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CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

BEGINNINGS OF IRISH MONASTICISM

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE SEMINARY FACULTY

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

BACHELOR OF DIVINITY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

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PART I: ST. PATRICK, THE FOUNDER OF IRISH MONASTICISM

CHAPTER I: HIS CAPTIVITY AND ESCAPE

As Alaric and his Goths entered Italy and Emperor Honorius summoned his Britannic legion to protect Rome, Britain lay helpless and at the mercy of their old enemies. During the disorders which preceded the departure of the Roman army from the Island, King Miall, the High-king of Ireland joined in marauding expeditions which vexed and terrified Britain. It was at this crisis in history that a fleet of Irish freebooters made the raid upon the western coast of Britain which was to shape the whole life of a sixteen year old decurion's son¹, who introduces himself in his Confession: "I, Patrick, a sinner, the rudest and least of all the faithful, and contemptible to very many, had for my father Calpornius, a deacon², the son of Potitius, a priest, who lived in Bannavon Taberniae³, for he had a small country house close by, where I was taken captive when I was nearly sixteen years of age⁴."

Born in the year A.D. 385 or 386 of Christian parents, Patrick had been educated in the Christian faith and taught the Scriptures. But he confessed that he had led the life of a careless boy who made

1. J. B. Bury, The Life of St. Patrick, 25-26.

2. Bury suggested that Calpornius belonged to the class of decurions who had sought ordination in order to escape the oppression of Roman taxation. Ibid., 18-20.

3. Bannavon Taberniae was either near the estuary of the Clyde in South Scotland or near the estuary of the Severn in South Wales. Cf. James Veal, "St. Patrick's Confession," Ecclesiastical Review, (March, 1939), 207. The latter site is the one supported by most modern historians. Cf. Hugh DeBlacem, Saint Patrick, Apostle of Ireland, 1.

4. St. Patrick, "Confession," translated in The Life of Saint Patrick by M.F. Cusack, 530.

light of the admonitions and corrections of his parish priest¹. It must be remembered that Patrick looked back on the days of his youth with the eyes of one who had received a monastic training at the time when monasticism was at the height of its vigor and fervor and stood out in Christendom as a contrast not only to the vices but also to the follies and frivolities of social decadence in the Roman world.²

The actual realization of his careless and evil habits came to Patrick after he, together with a large group of his fellow countrymen,³ had been taken captive to Ireland. "And there the Lord showed me my unbelief, that at length I might remember my iniquities, and strengthen my whole heart towards the Lord my God, who looked down upon my humiliation, and had pity upon my youth and ignorance, and kept me, before I knew him, and before I had wisdom, or could distinguish between good and evil,⁴ and strengthened and comforted me as a father would his son."

This conversion took place during the six years of captivity under a master⁵ who lived near the wood of Fochlad in the north-western part of Connaught, which to this day is a wild and desolate land.⁶ Maybe Patrick

1. St. Patrick, op. cit., 580.

2. Eoin MacNeill, St. Patrick, 11-12.

3. "I was brought captive to Ireland, with many thousand men." St. Patrick, op. cit., 580.

4. Ibid., 581.

5. Bury rejects the common tradition that this master was Miliucc, whose homestead was in northern Dalaradia and that Patrick herded his groves of pigs on Mount Miss. Cf. Bury, op. cit., 28-30.

6. Ibid., 27-28.

had not given much thought to his religion while at home, but now as a slave in a foreign land he devoted more time to his God. He burned with the ardor of religious emotion;

But after I had come to Ireland I was daily tending sheep, and I prayed frequently during the day, and the love of God, and His faith and fear, increased in me more and more, and the spirit was stirred; so that in a single day I have said as many as a hundred prayers, and in the night nearly the same, so that I remained in the woods, and on the mountain even before the dawn, I was roused to prayer, in snow, and ice, and rain, and I felt no injury from it, nor was there any slothfulness in me, as I see now, because the spirit was then fervent in me.¹

2

Patrick wrote how his captivity came to an end. He claimed divine guidance, because one night a voice informed him that he would soon return to his home-land. This voice next told him that a ship would be waiting for him at a strange port on the south-eastern coast. But when he arrived here the captain of the ship refused to take this fugitive slave as one of his passengers. Later he relented and furnished Patrick with quarters on board ship. It was a three day journey during which time Patrick refused to associate with the heathen crew, although he remained with the group with the hope "that they would come into the faith of Jesus Christ, for they were Gentiles."⁴

Patrick then told of a journey through an unpopulated and barren country: "and for twenty-eight days we journeyed through a desert ,⁵

1. St. Patrick, op. cit., 587.

2. Ibid., 588-590.

3. "It is most likely to have been an Irish ship manned by Irishmen, for Patrick says that they were heathens and few of the people of Britain or Gaul were accounted heathens in his time." MacNeill, op. cit., 589.

4. This desert was created by the invasion of the Vandals in western and south-western Gaul at this period. Cf. Bury, op. cit., 35.

5. St. Patrick, op. cit., 589.

and their provisions failed, and they suffered greatly from hunger.¹ When their food supply gave out, the leader asked Patrick to pray for divine aid. And we find full faith in the power of prayer evident in Patrick's reply: "Turn sincerely to the Lord my God, to whom nothing is impossible, that He may send us food on your way until ye are satisfied, for it abounds everywhere for Him." The hope that God would hear their prayer was fulfilled, because they discovered on the road a herd of swine, which furnished them meat. They also found some wild honey.² Then Patrick related a strange dream in which a huge rock was pressing down upon him, and how, after he had called to Elias, a bright light removed the heavy weight.

