

## Vessels and Visions

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

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The question as to the nature of the vessels in which the early inhabitants of our islands ventured forth upon the ocean must always be an interesting one. Mr. Cecil Torr, in the opening of his work on “ Ancient Ships,” observes that whereas in the Mediterranean Sea the nations inhabiting its shores filled the sea with oared vessels, and oars became the characteristic instruments of navigation, and their arrangement the chief problem in ship building ; on the other hand, the nations of Western Europe, and dwellers by the ocean, devised sailing vessels of different types for voyages on the Atlantic, and oars gradually gave way to sails. In the legends of St. Brendan, vessels with three sails are described. Adamnan mentions no less than nine kinds of vessels as in use among the Scots in his day. Yet it seems as if they might be classed under three heads. First, ships that were built ; secondly, currachs covered with skins ; thirdly, boats of solid wood hollowed out of the stems of trees. They are styled *navis oneraria*, *barca*, *caupullus* or *coblach*, *curuca*, *navicula*, *scapha*, or *cymba*, or *cymbula*, *olnum*, and *navis longa*. In the life of St. Brendan, from the “ Book of Lismore,” when the saint starts in search of the island from which he had seen trains of angels rising to the sky, two kinds of vessels are spoken of in the account of his embarkation ; and, in one instance, vessels built of wood, and not merely hollowed out of trees, are referred to. St. Brendan orders three vessels to be built, “ with three rows of oars to each ship, and three sails of hides and thirty men in each ship.” [1]

“ Three vessels the sage sailed  
Over the wave-voice of the flowing sea ;  
Thirty men in each vessel he had  
Over the storm of the crested sea. ;

And we learn afterwards that these first vessels were covered with hides. When he first returns, after having failed to reach the angelic abode, his mother, Ita, says to him, [2] “ The land which thou art seeking from God thou wilt never find in those dead stained skins, for it is a holy, consecrated land, and men’s blood hath never been spilt therein, howbeit,” she saith, “ let wooden vessels be built by thee, and it is probable that thus thou wilt find the land later.” He then builds in Connaught “ a great marvellous vessel.” [3] In this “ built” vessel he embarks with all his household and his people, [4] among whom wrights and smiths are specially mentioned, and they bring therein a cargo of various plants and seeds. [5]

In Adamnan’s “ Life of Columba” the *navis oneraria* is spoken of as a vessel capable of containing parcels of light timber for building a dwelling-house. We get an idea of the aspect of these boats from a passage in the life of Columba where the sailors are said to hoist their sails in the form of a cross.” [6]

“ When they were returning to Hy with a cargo of wood for building ships, it is said the sailors having raised the sailyards in the form of a cross, and having spread the sails upon them, we put to sea.”

The word *barca* is used to describe the vessel in which a captain and his crew, having sailed from Gaul, arrived at Cantyre.

Ware has some observations on the boats of the ancient Irish ; he says they made use of wicker boats covered with cow-hides, not only on rivers but sometimes in their navigations on the open sea. These little barques were called by them currachs. [7] A similar boat to this is mentioned in a manuscript life of St. Brendan, and termed *navicula*, being a currach or boat brought to Columba across a river which was so shallow that men could ford it on foot. The *cymba* [8] or *cymbula*, was a skiff or boat, a frail vessel such as that in which Columba is said to have embarked in a storm on Lough Ness, but this had sails which carried him against the wind. So we see that, occasionally these currachs were furnished with sailyards, sails, and ropes, as well as oars ; and Adamnan relates that St. Cormac made use of such a boat, with a covering of skins, in his third voyage. [9] Probus, in his life of St. Patrick, speaking of MacFil, Bishop of Man, says that when he was at sea in *navi pellicea*, *i.e.*, in a boat made of skins, the wind being from the north, he was cast upon the Island of Man. Gildas, in his epistle concerning the destruction of Britain, says, “ The rude droves of Scots and Picts throng hastily out of their currachs in which they were transported across the Scythian Channel” (*i.e.*, the Irish Sea). “ They sew skins to skins and plough the pathless seas in furthest parts with keels of leather,” is the description given by Festus Avienus about the beginning of the fifth century.

