass, without on their part marking it in some appropriate manner, so great an occasion in the life of their first President. Accordingly, on the suggestion of some friends, they decided to do for Archbishop Healy's Jubilee what their flourishing sister Society in Australia had done a year or two ago for Archbishop Carr's, that is, gather together and publish in permanent and attractive form the most interesting of his hitherto uncollected Papers and Addresses. And so this volume has come to light, and is now offered with cordial and respectful greetings as the Society's Jubilee Gift to their Most Reverend President.

It will be noted with satisfaction that while a large variety of subjects is touched on in these Papers and Addresses, they are chiefly concerned with the discussion and elucidation of important questions in the civil and ecclesiastical history of Ireland. And they belong to every period of his Grace's well-filled literary career—as for example, the historical sketch of Gerald Barry, and the rousing metrical version of Hugh Roe O'Donnell's Address, to the far-off days when he was a simple curate in County Sligo ; or the beautiful appreciation of John Duns Scotus and the masterly exposition of the Catholic teaching on Inspiration, to his maturer years as a Professor in Maynooth ; or, yet again, his famous pulpit efforts and archæological lectures, to the quarter of a century, just completed, of his episcopate—thus on from an article written the year of his ordination down to one written only a few weeks ago at the request of Cardinal Moran for the notable Catholic Congress being just now held under his Eminence's presidency in Australia.

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A Pilgrimage to Innismurry.

THE tourist who has ever travelled the highly picturesque road from Sligo to Bundoran, which runs between Benbulbin Mountains and the sea, cannot fail to have noticed the island of Innismurry. Long and low-lying, it looks in the distance like a huge raft at anchor in the broad waters of the noble bay of Donegal. Being very difficult of access, it is seldom visited by strangers, and yet few ancient sanctuaries ought to be more interesting to the churchman and antiquarian. It is undoubtedly one of the very earliest of the Irish monastic retreats. Here the great Columba spent his youth before he went to found the more famed Iona ; here was a School of Saints before St. Kyran laid the first stone of Clonmacnoise in the green meadows by the Shannon side. More than thirteen hundred years have passed since St. Molaise first

built his church and cell in this desolate island ; time and the spoiler's hand have not spared these venerable ruins, but the shadow of its ancient holiness is around the island still. The lowly cells, built of dry stones, the broken cross, the small stone-roofed churches, the ancient Irish inscriptions on the tombs, bring back the mind to the very infancy of the Irish Church and the dawn of her ecclesiastical architecture. And it is purely Catholic still. No Protestant lives there or is buried there, no church of the new worship desecrates the resting-place of these early Irish saints.

The writer with a few friends, paid a visit to Innismurry on the 21st of last September. [1] A brief account of what they saw may not be uninteresting.

The morning selected for our expedition was dry and cloudy, with a rather stiff breeze coming down from the Leitrim Mountains on the south-east. " Fine day, sir," said an old sailor, " for going to the island ; but you will want to be waterproof if you expect to come home dry." Some old salts even hinted it would be more prudent to defer our visit ; but the ladies—at least the younger ones—were courageous, and how could the gentlemen show the white feather ?

The bay of Donegal is fickle and dangerous, owing chiefly to the high mountains and deep valleys that surround it. We started from Mullaghmore, the most beautiful watering place on the western coast. The lodges are few, but the accommodation is excellent, so that all who spend one season in Mullaghmore are anxious to come again. Besides its great natural beauties it has the advantage of an excellent harbour and breakwater, constructed by the late Lord Palmerston for the benefit of the fishermen at a cost of some £30,000 from his private resources. He was a truly excellent landlord ; he established and endowed national schools, built a glebehouse, and gave a free farm to the parish priest ; and even when guiding the diplomacy of Europe (not always in the right direction), the meanest of his tenantry, if he had just cause of complaint, was certain to receive prompt and speedy justice by the autograph orders of the busy statesman—a policy which his successors still faithfully carry out.

We had a rather small yacht for our voyage across to the island, but our party was also small—three ladies, two gentlemen, and two sailors—both, fortunately for us, men of coolness, courage and skill. Shooting like an arrow from her moorings, the little craft soon rounded the bold promontory of Mullaghmore, the quickening breeze and the rising sea compelling us to shorten sail somewhat precipitately. Yet no sooner had we rounded the point than we had a short interval of calm under the lea of the huge cliffs, which gave us leisure to admire the beautiful residence lately erected by Mr. Cooper Temple. It stands upon a rock almost over hanging the sea, and is surrounded by long reaches of swelling sand hills, with the " hollow ocean ridges roaring into cataracts" just under the windows. Altogether this splendid residence commands what is, perhaps, the finest prospect of ocean and mountain scenery in Ireland. But the darkening water and the whitening wave crests soon warned us of the coming breeze, and a lively one it proved to be for the rest of the day. Our little craft seemed to fly before it swifter than the cloud-shadows racing down from the mountains :—

" Ocyor cervo, et agente nimbos
Ocyor Euro."

The foam-showers at intervals swept over us as we rushed onwards with our deck listed to an angle of 45°, and the water boiling over our gunwale, exciting and pleasant to people waterproof and strong-nerved, but rather alarming to those new to the sea. However, after a run of about eleven miles in little more than an hour, we cast anchor quite close to the island in twelve fathoms of water.