CHAPTER II: HIS MONASTIC TRAINING

After they had come to the habitations of men, Patrick parted from his companions. "And again, after a few years, I was with my relations in Britain."⁴ Most likely his homeward journey was interrupted⁵ by visits to the monasteries, such as Lerins, which were springing up

1. St. Patrick, op. cit., 589.

2. Bury explained this dream by saying that it shows the intense religious excitement of Patrick at this period, ready to see in the most trivial occurrence a direct interposition from heaven. Bury, op. cit., 33-34.

3. All evidence points to the fact that this final destination was Italy. Ibid., 36.

4. St. Patrick, op. cit., 591.

5. Later in his Confession Patrick related that part of his life between this escape and his mission to Ireland was passed in Gaul. A saying of his preserved in the Book of Armagh (Appendix II, B) says: "I had the fear of God for my guide on my journey through Gaul and Italy and the islands of the Tyrrhene Sea." MacNeill, op. cit., 30.

throughout Italy, Gaul and on the islands which dotted the coast of the
¹
 Tyrrheno Sea .

When Patrick returned home, his kinsfolk received him as a
 son and begged him to remain with them. But here one night he saw the
²
 vision in which the man, Victorious, presented him with many letters,
 one letter containing the title "The Voice of the Irish." At this time
 he heard voices of persons whom he had known in Ireland, pleading for
³ ⁴
 his return . Other dreams convinced him that his mission in life was
 to bring the Gospel to the heathen Irish people, so he left Britain to

1. "In the later part of the fourth century the influence of the Eastern on the Western mind had displayed itself not only in theological thought, but also in the spread of asceticism and the foundation of monastic societies, especially through the influence of men like Ambrose, Martin of Tours, and Jerome. In choosing their lonely dwelling-places, the eyes of anchorets did not overlook the little deserted islands which lay here and there off the western Mediterranean." Bury, *op. cit.*, 37-38. Bury is quite certain that he visited the monastery of Honoratus on the islet of Lerinus, because he writes: "There can be no doubt that the years which he spent at Lerinus exercised an abiding influence on Patrick. He was brought under the spell of the monastic ideal; and though his life was not to be sequestered, but out in the active world of men, monastic societies became a principal and indispensable element in his idea of a Christian Church." *Ibid.*, 40-41.

2. MacNeill thinks that there can be no doubt that Patrick took this vision for a call from God. It decides his mind to become a missionary to the heathen Irish and it assured him at the same time that his vocation to that work came to him from God. MacNeill, *op. cit.*, 34.

3. "I thought I heard in my mind the voice of those who were near the wood of Foeluti, which is near the western sea; and they cried out: "We entreat thee, holy youth, to come and walk still amongst us." And my heart was greatly touched, so that I could not read any more, and so I awoke." St. Patrick, *op. cit.*, 252.

4. *Ibid.*, 592-3.

seek his theological training on the Continent ¹.

It was necessary for Patrick not only to train himself, but also to win the support ² for his enterprise from influential authorities in the Christian Church. And it was Auxerre³ famous in northern Gaul through the virtues of its bishop, Amator, that Patrick chose as a place for study. And if the tradition recorded by Muirchu (Appendix II, C) is correct, Patrick made his home at Auxerre until he began his missionary work in Ireland. We are told that he studied the "Canon," or the text of the Old and the New Testament, under Germanus, who succeeded Amator about A.D. 418. During this period he must have acquired that profound intimacy with the Bible which his writings reflect. ⁴ Other studies than

1. At this time western Christendom was agitated by a controversy opened by a man of Irish descent Pelagius, whose Irish folks settled in western Britain, was in Rome when Patrick was enslaved in Ireland. His teachings, also were familiar to the men in the new monastic foundations of that day. Bury claims that this Pelagian controversy impressed upon Patrick's mind the plight of the unbaptized people in Ireland. Bury, op. cit., 43-47.

2. Even if he had been already in clerical orders, it would have been the mere adventure of a wild fanatic, and would have excited general disapprobation, to set sail in the first ship that left Britain for Ireland. Ibid., 48.

3. There is evidence that Auxerre was a resort of Irish Christians for theological study. When Patrick was ordained deacon, two other men, who were to help spread Christianity in Ireland, were ordained at the same time. Ibid., 49.

4. In the 83 short paragraphs of his Confession there are more than 200 quotations from the Bible. These quotations are from the Old Latin versions and Jerome's Vulgate. Hence Patrick must have used a mixed text, Old Latin and Vulgate, such as was in common use in the fifth century. A. H. Forster, "Saint Patrick in Fact and Fiction," Anglican Theological Review, (July, 1928), 26.

Scripture he seems never to have attempted, in striking contrast with the leading church men of his age in Gaul, all of whom had received the education of their class in style and classical literature. Even later in life this successful Irish Missionary claimed that his secular education had been inadequate: "I blush today and greatly dread to expose my ignorance, because I am not able to express myself briefly, with clear and well arranged words, as the spirit desires and the mind and the intellect point out."

At one of the conferences at which some of Patrick's associates of the clergy were present, there was brought forward the project of doing missionary work in Ireland. Patrick eager to accept such a call then experienced one of the greatest disappointments in his life, which he recalls in his Confession: "And when I was tried by some of my elders, who came and spoke of my sins as an objection to my laborious episcopate, I was on that day, sometimes, strongly driven to fall away here and forever. But the Lord spared a proselyte and a stranger for His name's sake, and mercifully assisted me greatly in that affliction, because I was not entirely deserving of reproach." This fault which was charged against him he had at one time confessed to a friend, as he later laments:

1. St. Patrick, op. cit.; 584.

2. Such outstanding men as Honoratus, Hilary, Eucherius, Lupus, Vincentius, Faustus, and Germanus. Cf. John Ryan, Irish Monasticism, 66.