On one occasion when Cæsar was at war in Arragon, and when he was hemmed in between the rivers Segre and Cinca, and his bridges were destroyed by a violent storm, he ordered his soldiers to make ships of the kind that his knowledge of Britain a few years before had taught him. First, the keels and ribs were made of light timber, then the rest of the hulk of the ships was wrought with wicker work and covered over with hides. See Cæsar’s “ Comm. on the Civil War,” book i., li.

We find details given as to the making of these currachs in second life of St. Brendan. [9]

“ They made a very light barque, ribbed and fenced with timber, and covered it with raw cow-hides, and on the outside they daubed all the jointings of the skins with butter, and put into the vessel materials for making two other boats of other skins, and provisions for forty days, and butter to prepare or dress the skins for the covering of the boat, and other utensils necessary for human life. They also fixed a tree in the midst of the barque, and a sail, and other things belonging to the steering of a boat.”

With respect to the third class, the boats of solid wood, or those hollowed from the stems of trees, we find that the Irish custom seems to have resembled that of the Gauls, who were described as hollowing out the trunk of a tree, either an oak or an alder, as in Dryden’s translation of Virgil we read :

“ Then first on streams the hollowed alder swam.” [10]

Such vessels as these would be the *naves longae* of the Irish, the long ships made of pine or of oak which were brought from Ireland to Iona by Columba, loaded with building materials ; or the boat described by Oengus the Culdee as that in which the humble Egbert is described as crossing the sea. “ He came over the great sea : unto Christ he sang a vigil, in a coracle without a hide around it.” [11]

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 Delepiere 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.

There is a distinct development, a growth and a decay, in the character of these visions in the course of centuries. Their primitive simplicity is modified by the growing familiarity with classical imagery as the writings of the ancients become more widespread. At first they were more of heaven than of hell, but after the ninth century a strongly-marked change is perceptible in the spirit of the dream ; it darkens, or glows, with the lurid light of hell. In details of torture and of misery in a future life, men used these visions as instruments of terror, or even of personal vengeance, and, searching in the literature of the far distant past, they drained the very sources of Greek and Latin mythology for images of dread. When this new phase presents itself the vision becomes a form of poem which embraces all kinds of human misery, giving expression to the rage of the oppressed against the oppressor ; and it is also often used as a means of conveying political, moral, and theological doctrine.

In 824, A.D., Wettin, a monk of Reichenau, anticipates Dante in the introduction of historical characters into his vision ; thus Charlemagne is seen tortured for having given way to luxury. Allusions to contemporary events occur in certain visions after this date, such as we find in that related by Berthold to Hincmar, and evidently composed to serve the purposes of the latter. Political questions were dealt with in the vision of Raduin, the monk of Rheims, and when we arrive at the thirteenth century, in the vision seen in the year 1206 by Thurcill, native of a village near London, a new element appears. Thurcill, living at Fidstude, was devoted to rustic labour and hospitality when Julian l'Hospitalier appeared to him. Then his soul is separated from his body, and he goes through all the trials of purgatory. The new elements in this story, which in time became marked features in the mystery plays, are those of the spectacle, the *mise-en-scène* of the Court of the Prince of Darkness, and the element of the humorous, which give an amusing side to the horrors of the infernal pains.

Hitherto these seers of visions have been out of the body, and only visitants in the spirit to the land of spirits, but in the twelfth century, in the story of Owen Miles, we find it said that he visited hell in the flesh, his soul not being absent from the body, and returning to it as in other instances. His tale is more one of mystic romance than of hallucination, like that of the monk of Evesham.