Even in the finest weather it is no easy matter to land on Innismurry without assistance from the shore ; but when the sea is “ up,” it is well nigh impossible. The entire island is composed of a huge granite rock, against whose steep sides, a restless and angry ocean is ever dashing. The islanders, however, recognising the priest on board, came to our assistance and took us ashore in one of their fishing-boats, landing us in a deep and narrow gully between two huge overhanging rocks. With the aid of their strong arms we succeeded, not without difficulty, in clambering over the horrid crags and huge misshapen boulders that blocked up the passage.

The entire population generally turns out to receive what they consider to be visitors of distinction. All came to meet us, young and old, men, women, and children, clad in rather primitive and scanty raiment. The dress of the men consists generally of coarse woollen vest and trousers, the women have somewhat differently shaped garments of the same material, while the gender of most of the juveniles, as far as their dress gave indication thereof, was decidedly epicene.

The seaward side of the island affords the finest prospect. Sea and sky and mountain all combine to lend their charms. The aspect of the place itself is naked and bare ; not a tree, or even a shrub, is to be seen ; but the eye never tires of the glorious presence of the far-reaching sea, framed on three sides by noble mountains. Due north is the serrated ridge of south-western Donegal, terminating in the bold promontory of Slieve-Liag—the Gray Mountain—whose perpendicular cliffs, nature’s rampart against the wild Atlantic, rise a thousand feet in height from water thirty fathoms deep. The sun lit up the dark caverns of this mighty sea-wall, making them shine like palaces of white marble built upon the waves. According to Professor Hull, this is the father of Irish Mountains, having emerged from the sea countless ages before even the Alps or Pyrenees raised their heads from their cradles in the deep. To the south, the Benbulbin range, unique in beauty, throws out four bold spurs to the sea, as if to contest the palm for pride of place with their older brethren of the northern shore. Then, westward, in the dim distance, can be seen Nephin and Croagh Patrick rising in solitary grandeur, and the Stags of Broad Haven resting like cloud shadows on the “ ultimate sea.”

A well filled hamper always improves the æsthetic enjoyment of scenery, especially after a sea voyage. So we set ourselves down on the rocks to eat, and admire at our leisure ; our noble hostess supplying us with the viands which the *mal de mer* would not let her touch herself. We keep, however, at a safe distance from those huge green waves that come racing and swelling onward like living things, and leap against the rocks at our feet with angry roar, only to be flung back in those showers of foam gleaming many-hued in the sunshine.

The island contains about 130 acres of shallow soil, partly cut-away bog, with a stiff sub-soil of what looks like impure iron ore. The arable portion about a fourth of the whole produces scanty and precarious crops of barley, potatoes, and rye. The population numbers about ninety-six souls, all Catholics, besides a garrison of four or five policemen, who are kept on the island at a cost of about £300 a year, to prevent the illicit distillation of whiskey, for which purpose barley was formerly much grown. Previously to the advent of the police, it was manufactured in large quantities, and found a ready sale on the mainland. Now, however, the natives are obliged to confine their energies to the manufacture of kelp from the drift seaweed, which they carry by water round to Sligo, and sell to the agents of a Glasgow firm at the average rate of about £4 a ton. Fish are taken off the island in large quantities during the summer months ; for, having no harbour, they dare not fish except in the finest weather. The rocks around the island abound in lobster, which are always to be had during the season, and of the best quality. The live stock consists of a few small and weather beaten cows and sheep, who contrive to live, with some difficulty, on the scanty herbage. There are no horses, but

there are a few peculiar specimens of the donkey tribe ; how they make out life no one knows, nor do they seem to belong to anybody in particular. Perhaps, like the people themselves, they are aborigines—the sole descendants of an ancient race.

There is an island queen, heretofore greatly revered, and of parental authority ; but the spread of democratic ideas has penetrated even to this remote spot, so that her insular majesty, like many of her royal cousins, has had to endure considerable diminution of her prerogatives. She considers the presence of the police as a gross infringement of her sovereign rights ; and she would dismiss them “ bag and baggage” as peremptorily as Mr. Gladstone would the Turks, if she only had the power. The present Prince Consort is her majesty’s second husband, and in the good old times no one could distil so potent and well-favoured a “ cast” as his royal highness. But Othello’s occupation is gone ; his right hand has lost its cunning for want of practice, and the Jameson of Innismurry is renowned no more. We had the honour of being presented to the queen, who received us with dignity and graciousness, not unmixed with sadness. “ She was now old,” she said, “ and of late years her authority was set at nought by her subjects” :—

“ Old times were changed, old manners gone,
A stranger filled the Stuart’s throne.”

Not that the poor queen quoted Scott, but the lines accurately express the burden of her complaint.

They have no opportunity of hearing Mass on Sundays ; but they never fail to say the rosary, either in their own houses or, when the weather is fine, in the little chapel of St. Molaise, the patron of the island. They invariably call him “ Father Molosh.” Though dead, his spirit rules them ; he is revered and spoken of as if still living amongst them, like a parish priest, able to hear their complaints and redress their grievances.