3. St. Patrick, op. cit., 593.

4. MacNeill thinks that this sin was only a fault of the tongue but grave enough to be remembered and confessed at the time of his ordination to the diaconship. MacNeill, op. cit., 11.

"they found me after thirty years, and brought against me words that I had confessed before I was a deacon; from anxiety, with sorrow of mind I told my dearest friend what I had done in my youth, in one day, nay, rather in one hour, because I was not then able to overcome. ... How, then, did it happen to him that, afterwards, before all persons, good and bad, he should detract me publicly, when he had before this freely and gladly praised me?"¹

²
Fourteen years passed before he turned his eyes in the direction of Ireland. Celestine, the bishop of Rome, had sent the deacon Palladius, who had helped in the extermination of British Pelagianism,³ to the Christian communities in Ireland. But the mission of Palladius

1. St. Patrick, op. cit., 593-594.

2. Ibid., 50.

3. Before Patrick's arrival as missionary in Ireland (431) we find the following statement in The Chronicle of Prosper of Aquitaine: "Ad Scotus in Christum credentes ordinatur a Papa Celestino Palladius, et primus episcopus mittitur." This statement that an early Christian group existed in Ireland before the coming of Palladius is substantiated by the traditional account in the Book of Armagh (Appendix II, B) and the Tripartite Life of St. Patrick. (Appendix II, G) Also the general policy of Loigaire, High King of Ireland, A.D. 428-463, not to be hostile to the spreading of Christianity by Patrick, and the curious wordings of the Druid's prophecies concerning the coming of Christianity, which betray in their language some acquaintance with the ritual of the Christian church, indicate the previous existence of Christianity in Ireland. Cf. F. E. Warren, "Conversion of the Kelts," The Cambridge Medieval History, II, 502-504. This Christianity was introduced into Ireland by the Christian captives of Irish raids into England and Wales in the course of the fourth century. Although there is sufficient evidence to prove the existence of some Christianity in Ireland before A.D. 432, still the majority of the Irish population at that date was pagan, and "the conversion of Ireland to Christianity was mainly though not entirely the work of St. Patrick: he is not, therefore, to be robbed of his title of Apostle of the Irish." Ibid., 505.

in 43 was a failure either through his missionary incapacity, or more probably through his early death. About the time of the death or departure of Palladius, Patrick set out to do his mission work in Ireland.

CHAPTER III: HIS MISSIONARY WORK

After Patrick had been consecrated in 432 A.D. by Germanus, the bishop of Auxerre and brilliant successor of Amator, he left Gaul for Ireland. More this forty-three year old missionary from the very beginning made it his wise policy ¹ to approach the kings of the petty kingdoms which made up Ireland and over whom certain rights were held by Loigaire, son of Niall, the High King of Ireland.

Patrick landed near Wicklow and then sailed north up the coast to a little island later called Inis-patrick. He then passed up the narrow sea-passage into lake Strangford in that southern part of ² Dalradia which is now County Down. He landed on the southern shore of ³ this lake to convert Dichu, the proprietor of that district. After he had tried unsuccessfully to convert his old master, Miliucc, he was

1. Tribal loyalty was strong, and if the petty king or chieftain was won over (or even if like king Loigaire he sanctioned the mission without being converted himself), the conversion of his tribe was facilitated, if not certain to follow." Ibid., 506.

2. The principle sources for detailed information in regard to his work in Ireland are the Breviarium by Tirechan (Appendix II, A) and the Tripartite Life (Appendix II, G) which shows evidence of having been written by the same Tirechan. The history of Patrick by Muirchu, so far as it deals with his missionary work, is confined to a small number of more or less dramatic anecdotes. How much there is in these earliest biographies that reaches back in tradition to the actual facts and how much represents a later legendary growth is a problem not easily solved. These writings are closely connected with the temporal aims and interests of the church of Armagh. MacNeill, op. cit., 70.

3. Bury, op. cit., 84.

granted a site for a Christian establishment at Saul¹ by Dihu. In this vicinity Bright, Rathoolpa, and Downpatrick, also have a traditional connection with Patrick. Other places associated with his activities are Trim and Dunshaughlin in Meath, which are not far from the royal hill of Tara, and Donagh-patrick where Conall, brother of king Loigaire, was converted. Next he advanced into Ulster, where he destroyed the idol Crom Cruaich in the plain of Slecht and founded churches at Aghanagh, Shancough, Tannaoh, and Carrselire².

Patrick now turned south to found the church of Agagower on the confines of Mayo and Galway, not far from the hill Crochan-Aigh³. There is also evidence that he made a journey into Connaught and still later⁴ into the territory⁵ of king Amolngaid. Here he built a church and set up a cross in a spot which still bears the local name of Crosspatrick.

1. Dihu granted Patrick this site on a hill not far from his fortress, and a wooden barn was said to have been turned into a place of Christian worship. "Sabhall" or "Saul", a word said to be borrowed from "Stabulum," cattlestall or sheepfold. *Ibid.*, 87.

2. All in the county of Sligo Warren, *op. cit.*, 506.

3. Croagh-Patrick, on the summit of which he was believed to have spent forty days and nights in prayer. *Ibid.*, 506.

4. *Ibid.*, 507. To be dated thirteen years after Patrick's arrival in Ireland.

5. Including the wood of Focklad, where, according to the most probable interpretation of documents he had wandered in the days of his early captivity. *Ibid.*, 507.