It is most important to note the transitions to a new phase of belief in the conditions of the soul hereafter, such as may be traced by a comparison of the visions of Fursa and that of Drihthelm, [12] the latter coming some years after the former. While Fursa is immediately borne upwards by angels to enjoy the light and music of the heavenly choir, Drihthelm is drifted away to a region in the north-east, a vast valley, deep, and infinitely long, where, thinking himself in hell, he is told by his miraculous guide that he is only in purgatory. Flame, upon one side, with icy mountains and insufferable cold, hail, and snow, upon the other, where he beholds the souls of men tossed by a stormy wind on every side. Passing

through the valley, he enters a land of darkness at the far end. This is hell, at the side of which he is left alone by his angel guide, and in the depths of which he perceives bubbles like black globes being tossed upwards, and tortured souls flying hither and thither like sparks ; while the air is filled with a horrible stench, and he hears the noise and din of jeering laughter, mingled with the lamentations of devil-tormented souls.

It is believed that the vision of St. Fursa occurred about thirty years before that of Drihthelm, and it will be acknowledged that it is quite as memorable as any one of those here cited. The construction of the piece is interesting. The time is limited to three days, as with our Lord's visit to Hades, and, as in the case of another Irish vision, that of Tundal of Cashel. Paragraphs 4 to 6 contain the vision of heaven in the first day. Paragraphs 7 to 14, the vision first of hell and second of heaven, till mid-night of the third day. Contrary to the usual custom of mediæval visions, heaven occupies the principal place in Fursa's dream, there being, in fact, two scenes in heaven to one in hell. The principal episode in the hell vision is the dispute of the guardian angel with Satan. This argument begins at paragraph 10 and ends at paragraph 13, when the Lord pronounces judgment, and the adversary is conquered. The three attendant angels who protected Fursa in hell, rejoicing in his victory, are surrounded by a great light, and he is instantly transported to heaven (paragraph 13), when the ministration of angels on earth is explained to him. This is followed by the apparition of the two teachers of his youth, Meldan and Beoan, one of whom preaches on the backslidings of the clergy, the other on the inner life. The return of the saint to earth is related in paragraph 23, when he must again pass the fires of hell on his way, and he receives the blow the mark of which remains throughout his earthly career as proof of the reality of his miraculous experiences.

The love of music is singularly manifest throughout these visions of Fursa. At the first moment of his rapture the saint is described singing an evening hymn as he walks homeward, leaning on the arm of his friend. When transported to heaven he hears an angel leading, followed by a chorus, singing psalms and hymns (paragraph 4), "Ibunt Sancti de virtute in virtutem," and "Exierunt obviam Christo ;" paragraph 5, "Videbitur Deus deorum in Syon ;" paragraph 14, "Hosanna Sanctus Deus Sabaoth." It is said that his soul was filled with these sounds of unspeakable joy, upborne by the song, and his spirit was restored by the melody of heaven. That such acknowledgment of the elevating power of music should come from a writer of the seventh century in Ireland need not surprise those who are familiar with our ancient Irish melodies, such as "Erragon More," from the glens of Antrim, or the chants to which our Ossianic fragments have been sung in the present century. It is known that even Dante, in some long-lost work, referred to the antiquity of music in Ireland, as he is quoted by Vincentio Galilei in the following passage on the harp :

"Fu portato d'Irlanda à noi questo antichissimo strumento (*commemorata da Dante*) dove si lavorano in eccellenza et copiosamēte ; gli habitori della quale isola si esercitano molti e molti secoli in essa," etc. [13]

This incidental mention of the name of the great Italian poet leads us on to the question as to the possibility of his having met with these Irish visions of heaven and hell. It has been allowed that the lately recovered vision of St. Peter and those of Paul, Clement, Salvius, Wettin of Reichenau, and Alberic of Monte Cassino, are links in the long chain of Christian writings which culminated in the Divine Comedy. Is it too much to hope that Ireland may be thought to supply fresh links in this memorable chain, since in Irish Christian literature we have no less than five visitants to Hades who have left a record of their revelations : Brendan, Fursa, Adamnan, Tundal, and Owen Miles. The Venerable Bede, who dwells with much reverence on the history of Fursa and his visions, is one of the writers whom Dante specially honoured. He speaks of him in his ninth Epistle. 7, when writing in scorn against the theologians who gave their whole time and study to the forged decretals he says, "deserting Augustine and Gregory, Ambrose, Dionysius, and Beda, men who sought God as their end

and best good ;” and in the tenth canto of the “ Paradiso” he places Bede in the fourth heaven, that of the sun, as forming one of the wreath of blessed spirits standing there with Thomas Aquinas and with Boethius, etc.