No person has been known to die without the rites of the Church, although the island is so far from the mainland and so difficult of access in severe weather. Either the priest “ overtakes them,” or they come ashore before they grow dangerously ill, in order that they may, in case of need, receive the Sacraments. Almost all the children, too, are brought to the mainland to be baptised in the Church, and generally within ten or fifteen days after their birth ; nor does the voyage seem to injure in the least either the child or mother who generally accompanies it.

A national school was opened a few years ago. Most of the children can now read and write, and are well instructed in the Christian doctrine. A short time ago Irish was exclusively the language of the people, but English is now commonly spoken. The school-house at present is a cold and dreary timber-roofed shed, with only too much ventilation, and an earthen floor, where the poorly clad children put in a shivering and reluctant attendance in winter. The annual visit to this school for results examination is a source of terror to most of the Board’s Inspectors.

But it is its ancient ruins which make this desolate island so interesting. These ruins are bounded by a huge circular wall, ten to twelve feet thick, and originally about fifteen feet high. This immense wall encloses an area of nearly half an acre, and was built of large, flat stones without cement or mortar of any kind, but closely and accurately fitted together. There does not appear to be any external opening except one small subterranean passage. No doubt this was intended as a precaution against external foes, especially the Danes, who, in the eighth and ninth centuries, ravaged all the coasts and harbours of Ireland, and more than once burnt all they could burn of this very monastery. The cells were constructed in this wall ;

seven of them yet remain. They are very small, of bee-hive shape, with low doors on the inside. “ Yet there, on the wet soil, with that dripping roof above them, was the chosen home of these poor men. Through winter frost, through rain and storm, through summer sunshine, generation after generation of them lived and prayed, and at last lay down and died.” [2] And here, beneath our feet, they sleep in peace ; you can read their names on those ancient grave-stones.

There are four churches remaining within the sacred enclosure, small in size, and of a rude and primitive construction. The principle of the arch appears to be unknown ; all the doors and windows are covered with flat lintels, except in one solitary instance in which the altar window was arched the arch having been hewn out of the stone. No cement or grouting of any kind was used in their construction. The smallest, and apparently the most ancient of these buildings, is called “ Father Molaise’s Chapel.” It is about ten feet in height, with a stone roof and a low doorway. It is twelve feet long, and about eight feet in breadth. At the east end, facing the doorway, there is a rude altar, built of loose stones ; the altar stone has been broken by some rude hand ; the fragments contain part of an inscription in Latin written in Irish characters, commencing with the words : “ Hie dormit Diarmid . . .” The remainder was partially defaced, so that I was unable to decipher it. Near the doorway the earth is stained with a dark, reddish colour : the islanders say it is the blood of St. Molaise which marks the spot where he lies buried. On the epistle corner of the altar there is a quaintly-carved oaken statue of the Saint, evidently of great antiquity. The same rude hands that broke the altar stone defaced this venerable relic of ancient art, and cast it into the sea. It was done by some Orangemen [3] from the mainland, whose names have acquired an infamous immortality, and who justified the conduct by pretending that it was the figure-head of a ship belonging to the Spanish Armada which was wrecked in the bay. The statue, however, though thrown into the sea, with the receding wind and tide, was found on shore next morning ; and the islanders stoutly assert that if “ Father Molosh” was thrown out in mid ocean he would return, in spite of wind and tide, to the island which he loved so well. Here are also to be seen scattered around numerous grave stones with inscriptions in the earliest Irish characters which I was unable to decipher, and all commencing with the words, “ Or do—” “ Pray for.”

Our guide specially called our attention to the “ Cursing Stones”—some sixty round sea-stones irregularly arranged on a kind of rude platform. It is said no one could ever find exactly the same number on a second enumeration—an assertion which we vainly endeavoured to disprove. The islanders assert that if these stones are “ turned against any-one,” that is, with evil intent, some signal chastisement or untimely death will overtake that person within twelve months, if he deserves it ; otherwise, the penalty will fall on the head of him who unjustly invoked the divine wrath. It is notorious in the neighbourhood that a certain lady, whose name was mentioned, in mockery of the superstition, turned the stones against herself, and died within the twelve months.

Another stone was pointed out within one of the unroofed chapels, on which fuel will kindle spontaneously if the fires on the island should all happen to be extinguished. They told us of a miscreant who defiled this sacred spot in wanton profanity, and immediately died a miserable death. A huge cairn of stones close by marks his dishonoured grave to which we did not scruple to add another stone in reprobation of the deed. [4]

Many of the headstones are marked with crosses of great variety in design and beauty of execution. One, in particular, is an object of special veneration. Any childless matron, praying at this headstone, will receive the blessing of Anna, and become a fruitful mother. The well-trodden sod and the finger-holes, worn in the stone attest the people’s faith in this tradition. The island has a famous station : seven resting-places, *stationes*, for fixed prayers, four within and three without the sacred enclosure ; and it is a common practice for people to

come to the island from the mainland to perform this station *ex voto*, or to obtain some special favour from God through the intercession of St. Molaise.