"No act of Patrick had more decisive consequences for ecclesiastical history of the island than the foundation ... of the church and monastery of Ardd Mache, in the kingdom of Oriel." ¹ King Daire furnished him (A.D. 444) a small tract of ground at the eastern foot of the hill Ardd Mache, "the height of Macha," and this was the beginning of what was later to become the chief ecclesiastical city of Ireland, Armagh. After his conversion king Daire resolved that the monastery should be moved from the bottom to the site on top of the hill of Macha. And here, ² although Patrick does not mention the fact in any of his writings, tradition claims was the special residence of Patrick.

There is also evidence that Patrick was active in south Ireland. He is said to have baptised the sons of Dunlang, king of Leinster, the sons of Natfraich, king of Munster, and Crimthann, the son of Endoe, a ³ sub-king. But evidently his mission work was needed more in the northern part of Ireland where his glory still shines from Armagh.

The last years and death of Patrick are dimmed with legends, ⁴ but it seems probable that he retired to Dalradia, and spent the last three or four years of his life at Saul, where he had founded his first church. He died in A.D. 461 and was buried near the mouth of the Slaney river in Dawn, where he had first landed at the commencement of his ⁵ missionary journeys in Ireland.

1. Bury, op. cit., 154.

2. Ibid., 156-160.

3. His residence and territory were on the banks of the Slaney river in Wexford. Warren, op. cit., 507.

4. The earliest accounts of Patrick's last days were written more than two centuries after his death. They are heavily tinged with legend, and reflect the rivalries of the time when they were written. MacNeill, op. cit., 122.

5. Warren, op. cit., 507.

CHAPTER IV: HIS CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE, WORSHIP AND PRACTICES

When one reads the Confession and Letter of St. Patrick, he is immediately struck by the similarity between these writings and the letters of the Apostle Paul. The Irish missionary quotes again and again words from the pen of the inspired missionary. And it is interesting to note that such a comparison can be extended to their persons and lives. Both men living in a Roman world were given a native and a Roman name.¹ Both men became missionaries to a heathen people after having experienced an unnatural command.² Paul had separated himself from society to prepare himself in the desert of Arabia, while Patrick left home to prepare himself in the lonely monasteries of Gaul. Both of these unmarried men devoted their entire lives to the passionate search for lost souls. But let us continue this comparison while we consider the different quotations from Patrick's Confession which portray the essence of his Christian faith that was later to be taught in the Irish monasteries the first centuries after his death.

This faith of Patrick was not discolored by a self righteous attitude. "I, Patrick, a sinner" are the opening words of both Confession and Letter, and this same repentant and humble thought is repeated in his words: "but the flesh, which is in enmity, always draws me to death, that is, to unlawful desires, that must be unlawfully gratified."³

1. Patrick also had the native name of Suicat. He was thus double-named as the Apostle Paul who had both a Roman and Jewish name. Bury op. cit., 23.

2. Paul met Christ on the road to Damascus, while Patrick saw a vision and heard Irish voices calling him one night in Britain.

3. St. Patrick, op. cit., 602-603.

Realizing his utter weakness to fulfill the Law of his God "this poor
 and miserable creature"¹ put complete trust in his Lord and Savior:

"Therefore, I give unceasing thanks to my God, who preserved me faithful
 in the day of my temptation, so that I can, today, offer him sacrifice
 confidently, the living sacrifice of my soul to Christ my Lord, who
 preserved me from all my troubles."² And this penitent sinner placed his
 entire trust upon Christ and determines to devote his life to His cause,
 which is to become the goal of all those who entered his monastic in-
 stitutions: "But I hope that which I am bound to do, but trust not myself
 as long as I am in this body of death, for he is strong who daily tries
 to turn me from the faith, and from the sincere religious chastity to
 Christ my Lord, to which I have dedicated myself to the end of my life."³

In his Confession Patrick did not only reveal his orthodox
 position in regard to the doctrines of sin, grace, and sanctification,
 but he also included a confession which echoes the thought of the Apos-
 tle's Creed:

For there is no other God, nor ever was, nor shall be here-
 after, except the Lord, the unbegotten Father, without begin-
 ning, by whom all things have their being, who upholds all
 things, as we have said; and His Son, Jesus Christ, whom,
 together with the Father, we testify to have always existed
 before the origin of the world, spiritually with the Father,
 ineffably begotten before every beginning; and by Him were
 the visible things made; was made man, death being overthrown,
 in the heavens. And He hath given Him all power over every
 name of things in heaven, and earth, and hell, that every
 tongue should confess to Him that Jesus Christ is Lord, and

1. Ibid., 607.

2. Ibid., 596.

3. Ibid., 602.

whose coming we expect ere long to judge the living and dead; who will render to every one according to his works; who hath poured forth abundantly on us both the gift of His Spirit and the pledge of immortality; who makes the faithful and obedient to become the sons of God and co-heirs with Christ; whom we confess and adore one God in the Trinity of the holy Name. For he Himself has said by the prophet: Call upon me in the day of thy trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt magnify me. And again he says: It is honorable to reveal and confess the works of God.¹

The Lorica of St. Patrick (Appendix I, D) expressed this same pure and orthodox faith which must have been the guiding light for the monastery of that day.