“ Vedi oltre fiammeggiar l’ ardente spiro  
D’Isidore, di Beda, e di Riccardo,  
Che a considerar fu piû che viro.”

In the writings of Bede Dante very possibly made acquaintance with the name of St. Fursa. However, if we note as interesting a few parallelisms which occur in his great work and those of his Irish forerunners, it is not that we would impute any plagiarism to him, but that we may perceive that his poem is no sudden and spontaneous growth ; but that, on the contrary, it is linked to an entire cycle of older works, and the result of permanent conditions of thought regarding a future life, and faith in the eternity of the soul, which time cannot destroy. One of the most striking of these parallelisms is to be found in the description in the “ Purgatorio” of the river in the forest, where Dante meets the Countess Matilda, which resembles the river in the voyage of St. Brendan when he and his monks came into the “ Londe of Byheest” (*i.e.*, Promise), where “ all the trees were charged with ripe fruit and herbes full of flower, and at the last they came to a ryver, but they durst not go over.” There came to the river a fair youth who gave them gracious greeting, and told them they had gained sight of the land they sought, the earthly paradise ; but he sent them away laden with fruits, since “ the water of that river divides the two worlds, and no man in this life may cross to the other side.” The fruits he gives ripen all the year round, it is eternal day, eternal spring. In like manner Dante finds himself on the brink of an impassable river. He beholds a fair nymph standing on the opposite bank who tells him that that place was prepared for man as pledge and earnest of eternal peace. Here is perpetual spring and every fruit may ripen, fruits that grow upon no other soil, sown in seed wafted by the winds of Paradise. [14]

Between the visions of Dante and Fursa occasional correspondences may also be traced, as, when the devil quotes Scripture in his arguments with Fursa’s angel, we are reminded of Dante’s “ fools,” who “ reflected back the Scripture image by distortion marred.” [15] And when the guide shows Fursa the fire that burns to consume the sin of fraud, we remember the words of Virgil to Dante, when he tells him that the souls in the seventh circle are accursed who are guilty of

“ Fraud, that in every conscience leaves a sting.” [16]

The third fire which burns in Fursa’s vision for the stirrers-up of strife, corresponds to the third cornice in Dante’s purgatory, where the sin of anger is purged. [17] In the address of Meldan, speaking to Fursa among the heavenly host, he declares that the anger of the Supreme Judge is chiefly kindled against spiritual teachers and leaders, in terms that at once remind us of Dante’s condemnation of the Church, who

“ Mixing two governments that ill assort,  
Hath missed her footing, fallen into the mire,  
And there herself and burthen much defiled.” [18]

And when Beoan warns Fursa to keep himself a faithful steward, and to purge his nature of all desire of gain, we are reminded of the admonition in Dante :

“ Such cleansing from the taint of avarice [19]  
Do spirits converted need.”

Another very remarkable parallel occurs in the passage of Meldan's address : " Let the teachers of the Church be slow to excommunicate, lest they should sustain the accused in his fault, and render the soul barren that might, if fed with spiritual food, have become fruitful," while Dante says :

" War once had for his instrument the sword,  
But now 'tis made, taking the bread away,  
Which the Good Father locks from none ;" [20]

meaning, that it is one of the evils of his day that excommunication, or interdiction of the Eucharist, is employed as a weapon of warfare.