The monastery was founded early in the sixth century by St. Molaise and St. Columcille, and dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. St. Molaise died here, it is said, in the year 564. Some difference of opinion arose between the two saints, and Columba left the island to the exclusive charge of St. Molaise, who appears to have been the older of the two. The “ Four Masters” speak of the monastery as being governed by St. Dicholla, son of Meinida, who died in the year 747. According to the same authority, it was burned by the Danes in 807. It was finally abandoned by the religious many centuries ago. There is no trace of any modern buildings, at least of a date later than the eleventh century. There is a chapel, called by the people, “ Tempol Muire”—Mary’s Chapel—of about that period, but outside the walled enclosure. In 1666 the island was granted by Charles II. to Thomas Stratford and Thomas Retcliffe. It was a part of the property of the late Lord Palmerston, and now belongs to his nephew, the Rev. Mr. Sullivan. Ecclesiastically, the island belongs to the parish of Ahamlish and the diocese of Elphin.

As far as the land is concerned, the whole island is not of much value. The people are poor, the soil is barren, the climate in winter very severe. The monks of old, in their choice of a home, sought not the fertility of soil or sylvan beauty, but a secure asylum for prayer and penance. And in their eyes, though so bare and desolate, the place had a suitability and beauty of its own. They were effectually cut off from the world and its contagious influences. The waves murmured in unison with their morning and evening hymns of praise. The frequent storms, the changeful ocean, the distant mountains, reminded them of God. The wild grandeur and stern loneliness of the scenery were well suited to foster grave and sober thoughts. And even still, a visit to this holy island cannot fail to elevate the mind and purify the heart. Its hoary ruins are eloquent memorials to the virtues of the saints who sleep within its mossy, mouldering walls. In the presence of so much that bears witness to their penance and self-denial, we feel all our own littleness and worldliness. Around us are the undesecrated graves of Ireland’s holiest and earliest saints. There are the cells where they slept on the bare ground, the churches where they united in prayer, the well whose waters were their only drink.

We wandered long through this sacred enclosure, and left it reluctantly to prepare for our return journey. But the ladies lingered behind us and in that spirit of hereditary faith which kept the barons of her ancient house faithful to the Church during the stormiest centuries of England’s history, the countess knelt to say a parting prayer over the graves of those forgotten Irish saints. We were soon again afloat, and, after a stormy and tedious voyage, arrived at Mullaghmore about eight o’clock, fatigued and thoroughly drenched. But we had seen where dwelt the saints of old, where they spent their lives, where their relics rest in peace ; and we felt that our day was not uselessly employed, for we ventured to hope that our pilgrimage had secured for us new intercessors in heaven.

Patrician Pilgrimages in Ireland [5]

A PILGRIMAGE is a journey, undertaken from religious motives, to visit places or things that have been rendered sacred by intimate association with our Blessed Saviour or any of His Saints. We know that from the earliest Christian times it was customary to visit the Holy Places around Jerusalem of which the Holy Sepulchre was the centre ; and the virgins, Paula and Eustochium, writing A.D. 386, declare that there was a constant stream of pilgrims to Jerusalem from the very infancy of the Church—bishops, martyrs, learned men—who came to perfect their virtues by meditation and prayer in those places where the Gospel had first shone forth from the Cross. In every pilgrimage our primary object is to adore Christ, and quicken the spirit of faith and penance by personal visits to the scenes of His life, miracles

and death ; or to the shrines of the saints who lived and died for Christ, that we may adore Him in His saints, and be moved by the memory of their virtues and labours to imitate their example and glorify their Master.

The pilgrimage to Rome “ ad Limina Apostolorum”—that is to the graves of SS. Peter and Paul has been made year after year since their death by crowds of pious souls from every country in Europe, and indeed we may now say in the whole world. Other famous pilgrimages for many ages have been those of St. James of Compostella and St. Thomas of Canterbury in England, and in our own time we know how the Shrine of the Blessed Virgin at Lourdes attracts thousands of devotees from all quarters of the globe. Pilgrimages have always flourished, and always will flourish, in the Church so long as the hearts of Christians are filled with the spirit of faith and love. The immediate purpose though varying in particular cases is usually fourfold : to quicken this faith and love for God ; to obtain by prayer some special grace or favour ; to atone for one’s sins, and not unfrequently in fulfilment of a vow.

It is true that grave abuses have sometimes arisen in connection with pilgrimages, either on the journeys to and from, or amid the sacred scenes themselves. Avarice, intemperance, profanities of various kinds, immoralities even are not unknown, and hence the supervision of the ecclesiastical authorities is always needed to prevent the growth of such abuses. In our own time they rarely occur, but it is wise to be very vigilant lest the enemy sow his tares in the midst of the wheat.