The early Irish monastery was to be the headquarters for missionaries.² Their example was to be found in the person of Patrick, because with the boldness of conviction he had fearlessly preached Christ and baptised his new converts: "In the measure therefore of faith of the Trinity it behoves me to distinguish without shrinking from danger, and to make known the gift of God, and everlasting consolation, and without fear, confidently to spread abroad the name of God everywhere, so that after my death I may leave it to my Gallican brethren and to my sons, many thousands of whom I have baptized in the Lord."³

The other sacrament, Holy Communion, was undoubtedly distributed in both kinds, as can be later evidenced in the old Irish hymn:

Sancti, venite
Christi corpus sumite;
Sanctum bibentes
Quo redempti sanguinem.
Salvati Christi

Oh! come, ye holy ones,
Christ's body receive;
Come, drink the Sacred Blood,
For life it will give.
Saved by Christ's Body

1. Ibid., 581-583.

2. The first monasteries were doubtless missionary stations, similar to those which were to be founded later in the eighth century by Boniface in Germany. Louis Gougaud, Christianity in Celtic Lands, 65.

3. Ibid., 586.

Corpore et sanguine,
 A quo refecti
 Laudes dicamus Deo
 Alpha et omega
 Ipse, Christus Dominum,
 Venit, venturus
 Judicare hominus.

And saved by His Blood
 Refreshed now and strengthened,
 Sing praises to God.
 He comes, the first, the last,
 Himself, the Christ our Lord,
 He who shall come to judge us
 For every act and word.¹

Patrick would often voice with Paul-like phrases his willing-
 2
 ness to suffer for Christ: "so that I came to the Irish people to preach
 the Gospel, and bear with the injuries of the unbelieving, and listen to
 the reproach of being a stranger, and endure many persecutions, even to
 chains, and to give up my freedom for the benefit of others. And if I
 be worthy, I am ready to give up my life unhesitatingly and most cheer-
 fully for His name, and thus, if the Lord permit, I desire to spend it
 even until my death. For I am truly a debtor to God, who has given me
 so much grace, that many people should be born again to God through me."³

This same thought is expressed in his words:

And if I have done anything good for my God, whom I love, I
 beseech Him to grant to me that with those proselytes and
 captives I may pour out my blood for his name, even if my
 body should be denied burial, and be miserably torn limb from
 limb by dogs or fierce beasts, or that the birds of heaven should
 devour it. I believe most certainly that if this should happen
 to me, I have gained both soul and body; for it is certain
 that we shall rise one day in the brightness of the sun --
 that is, the glory of Christ Jesus our Redeemer, as sons of
 God, but as joint heirs with Christ; and to become conformable
 to His image.⁴

1. This communion hymn was preserved in the Antiphonarium
 Benchorense from a missal of the 6th century. Cusack, op. cit., 516.

2. Ibid. 598.

3. Gougaud claims that this burning zeal and the ardent tem-
 perament of the newly won converts accounts for the extraordinary develop-
 ment of the Irish monasteries. Gougaud, op. cit., 65.

4. Ibid., 612.

But even here there is no trace of the exaggerated asceticism which had existed the foregoing century in Eastern monasticism and was to appear in the later centuries in Irish foundations. In fact, the nearest approach to such practices would be found in the early captivity of Patrick where he prayed while tending his flocks. He said: "I prayed frequently during the day, and the love of God, and His faith and fear, increased in me more and more, and the spirit was stirred; so that in a single day I have said as many as a hundred prayers, and in the night nearly the same, so that I remained in the woods, and on the mountain, even before the dawn, I was roused to prayer, in snow, and ice, and rain, and I felt no injury from it, nor was there any slothfulness in me, as I see now, because the spirit was then fervent in me."¹

Again we must think of Paul in Corinth when Patrick explained his missionary policy not to accept any gifts from his new converts:

But when it happened that I baptized so many thousand men, did I expect even half a 'scorepall' from them? Tell me, and I will return it to you. Or when the Lord ordained clergy through my humility and ministry, did I confer the grace gratuitously? If I asked of any of them even the value of my shoe, tell me, and I will repay you more. I rather spent for you, as far as I was able; and among you and everywhere for you I endured many perils in distant places, where none had been further or had ever come to baptize, or ordain the clergy, or confirm the people. By the grace of the Lord I labored freely and diligently in all things for your salvation.²

But Patrick also had a policy which had no parallel in the life of Paul. He would purchase the good will and protection of the kings and judges by giving them presents: "At this time also I used to give re-

1. Ibid., 587.

2. Ibid., 605.

wards to kings, whose sons I hired, who travel with me, and who understand nothing but to protect me and my companions. ... You know how much I expended on the judges in the districts which I visited most frequently. For I think I paid them not less than the hire of fifteen men, that you might have the benefit of my presence and that I might always enjoy you in the Lord.¹

And with a short confession in the Triune God, Patrick concluded his Confession : "But we who believe in and adore the true sun, Christ, who will never perish, neither he who shall do His will, but even as Christ shall abide for ever, who reigns with God the Father Almighty, and with the Holy Spirit, before the ages, and now, and forever and ever. Amen."²
³

1. Ibid., 605-606.

2. Ibid., 611.

3. Ibid., 611.

PART II: THE EARLY IRISH MONASTERY

CHAPTER I: FOUNDATION OF THE MONASTERY

The preaching of Patrick and his fellow missionaries was blessed with many Irish converts. And a large number of these men and women forsook the superstitious teachings of the Druids¹ not only to accept the Christian faith but also to devote their lives to the maintenance and the spread of Christ's church in Ireland. Patrick wrote in his Letter (Appendix I, A, 2) concerning this zealous group which had been "cruelly cut up and slain" by the soldiers of Coroticus; "Ravening wolves have scattered the flock of the Lord, which, with the greatest diligence, was increasing in Ireland; the sons of the Irish, and the daughters of kings, who are monks and virgins of Christ, are too many to enumerate." He also mentioned in his Confession that the "sons of the Scoti and daughters of princes are seen to be monks and virgins of Christ."²

There is little information concerning the origin of monasticism in Ireland, although this system did play a prominent part in the

1. "The chief pretenders to the possession of wizardry and powers of divination in Ireland were the Druids, who correspond, but not in all respects, to the Druids of Gaul. They joined to their supernatural lore innocent secular learning, skill in poetry, and knowledge of the laws and history of their country. They gave the kings advice and educated their children. The high value which was attached to their counsels rested naturally on their prophetic powers. They practiced divination in various forms, with inscribed rods of yew, for instance, or by means of magic wheels." Bury, op. cit., 76.