Delepierre, [21] having referred to the theory of Bottari and many other Italian critics, that Dante undoubtedly derived the general plan, as well as many of the details of his work, from the vision of Alberic (A.D. 1170), declares that, in his opinion, on the contrary, if the great poet was indebted to any preceding work, it was rather to Tondal of Cashel (A.D. 1149) than to Alberic that we are to turn for his source. [22]

" Cette Vision de Tondal est peut-être la plus célèbre de toutes, et fut traduite dans la plupart des langues de l'Europe. Par ses détails, c'est une autre ' Divine Comédie en prose... Il est même des passages où, le mérite du style à part, Tondal présente des images plus terribles et plus justes." [23]

It is, however, the opinion of Dean Plumtre [24] that there is no ground even for imputing to Dante any conscious reproduction from the works of those who had preceded him in recording their visions of the Unseen World. " His position is simply that of one who, like all great poets, is the heir of the ages that have preceded him. The supreme artificer uses all materials that he finds ready to hand. Whatever was grotesque, horrible, or foul in the mediæval conceptions of the Unseen World, no less than what was pure, bright, transcendent in its beauty, was likely to find its way into his treasure-house of things new and old, and to be used by him in the spirit of his own, and not of a later, generation."

An exhaustive study of the various incidents in the conceptions of hell and Satan, of heaven and the angels, that appear in these pre-Dantesque works would be of the deepest interest, but time and space will only allow us to consider a few of such which are common to those particular visions already named.

Thus we find that among the many points of resemblance between the incidents of Dante's hell, and those of these earlier visions, may be noted the Bridge of Dread by which the gulf is spanned. In the vision of Wettin of Reichenau (A.D. 824), we read of the bridge that led from the arid plain to the high marble mountains over the river of fire ; and in the vision of Tondal, the long plank, but one foot in width, which spanned the dark abyss, whose depths resound with cries of tortured souls amid clouds of sulphurous smoke. This incident occurs also in the visions of Owen Miles and others, and the idea is borrowed, says J. Labitte, from Persian theogony, whence it has passed into the Koran. It is one of the first traces of the invasion of Oriental legend into the bosom of Christian tradition in the middle age.

Whitley Stokes has drawn attention to a similar incident in his notes on the " Vision of Adamnan" (see Appendix, " Vision of Adamnan").

The conception of hell with all these Irish seers differs essentially from that of the Scandinavian writers, in which fire and heat have no part. Their conception is of a hell of ice and snow, tempests and frozen torrents, and this is thus painted by Shakespeare.

“ To reside  
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice,  
To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,  
And blown with restless violence round about  
The pendent world.” [25]

In Adamnan's hell we have a wall of fire, a river of flame. In Fursa's, four fiery furnaces. Nor is the conception of the devil Scandinavian. The iconography of the devil in the Middle Ages, as we learn it in such frescoes as those of the Campo Santo at Pisa, and on the walls of Byzantine churches, is so strikingly similar to the pictures drawn by these Irish writers that we are tempted to assign to them a common origin. These devils are black, long-necked, scranny, pot-headed, unclean, horrible, flying shadows flitting through flame ; and the devil is called the Adversary, the old Accuser, and compared to a crushed snake with an envenomed head, followed by satellites who quote Scripture, and whose words distil a viper-like poison. [26]

Again, in the conception of heaven, the mediæval ideal of an inclosed space, hedged round by a very great and lofty wall with out any aperture, occurs in Drihthelm's poem, while in that of Fursa no mention of walls or hedges is to be found. Heaven is seen as a flowery plain, with shady bowers in full sunshine, and the air full of harmonious voices mingling with the exhalation of a thousand perfumes.