The Irish people from the time of St. Patrick were ever fervent in faith even when weak in works, and hence, as might be expected, they were always much given to pilgrimages. We know from their lives that it was the great ambition of an Irish saint to make a pilgrimage, and as a fact many of them are said to have often done so. Some went as far as Jerusalem especially in the tenth and eleventh centuries, when the spirit of pilgrimage was keenest and most active throughout Europe. Comparatively few, however, could accomplish the foreign pilgrimage, but the manifold places of pilgrimage at home were frequented by vast crowds of the people of every grade and rank. Warm-hearted and tenacious of tradition as our fellow-countrymen are, they would not easily allow the holy places associated with the labours of saints and martyrs to be forgotten. In our travels through the country we have frequently found that some sacred spot which could not be identified by any book narrative was well known to the people of the neighbourhood, and greatly venerated by them. In that way by personal inquiry we were enabled to identify several places mentioned in the Life of St. Patrick, the exact site of which could not otherwise be ascertained. John O’Donovan with all his learning could not find out the spot where St. Patrick crossed the Shannon on his first missionary journey westward, but the peasantry around knew it well at Drumboylan, about a mile and a half north of Battle Bridge, where the Shannon cutting through a ridge bifurcates forming an island, on both sides of which the rapid river became easily fordable. Some of the water-worn stepping stones of the ancient ford are still there, and the place itself takes its name of Drumboylan from Buaidmoil, St. Patrick’s charioteer, who died there and whose grave is still shown on the brow of the ridge over the river.

There are almost innumerable blessed wells bearing Patrick’s name which mark the whole course of his missionary labours throughout the country. They are held in deep reverence by the people, and in many cases are annually resorted to as places of pilgrimage. This is not to be wondered at, for the wells were solemnly blessed by the Saint for the purpose of administering baptism to his converts. Their waters were also used in the Holy Mass which was celebrated hard by, and the Saint and his companions many a time no doubt refreshed themselves therefrom after the arduous labours of the day.

But of all the pilgrimages associated with the name of St. Patrick in Ireland there were four held in particular honour- two of which are still made every year by enormous crowds of the faithful. These are Armagh, Downpatrick, Lough Derg and Croaghpatrick—of each of which we shall now give a brief account.

Armagh Pilgrimage.

During the life-time of the Apostle, and ever since, Armagh has been held in particular esteem as the seat of St. Patrick's primacy over all the Gael. There are many circumstances which tended to preserve and intensify that spirit of holy esteem for Patrick's Royal City. It was by command of God's Angel, we are told, that Patrick took up his residence at Armagh and made it the centre of his primatial sovereignty. The same angel went before him to guide his steps when Patrick and his clergy marked out the site of his Cathedral and blessed its foundations and its area. In the little church of Na Fearta, the first that Patrick built, were enshrined the relics of Saints Peter and Paul, and of St. Stephen and St. Laurence, which Patrick himself had brought from Rome, and which on their respective festival days were honoured by all the people in solemn procession. Long after, in evil days, in the year A.D. 1033, when calamities thickened around Armagh, the shrine containing these sacred relics was seen to drop blood on the altar of Patrick in the sight of those present in the church—*coram omnibus videntibus*—as the Ulster Annals tell. In his old age, when nearing his end, from the brow of the opposite hill, where his new Cathedral now stands, Patrick raised his arms to heaven and “ from out his two hands,” we are told, he blessed his own Armagh with a fruitful and abiding blessing, and thereafter in sleep the angel appeared to him and told him that God would considerably widen the bounds of his City and See of Armagh, and put all the tribes of Erin under his spiritual sway—give them to him in *modum parochiæ*. There, too, were the most sacred emblems of his authority—his Crozier, the Staff of Jesus, his Bell, and his Book.

Moreover, as the years went by, the ancient seats of Erin's temporal sovereignty were overthrown. Tara, Emania, Cruachan, Ailech and Cashel had all become waste and silent, and passed to the hands of the stranger, so the people clung with deeper affection to that spiritual city which was for them the source of authority and the home of their hearts. No wonder, indeed, that Armagh with its churches and holy wells and hallowed shrines, so intimately associated with Patrick, and so tenderly blessed by him and by God's Angel, should become a much frequented place of pilgrimage for all the children of the Gael. We are told, for instance, that in A.D. 1037 Cathal, son of Rory, King of West-Connaught, went all the way from the far West on a pilgrimage to Armagh. And many of the pilgrims considered themselves happy to die in Patrick's City, and find their graves in its sacred clay. The case of Brian Boru is well known. During one of his northern campaigns he visited Armagh, and presented at the altar of Patrick a collar of gold weighing twenty ounces. Furthermore, his secretary wrote, in his name, in the Book of Armagh a formal recognition of the primacy of Armagh over all Ireland, signed by “ Brian, Emperor of the Scots”—that is of the Irish nation. And on the fatal but glorious field of Clontarf Brian's last instructions were—“ my body and my soul to God and to St. Patrick ; let me be carried to Armacha, and twelve score cows be given to the Comarb of Patrick and the church of Armagh,” and we know that the hero's body was borne thereto, and interred in the great church of St. Patrick.

In after ages Armagh fell into the hands of the English, and it became the residence of the Protestant primate, and no Catholic was allowed to live in the city, and no one dared visit it on pilgrimage. But we have seen in our own times a very marvellous change. The noble church with the twin towers now dominates the whole city. The Heir of Patrick clothed in the purple of Rome sits upon its throne, and the pious pilgrim may still come as of old to venerate the memorials of our national Apostle in the ancient home of his love.

Downpatrick Pilgrimage.