2. St. Patrick, op. cit., 601.

Christianising of the country. The monastery was built primarily for the purpose and the furtherance of missionary endeavors. So a number of men from different lands and stations of life would build their mission station near the church of the community where they would prepare themselves and others for the Irish mission field, or would copy and study the Scriptures to be used for such preaching, or would go out to contact those heathen in the neighborhood who still clung to the Druidical superstitions. Such men were to be inspired by the Paul-like Patrick whose burning enthusiasm for mission work is so Scripturally expressed in his

Confession:

For I am truly a debtor to God, who has given me so much grace, that many people should be born again to God through men and that for them everywhere would be ordained priests for this people, newly come to the faith, which the Lord took from the ends of the earth, as He promised formerly by His Prophets: Our fathers falsely prepared idols, and there is no profit in them, to thee the Gentiles come and will say. And again, I have set thee to be the light of the Gentiles, that thou mayest be for salvation unto the utmost parts of the earth. And thus I wait the promise of Him who never fails, as He promises in the Gospel: They shall come from the east and the west, from the north and from the south, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. So we believe that the faithful shall come from all parts of the world. Therefore we wought to fish well and diligently, as the Lord taught and said: Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men. And again: Behold, saith the Lord, I send many fishers and many hunters, etc. Therefore we should, by all means, set our nets in such a manner that a great multitude and a crowd may be caught therein for God, and that everywhere there may be priests who shall baptize and exhort a people who so need it and desire it; as the Lord teaches and admonishes in the Gospel, saying: Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, etc.

That men should leave their homes and families to become monks and virgins of Christ was not unusual in that day. Patrick himself had studied for his missionary work in monastic foundations in Gaul. Already in the beginning of the fifth century this system had been inaugurated at Marseilles under the influence of John Cassian, and in the island of Lerins under that of Honoratus. Missionary monks had gone forth from Lerins to set up monastic communities where "by the monastic rules they composed for their government, spread far and wide through south-eastern Gaul the influence and ideas of Lerins."¹ These congregations in Ireland may not have accepted the austere rule of St. Martin of Tours,² but they certainly did not hesitate to devote their entire efforts to the propagation of their new faith.

For the period between the death of Patrick and the rise of

1. D.E.C. Butler, "Monasticism," The Cambridge Medieval History, I, planned by J.B. Bury, 534. The most famous of these monasteries in Gaul was Condat in the Jura mountains. Ibid., 534.

2. St. Martin of Tours was the founder of Gallic monachism. He had been born early in the fourth century and had practiced monastic life before becoming bishop of Tours in A.D. 372. Nearly ten years earlier he had established a monastery near Poitiers, and on becoming bishop of Tours he formed one at the place afterwards called Marmoutier. Here he gathered together eighty monks, and lived with them a life of great solitude and austerity. They dwelt singly in caves and huts, meeting only for the church services and for meals; they fasted and prayed long. It was a reproduction of the life of Egyptian monks. Cf. Butler, op. cit., 534. This type of ascetic life was also to be practiced in Irish monasteries of later centuries.

the great monasteries, the only general account that has survived of the development of Irish foundations is that contained in the Catalogus sanctorum Hiberniae (Appendix II, K). According to this document the first period of monastic development continued to the death of the High-King, Tuathal Moelgarb, in A.D. 544:

The first order of Catholic Saints was in the time of Patrick; and then they were all bishops, distinguished and holy, and full of the Holy Ghost, 350 in number, founders of churches. They had one head, Christ, and one chief, Patrick. They had one mass, one liturgy, one tonsure from ear to ear. They celebrated one Easter, on the fourteenth moon after the vernal equinox, and what was excommunicated by one church all excommunicated. They did not reject the service and society of women because founded on the rock, Christ, they feared not the blast of temptation. This order of saints lasted for four reigns, those namely of Loiguire, of Ailill Molt, of Lugaid son of Loiguire, and of Tuathal. All these bishops were ¹ sprung from the Romans and Franks and Britons and Scots.

Foreign influence in this first century and a quarter following Patrick's arrival was especially strong among the clergy. Beyond a doubt these monks from the Continent and Britain became the first overseers of the many new Irish foundations and the first instructors of the converts who wished to join the great mission movement.

The second period is also briefly described in the Catalogus:

"The second era was from Columba, A.D. 534 to A.D. 600. In this order there were few bishops and many presbyters. They had one head, our Lord. They celebrated different masses; had different rules; one Easter; one tonsure. They refused the services of women."²

1. John Ryan, Irish Monasticism, 97.

2. Daniel DeVinne, History of the Irish Primitive Church, 82.

The monasteries of these first two periods outlined in the Catalogus are the object of our study in this thesis. During this time the monastic congregations developed from simple mission stations to cenobitic communities and influential centres of intellectual life¹ which were still untouched by the influence of the Roman church.

There were outstanding causes which help to account for the extraordinary spread of the Irish monasteries. Primarily, there was the burning zeal of the clergy, who from the outset were eager to establish mission institutions, as can be seen in the writings of Patrick. But there were also the political and social conditions of Ireland which were conducive to the rapid development and growth of monastic life. There were no towns in Ireland and hence the monastery became the cultural and intellectual centre of the community.