In the vision of St. Sauve, recorded by Gregory of Tours, as occurring in 584, which precedes that of Fursa by about twenty years, we find that the revelation was much more of heaven than of hell ; but his heaven is also an inclosed place, entered through a shining gate with golden floor. A great multitude, whose voice was as the voice of many waters, stand upon its golden floor, in the midst of ineffable light ; and his body is so fed on perfume that he needs neither food nor drink. Another vision of heaven is given by Anschar at Corbie. With him the blessed were clothed in radiant clouds taking the form of the human body ; and here a beautiful incident in the vision of Fursa is repeated, when a voice full of melody and sweetness is heard to say, “ Return to earth, and stay till purified by martyrdom, and then come back to us ;” and the writer adds, “ my angel guide looked on me tenderly as a mother gazes on her sleeping child, and my soul returned to its earthly habitation.”

By the angels of Fursa's vision we are again reminded of the iconography of the Campo Santo ; they appear as winged hands and winged faces, whose bodies are invisible, lost in dazzling light, or winged birds with human faces.

“ As more and more toward us came, more bright  
Appeared the bird of God.”

Besides the bodiless winged heads, there are three angels who protect and guide St. Fursa on his way through hell, and his approach to heaven. We may believe them to have been endowed with noble form and countenance, in their presence the flames of hell can do him no hurt, and one of them, armed with shield and sword, who goes before, is Michael. We cannot remember any passage in early Christian poetry showing a finer ideal of the mission and the ministry of angels than that (in c. 14) which is conveyed in the angel's answer to Fursa, when he, rapt in the beauty of the heavenly music, as it swells upon his ear, says, half in wonder, half in envy, “ It is great joy to hear these songs.” To whom the angel of the Lord replied : “ We may not often hear them. We are the ministers of man, and we must toil and labour in his service, lest demons destroying human hearts should make our labour vain.” This calls to mind a passage in the “ Vision of Adamnan” where the seven thousand angels are described who spread their light and radiance through the heavenly city, and to whom the mission is given to minister to those who do not reach that city, but who yet are predestined to attain its

blessedness. These men the angels haunt, “ changefully and restlessly, in heights and in hills, in moors and in morasses, till doom shall come to them.” Even thus are those hosts and their assemblies, and a comrade angel in lowliness and attendance on every single soul that is therein.

And now I must ask you to forgive me for the undue length to which this letter has run. My only excuse is the great desire I feel that I should leave no point neglected which may awaken your interest in a subject that has been a source of pure delight to myself ; and none the less so because I have learned that the more we search into the past history of the inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland, their arts and customs, the more we perceive the unity that prevailed among them ; and that it is because their occasional differences were the exception, not the rule, that historians have hitherto given such differences undue prominence.

Although the nature of my subject has compelled me to confine myself to Ireland, yet you will find many indications through out these pages of the friendly intercourse, the unity of aim, similarity of customs that prevailed in Ireland, Scotland, and England in the seventh century. [27] If Anglo-Saxons visited the schools of the west of Ireland, Irishmen in their turn travelled to East Anglia, and entered into the labours of the early teachers of Christianity there. When the Irish Mauguille retires to his hermitage in Picardy, it is the British Wulgan from Canterbury who crosses the sea to soothe his later days. If an Irishman be the patron of Péronne, yet Irish, Scotch, and English together frequented the monastery there, through subsequent centuries, and were all classed by the natives of the place under the one word British ; while to this day that part of the town they occupied is called the British quarter, and the old gate through which these travellers entered is styled Porte de Brétagne. And while we exalt the beauty of our early Irish art, it must never be forgotten that the Gaulish patron of art, St. Eloi, had Teilo the Anglo-Saxon as partner in his labours, and his assistant in those wonderful works in jewellery and metal-work whose fame has descended to the present day. This Teilo succeeded Eloi as Master of the Mint, and ended his days with Eloi, labouring as a Christian missionary at the same time, and in the same fields, as St. Fursa and his companions. It is well to keep these facts in our mind if we would be saved from that spirit of exclusive patriotism which seeks to exalt our own country at the expense of our neighbours. It is while keeping clear of all such narrow tendencies that I again invite you to follow me in thought to those foreign scenes where the influence of Ireland for good was strong in the distant past.