Downpatrick was also a celebrated place of pilgrimage because St. Patrick was buried there, and in later times his relics with those of St. Brigid and St. Columcille were enclosed in the same grave. Some writers have denied that Patrick was buried in Down, and assert that Armagh was really the place of his sepulture, but their reasons on close examination are found to be baseless, and the authorities of antiquity, including the Book of Armagh, are clearly and emphatically against their theory.

At first the exact spot of burial was kept concealed, lest the men of Orior might come in force and by violence or stealth carry off his blessed body to their own church of Armagh. But in A.D. 552, as we learn from the *Annals of Ulster*, the tomb was revealed by an Angel to Columcille who found therein three of the *minna* or relics of Patrick, namely his Cup or Chalice, his Bell, called the “Bell of the Will,” and the Book of Gospels. The Chalice he gave to Downpatrick, the Bell to Armagh and, the Book of Gospels Columcille, by direction of the Angel, reserved for himself. The other relics Columcille placed in a beautiful shrine, which thereupon was recognised as the most precious treasure of the church of Down. About the close of the seventh century there was a translation—as we learn from Tirechan or his copyist in the Book of Armagh—of at least some of the relics of Columcille himself from Iona to Down which were immediately placed in the grave of Patrick. And at the beginning of the ninth century the shrine containing the relics of St. Brigid were brought to Down and also enclosed in the same monument, which thus became the most remarkable sepulchre in all Ireland, and naturally attracted pilgrims from even the remotest portions of the country.

During the devastations of the Danes it was considered desirable to hide away those much prized shrines. The pilgrimages were therefore interrupted, and the hiding-place seems thus in course of time to have been forgotten. But in A.D. 1186 the spot where they lay was revealed to Malachy, Bishop of Down, and, in presence of Cardinal Vivian and a vast host of prelates and clergy, the bones and other relics were taken up, enclosed in new separate coffins, and then solemnly re-interred. John de Courcy was at the time Master of Downpatrick, and the native Irish put small trust in this Invention of the relics of the saints, which was designed, they said, to give some heavenly sanction to this rude warrior’s conquest. Yet the Bishop Malachy was a Celt, and it is hard to suppose that he would lend himself to the perpetration of a spiritual fraud, and John de Courcy, whatever else he was, was certainly not a schemer.

When the Protestants got possession of Down and all its sacred treasures, no pilgrims dared show their faces there for many generations. But now they are allowed to visit the cathedral precincts, and many come and try to find out for themselves the triple grave of Patrick, Brigid and Columcille. The supposed spot is outside the latter church, and here, day after day the sacred soil is lovingly scooped up by the hands of poor emigrants about to start for America to be kept by them as a priceless souvenir until their dying hour. Small sympathy or welcome, however, do they get in Downpatrick now, for the last resting-place of our National Apostle has unhappily become one of the strongholds of Orangemen in the North.

Lough Derg Pilgrimage.

The pilgrimage to St. Patrick’s Purgatory, Lough Derg, County Donegal, is of late years coming back to something of its olden prominence and popularity. The Station Island as it is called, lies in the middle of the lake, which from the point of embarkation is about four miles due north of the little town of Pettigo. It is simply a mass of barren rock, rising a few feet above the surface of the water, 126 yards long, varying in breadth from 22 to 45 yards, and

not quite three quarters of an acre in extent. Yet upon this narrow area there are, besides a grand cross and campanile, two neat churches, St. Mary's and St. Patrick's, the latter being the "Prison chapel" which takes the place of the old Purgatory a dwelling-house for three or four priests, and a hospice and several well-kept cottages for the accommodation of the pilgrims.

The history of the Purgatory is full of striking vicissitude, which, however, we can barely touch on here. It was in former times situated on a much larger island called "Saints Island," lying two miles to the north-west of Station Island, and consisted in the main of a dark cave in which St. Patrick is said to have had a vision of our Blessed Saviour.

In a metrical work, *De Purgatorio S. Patritii*, written about the year A.D. 1152, by Henry, a Benedictine Monk of Saltrey in Huntingdonshire, we have the first recorded account of the Purgatory. Henry had received his information from Gilbert another monk from Lincoln. He in turn had learned all the details from Owen, an Irish soldier in the army of King Stephen, who in atonement for his sins had actually made a pilgrimage to the "Lake of Penance." Owen, in the words of Henry of Saltrey, tells how "Our Lord Jesus Christ visibly appeared to St. Patrick, and led him into a desert place, and there showed him a circular cave (*fossam rotundam*), dark inside, and at the same time said to him, whoever, armed with the true faith and truly penitent, will enter that cave and remain in it for the space of a day and a night will be purged from the sins of his whole life—that is obtain a plenary indulgence—and, moreover, passing through it, if his faith fail not—(*si in fide constanter egisset*) he will witness not only the torments of the damned but also the joys of the blessed. . . . And since the pilgrim is there purged of his sins the place is named the Purgatory of St. Patrick." the genuineness of the vision is indeed open to doubt, but we think it almost certain that our Apostle once at least visited Lough Derg, and spent some time in contemplation and prayer on its lonely islands, and perhaps even in this very "*fossa rotunda*" on Saints Island. That he visited the Lake is at all events the unbroken tradition of the people which no reliable historian would lightly set aside.