Irish society had been divided into numerous small and tribal states, so that when the chieftain or king had been converted, he would usually grant the missionary a site not only for a church, but also for a monastic settlement, which was to be maintained from the very beginning by the people of his tribe. The incident related in the Life by St. Mac-
Doc of Ferns may be taken as typical in that day. A chieftain of Leinster,

1. This influence would be realized in the third period described in the Catalogus: "The third era was from A.D. 600, and onward. This order had holy presbyters; few bishops; lived in desert places, and on herbs and water. Had different rules and masses; different tonsures; and a different Paschal festival." Ibid., 82.

having been baptized by St. Maedoc, made him a gift of land upon which he could establish a religious settlement, saying: "I offer myself to God and to thee, and with myself I offer all my race; be thou the master of all."¹ This does not necessarily mean that the ruler forced his subjects to follow the faith of the new missionary, but it did imply that the Christian clergy had full permission to preach the Word in their midst. This procedure was also described in his Confession by Patrick, who had even used gifts² in order to persuade the tribal kings and judges to give him permission to preach and to establish ecclesiastical foundations in the community.

CHAPTER II: BUILDING OF THE MONASTERY

The foundation of the early monastic settlement in Ireland must have repeated the picture and problems of our own frontier days. The founder of a monastery first decided in what part of the country he should fix the site for his establishment. Here assembled all those who had agreed to become his missionary companions to construct their place of habitation. Hands became hardened and scorred by the tools with which they levelled and fenced in the grant of land. Arms and clothing were torn by the great logs which they cut down in the surrounding forests to furnish timber for the dwellings. Backs were bent under

1. Gougaud, op. cit., 65.

2. St. Patrick, op. cit., 606.

huge bundles of wattles and twigs which were to form the wickerwork walls. "Even the leaders claimed no exemption, but often worked man-¹fully with axe and spade like the rest."

In the earliest records the ecclesiastical foundations seem to have been regular Christian congregations which called their own clergy. The abbot of the monastic group guided both secular and spiritual affairs of the settlement. They were expressly distinguished as "free," which would imply a release from restrictions and obligations which were usually imposed by the tribal chieftain, and a state of independence of the tribe.² In this manner Sligo, a large district, was offered "to God and Patrick" by the tribal king, who seems to have acted as a representative of the tribe when he "made it free to God and Patrick."³ At first most of the earliest monastic congregations selected their own abbots or bishops after their founder had died or had moved to found some other establishment on the Irish frontier of Christianity. But later when the ruling line of a tribe realized the importance of such an ecclesiastical institution as the social and cultural centre of activity in the neighborhood, they would attempt to secure some means of control⁴ over the monastery through the selection of the abbot who would then act as a secular authority.

1. FW. Joyce, A Social History of Ancient Ireland, 328.

2. Bury, op. cit., 176.

3. Ibid., 176.

4. This action reminds us of the Investiture Controversy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries when both Pope and German Emperor strove for control of the bishoprics in the Empire.

In most cases the ecclesiastical establishments of Patrick and his companions had been founded on grants of land devoted to that purpose by the tribal kings or leaders from their own private property. The interests, therefore, of the tribe and of the chieftain's descendants usually had to be considered, and the consideration of these interests gave rise to various peculiar systems. In some cases the tribal leader did not surrender all of his rights to the ecclesiastical territory, but transmitted to his descendants a limited control over it. The result was two lines of succession, which jointly exercised control over the institution. There was the secular line, in which descent was hereditary and tribal, and the ecclesiastical line, "which was sometimes regularly connected by the blood with the founder."¹ Armagh and Trim are two examples of such dual succession.

In other cases the connection between the monastery and the tribe was established by the rule that the abbacy should be conditionally selected from the king's descendants. The monastery of Drumlease in Lec-trim, which had been founded by Fothfio, furnishes us an example of such an arrangement. "Fothfio laid down that the inheritance to Drumlease should not be confined unconditionally to his own family. His family should inherit the succession, if there were any member pious and good and conscientious. If not, the abbot should be chosen from the community

1. *Ibid.*, 176

or monks of Drumlease."¹

In still other cases the tribal leader placed this grant of land entirely in the hands of the ecclesiastical founder. Although the tribe within whose territory the monastery had been built was consulted, it seems to have been a general rule that the privilege of succession belonged to the founder's tribe. And then if there was no qualified successor to be found in that tribe, the abbacy would pass² to the tribe where the monastery was located.

But now to return to the actual construction of the monastic buildings. Where wood and stone were not available, clay was generally used. Patrick is said to have built two earthen churches, one a Clebach, the other near Killala. Tirechan in his Life (Appendix II, A) wrote³ that the latter was square. A Druidical oracle concerning Patrick also described his churches as "augustae et quadratae."