[1] See “ Lives of Saints, from the Book of Lismore,” p. 253, edited, with translation, etc., by Whitley Stokes, D.C.L. Oxford, Clarendon Press.

[2] See “ Lives of SS. from the Book of Lismore,” p. 253, edited, with translation, etc., by Whitley Stokes, D.C.L. Oxford, Clarendon Press.

[3] This vessel, we must conclude, was regularly built, not hollowed out of a tree, and not wicker, covered with skins.

[4] Lives of the Saints, from the Book of Lismore,” p. 257.

[5] Ibid., p. 106.

[6] Reeves, “ Columba,” p. 178. Such a vessel marks one of the purely Christian types of Gnostic gems illustrated by King, which we have chosen as the stamp for the binding of this work.

[7] Lutan (“ Pharsalia,” bk. iv., l. 136) describes such boats of osiers :

“ The bending willow into barks they twine,  
Then line the work with skins of slaughtered kine.”

And he adds that with such boats the Venetian fishers float through the marshes of the Po, and the Britons navigate the ocean.



- [7] Cymbæ, according to Mr. Cecil Torr (*op. cit.*, p. 112), were vessels of a type invented in Phœnicia ; but Latin authors applied the name to any boat.
- [8] Reeves, "Columba," p. 169.
- [9] See "Notes to Metrical Life of St. Brendan," p. 5, and notes p. 58 (Thos. Wright, Percy Society), for another version of this curious description of a very primitive ship.
- [10] Virgil, "Georgics," i., 136.
- [11] See "Calendar of Oengus." By Whitley Stokes, LL.D., Dublin, 1880.
- [12] Drycthelm—Drihthelm—a landowner dwelling at Cuningham in Northumbria (Mon., "Hist. Brit.," 260 ; and Stevenson's "Note on Bede," "H. E.," v. 12.), who is said to have died in the middle of the night, and to have revived at dawn. While separate from the body he had visions of purgatory—Gehenna, the place of imperfect happiness, and the vicinity of the celestial kingdom. He is said to have been so profoundly impressed by this experience that the whole course of his life was altered. He left home and lands, and breaking through all earthly ties, became a recluse in a cell near Melrose.
- [13] V. Galilei, "Dialogo," p. 143. "Harpa venuta à noi d'Irlanda."
- [14] "Purg.," c. xxviii., l. 30.
- [15] "Par.," c. xiii., l. 123.
- [16] "Hell," c. xi., l. 55.
- [17] "Purg.," xv., xvi., l. 24.
- [18] "Purg.," c. xvi., l. 129.
- [19] *Ibid.*, c. xix., l. 115.
- [20] "Par.," c. viii., l. 123.
- [21] "L'Enfer, Essai philosophique, par Octave Delepierre," p. 63.
- [22] Tundal—Tungalus. Dungal, or Donngal, was probably the real name. The name Donngal, as borne by a king of Cashel, A.D. 851, occurs in the "Annals of the Four Masters." The vision is said to have been written (? copied) by an Irish monk for an abess in South Germany, who lived A.D. 1149, in the reign of King Stephen of England (Delepierre, pp. 64 and 78) : and Prosper Marchand states that John 22nd based on the work of Tundal his doctrine that the faithful would not enjoy his beatitude, or the sinner suffer his chastisement, till after the last judgment.
- [23] See "L'Enfer," p. 63. :
- [24] See "Commedia and Canzoniere of Dante Alighieri," translated by E. H. Plumtre, D.D., Dean of Wells, pp. 371, 373.
- [25] "Measure for Measure," Act iii., Sc. i.
- [26] See "Christian Iconography," Bohn, vol. ii., p. 126.
- [27] It is known that Aldfrid, King of Northumbria, when in exile, was educated in Ireland (*circa* 685), and, while living there, was named Flann Finna. A very ancient Irish poem said to be written by him in praise of Ireland is still extant. See "Story of Early Gaelic Literature," by Douglas Hyde, LL.D., p. 17.

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

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