Henry of Saltrey's story soon spread to the continent, and it became still more widely known from its having been freely utilised by Dante and Calderon in their immortal works. So we are not surprised to read in records of the reigns of Edward III. and Richard II., for example, of safe conducts having been given to troops of men and horses who accompanied knights from Hungary and Italy and even the Island of Rhodes on their way to pilgrimages on this desert island in Lough Derg. In like manner, in Froissart and the Four Masters, we are told of French and Spanish noblemen who successfully accomplished the dangerous enterprise.

And thus pilgrims were coming from far and near till towards the close of the fifteenth century Pope Alexander VI. acting, it is said, at the instigation of a Dutch monk from Eymstede, officially ordered the suppression of the pilgrimage "*quia fuit occasio turpis avaritice.*"

According to the Annals of Ulster the reason for the suppression was that the Purgatory which was the object of veneration was not the same which the Lord had shown to Patrick. Be that as it may, the period of suppression did not last long. Other counsels prevailed in Rome, and not only was the pilgrimage allowed to be revived, but it was even endowed with liberal indulgences by the Holy See.

Probably at this time took place the transfer of the station from Saints' Island to Station Island, and soon afterwards of the guardianship from the Canons of St. Augustine to the Franciscans. For many years past the pilgrimage has been in charge of certain secular clergy

of the Diocese of Clogher nominated by the Bishop, the senior of whom is called the “ Prior,” and it has grown under them in magnitude and popular favour. To a considerable extent this is due to the light that has been shed upon its chequered history by the Very Rev. Canon O’Connor in his fascinating and exhaustive work “ St. Patrick’s Purgatory,” and also to the generous patronage of successive popes during the last half century

So far back as 1714 when Ireland was groaning under the Penal Laws, Primate Hugh McMahon writes of the pilgrimage—“ whilst everywhere else throughout the Kingdom the ecclesiastical functions have ceased by reason of the prevailing persecution, in this island, as if it were placed in another orb, the exercise of religion is free and public, which is to be ascribed to a special favour of Divine Providence and to the merits of St. Patrick.”

Yes, truly—and it should never be forgotten—this and the other Patrician pilgrimages may be largely thanked that the spirit of faith was kept alive in the people’s hearts during the long years of dark and bitter persecution in Ireland.

Croaghpatrick Pilgrimage.

But the real National pilgrimage of Ireland is undoubtedly that to Cruachan Aigli—now called Croaghpatrick—the beautiful cone-shaped mountain which rises in solitary grandeur to a height of 2,510 feet over the southern shores of Clew Bay. On the summit of this lofty mountain Patrick spent the whole Lent of the year A.D. 441, or indeed longer, for he ascended on Shrove Saturday, that is the Saturday before Ash Wednesday, and remained there till the eve of Easter Sunday. To this fact, one of the best authenticated in the Life of our Apostle, we owe the origin of the pilgrimage which year after year is made to the wind-swept summit of this mountain. The *Annals of Ulster*, under date A.D. 441, have this entry : “ Leo ordained forty-second Bishop of the Church of Rome, and Patrick the Bishop was approved in the Catholic Faith.” And the Tripartite Life says : “ when Patrick was on Cruachan Aigli he sent Munis (his nephew) to Rome with counsel for the Abbot of Rome (that is the Pope) and relics were given to him”—to bring home to Patrick. These are highly important statements, and taken together give a singularly historic interest to this holy mountain.

We learn from the ancient writers that Patrick dwelt upon the mountain in great discomfort of body and mind, that he prayed and fasted incessantly, and that when he was exhausted by his long suffering and his fierce conflicts with the powers of darkness, the Angel Victor appeared to him, and suggested that he should go down and celebrate the Easter with his friends in the beautiful valley of Aghagower at the foot. How could the “ Reek”—as Croaghpatrick is familiarly called—fail to become a popular place of pilgrimage with the men and women of Ireland for whose salvation the Saint fasted and prayed and sorely mortified himself there during more than forty days and forty nights ?

And so we find it was from the very beginning. The old road on the Aghagower side may still be distinctly traced, for it was trodden through long ages by hundreds of thousands who believed in the promise of pardon said to have been made to Patrick in favour of those who in a true spirit of penance made the pilgrimage to the top. Jocelyn tells us in the twelfth century that crowds of people used in his time to ascend the Reek, and give themselves to fasting and contemplation and prayer. Again in the *Annals of Loch Cé* we read that King Hugh O’Connor cut off the hands and feet of a highwayman who attempted to molest one of the pilgrims thereto. We could multiply indefinitely references from the ancient writers to prove the continuance of the pilgrimage to the Reek down through the centuries even from the time: of St. Patrick himself.

In view, however, of the great difficulty of making the ascent, especially in inclement weather, the late Archbishop of Tuam, Most Rev. Dr. McEvilly, begged authority from Rome to change the place of pilgrimage to the Church at Lecanvey which lies to the north-west at a short distance from the base. On the 27th May, 1883, his Grace's request was formally acceded to, and a plenary indulgence was granted to all who on any day during the months, June, July or August, should visit that church, fulfilling of course certain other necessary conditions ; and a partial indulgence of a hundred days for every single visit made thereto during the same three months.

It has always, however, been found difficult to transfer with any success a place of pilgrimage from the original site, and so we ourselves deemed it expedient to designate again the little oratory on the top called " Templepatrick." This very primitive and unsuitable structure, was replaced in the year 1905, mainly through the exertions of the present zealous administrator of Westport, by a solid concrete building, which will, we hope, for centuries to come admirably serve its holy purpose.

The regular day of pilgrimage is Garland Sunday, that is the last Sunday of July. In the year 1904 we ourselves, accompanied by the Most Rev. Dr. Lyster, Bishop of Achonry, successfully clambered to the top. Again in the following year we ascended, and canonically blessed the little chapel to which reference has just been made. The illustrious Cardinal Primate of Australia, when Bishop of Ossory, also, we have heard, made the rugged climb, and his Eminence will testify that it is an arduous task, and if performed in the spirit of faith and penance, cannot fail to have considerable efficacy towards one's soul's salvation. We are aware, too, that it is his Eminence's fond wish for everything connected with St. Patrick is dear to him that this pilgrimage to the Reek should year after year rapidly grow and prosper, as indeed with the blessing of God it has rapidly grown and prospered for the last six or seven years.

Pilgrimage day this year fell upon the 25th July, just a few days before these words were penned. The leading Catholic journal of Ireland on the following day devoted graphic columns of its space to telling of " the Masses that began on the summit in the mists of the early morning celebrated by priests of different races and countries the ceaseless, laborious climbing of the thousands of pilgrims up the winding way of the mountain till the last arduous stretch which tries the strongest, the penitential fervour and the ardent prayers of young and old from the child of five to the octogenarian the Rosary and other spiritual exercises in Latin and in Irish and in English, the whole living scene of the faith and piety of the greatest pilgrimage of one of the most Catholic of European lands." And it continues, " those who have once taken part in the ascent, and heard Mass at the little shrine on the day of the revived pilgrimage, do not speak of it without a deep emotion as one of the great experiences of a lifetime, the sense of the antiquity and living power of the old religion of the race, the sense of privilege in being where Naomh Padraig was, and praying where he prayed for Ireland. It is well for the country that has such memories and such holy places of its own." And in a similar strain wrote many of the other journals of the British Isles, Protestant as well as Catholic.

A non-Catholic professor of history in Cambridge University—a very learned man—has recently said of Croaghpatrick— " The confined space of its summit is the one spot where we feel some assurance that we can stand literally in Patrick's footsteps, and realise that, as we look southward over the desolate moors and tarns of Murrisk, northward across the bay to the hills of Burrishoole and Erris, and then westward beyond the islets to the spaces of the ocean, we are viewing a scene on which Patrick for many days looked forth with the bodily eye."

And we ourselves lecturing under the shadow of this lordly hill, have told the people who have the happiness of dwelling amid the most sacred scenes of our Apostle's life, how " we have come to love the Reek with a kind of personal love, not merely on account of its graceful symmetry and soaring pride, but also because it is Patrick's holy mountain—the scene of his penance and of his passionate yearning prayers for our fathers and for us. It is to us, moreover, the symbol of Ireland's enduring faith ; and fronting the stormy west, unchanged and unchangeable, it is also the symbol of the constancy and success with which the Irish people faced the storms of persecution during many woeful centuries. It is the proudest and most beautiful of the everlasting hills that are the crown and glory of this western land of ours. When the skies are clear and the soaring cone can be seen in its own solitary grandeur, no eye will turn to gaze upon it without delight. Even when the rain clouds shroud its brow we know that it is still there, and that when the storms have swept over it it will reveal itself once more in all its calm beauty and majestic strength. It is, therefore, the fitting type of Ireland's faith, and of Ireland's nationhood, which nothing has ever shaken, and with God's blessing nothing can ever destroy."

His Eminence Cardinal Moran will no doubt join with us in imploring that the divine blessing may rest on the patrician pilgrimages of Ireland, and that the prayer of Patrick, which he prayed so incessantly for the men of this beloved western land whom " God had given him at the ends of the world," may be a fruitful and efficacious prayer for ever.

[1] This paper appeared in the *Irish Monthly* for June, 1877.

[2] Froude's *Short Studies*, vol. ii., p. 216.

[3] Sir John Lubbock, M.P., gives a somewhat different account of this act of vandalism in his paper " On the Preservation of our Ancient National Mounments," in *The Nineteenth Century*, No. 2, April, 1877.

[4] " They loosed their curse against the king ;
They cursed him in his flesh and bones ;
And daily in their mystic ring
They turned the maledictive stones."

So sings Samuel Ferguson of the priests of Crom, in his *Burial of King Cormac*. In a note he speaks of it as " a pagan practice in use among the Lusitanian, as well as the Insular Celts, and of which Dr. Donovan records an instance among the latter as late as the year 1836, in the Island of Innismurry, off the coast of Sligo."

[5] Paper written, at the request of His Eminence Cardinal Moran, for the Australian Catholic Congress being held at Sydney this year. and love for God ; to obtain by prayer some special grace or favour ; to atone for one's sins, and not unfrequently in fulfilment of a vow.

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