The most complete information of one of Patrick's monastic colonies is to be found in connection with his foundation of Armagh. In A.D. 444 King Daire had furnished him a small tract of ground at the eastern foot of the hill, Ardd Nache. The traditional record of these dwellings built for the small society of monks is important, because it represents the typical scheme of the monastic establishments of Patrick

1. Ibid., 175.

2. Ibid., 176.

3. Gouraud, op. cit., 340.

and his companions. "A circular space was marked out, one hundred and forty feet in diameter, and enclosed by a rampart of earth. Within this 'less,' as it was called, were erected, doubtless of wood, a Great House to be the dwelling of the monks, a kitchen, and a small oratory."¹ The dimensions of these houses are given in the Tripartite Life (Appendix II, G): "27 feet in the Great House, 17 feet in the kitchen, 7 feet in the oratory; and it was thus that he used always to found the conrbala (the sacred enclosures, or cloisters)." If these houses were circular, the numbers represent the diameters.²

The little oratories or places of prayer and worship were built of unhewn stone, generally put together without mortar, of which numerous specimens are still to be found in Ireland. They "generally took the shape of the keel of an upturned boat or of a truncated pyramid or a round beehive." The principle of construction employed was that of the beehive type known as clochan. Instead of perpendicular walls supporting a dome, these oratories were built with walls gradually inclined towards the centre by means of overlapping courses, until they met overhead in a cap which formed the roof the of little structure.³ They usually consisted of a nave, a western door and a small square-

1. Bury, op. cit., 156.

2. Ibid., 156.

3. Among the Irish oratories of the oldest type which remain at the present day intact or partly ruined may be mentioned those of Gallerus on the Kingle peninsula, of Valencia, and those of Skellig Michael. In some of these buildings the stone which formed the primitive altar is still at the east end. Gougaud, op. cit., 341.

4. Ibid., 341.

ended chancel. They had no apse; the doorways were generally constructed of very large stones with a horizontal lintel, and the jambs were often inclined so that the bottom of the opening was wider than the top. The chapel of St. Patrick at Heysham, Morecambe Bay, a little church 27 feet by 8, gives us an idea of what the oratory of the early Irish monastery must have been in the centuries immediately following Patrick.¹

Soon the monastic congregation began to expand and to take on the appearance of a foudal manor. The buildings were surrounded with a strong rampart like the forts of the district, and was of stone or earth, according to the abundance of the material on hand. The church now became the principal building within the enclosure, and beside it stood another small structure which served as a sacristy for keeping the altar coverings and equipment of the church. The abbot's house was a short distance from the church, while the monks of the community lived in separate dwellings. These huts were sometimes built of stone, had one entrance, and no window. They measured about 11 feet in diameter and seven feet in height. Often they were built of wood or wicker-wood, which² furnished a more comfortable dwelling than stone.

"The refectory where the monks assembled for meals, and the kitchen which stood near it, were also inside the enclosure. Probably the smithy and carpenter's shop were there also. Another very important

1. They were usually roofed with flat stones. The aisleless churches of Yorkshire, such as Adel, seem to be in direct descent from these early Celtic plans. Ernest H. Short, A History of Religious Architecture, 120.

2. John Begley, The Diocese of Limerick, Ancient and Medieval, 60.

building in connection with the monastery was the hospice, where strangers were hospitably entertained, but this was generally outside the rampart, as was the stone house for provisions and the mill for grinding the corn. Such were the different buildings that composed an ancient Irish Monastery.¹

It was in the front of the door of the more developed monastery within the circular enclosure that they erected cylindrical towers which the old chroniclers call cloictheas, or house of bells. There are still more than a hundred of these towers standing in Ireland. They were slightly conical in form and had small windows "which suggest that they were used not only as belfries, but as places of retreat for the monks as well. They may also have served as refuges for fugitives who sought the protection of the monastery."² So we see the simple mission station develop into the small medieval town which was so constructed as to furnish protection for its inhabitants. Here by the end of the sixth century were to be found not only the social and religious leaders of the community, but also the advisers, teachers, and missionaries for Ireland and the Continent.

1. Ibid., 60

2. Joseph Pijoan, Art in the Middle Ages, I, 138-139.

CHAPTER III: LIFE IN THE MONASTERY

The organisation of the Irish monastery was usually self-sufficient and completely independent of the mother church or monastery in the performance of its spiritual functions. A bishop¹ was commonly attached to every large monastery or nunnery for spiritual direction or for spiritual functions as the administering of sacraments and performance of ordination. It must be remembered that the Irish bishop held the position of an ordained clergyman in our day, although he was invested with greater authority in the community. This conclusion is supported by the large number of bishops which were to be found in Ireland² in the days of Patrick.

According to a passage in the *Lehar Brann* the spiritual supervision of the monastery bishop could be extended over the tribe: "In Patrick's Testament (it is decreed) that there be a chief bishop for every tribe in Ireland, to ordain ecclesiastics, to consecrate

1. The monastic establishment at St. Mocta in Co. Louth possessed 100 bishops. In some cases bishops lived together in groups of seven. C.H. Robinson, The Conversion of Europe, 65.

2. Ninnius of the seventh century wrote "that St. Patrick ordained 360 bishops." The Catalogus (Appendix II, K) recorded "that Patrick ordained 350 bishops, who were founders of churches." St. Bernard, as late as the eleventh century said that "bishops were changed and multiplied without order, and without reason, so that one bishopric was not content with a single bishop, but almost every church had its separate bishop." Ibid., 65

churches, and for the spiritual direction of princes, superiors, and or-
¹
 dained persons."

The abbot of the monastery was not always the bishop of the monastic congregation, as was usually the case when it was first founded. In the last chapter it was described how the successor of the abbot could be chosen from some member of the tribal chieftain's family or of the founder's family or of the tribe or monastery. The position of ab-
 bacy, therefore, would oftentimes be of a secular nature. And when such an
²
 abbot would act in the capacity of a chief, he would then need a pro-
 perly ordained person or a bishop to discharge the spiritual functions of the monastic congregation. The bishop of the monastery appears to have been selected by the people in the community, or by the rest of the
³
 monks, but with the advice and approbation of the Irish kings and chieftains. Bishops might also have been sent by the mother foundation if it still supervised its missionary activities and organization.

Discipline was generally established by the authorities of each monastery, but there is evidence that Patrick with other bishops did attempt to set down certain ecclesiastical rulings. There is a record of such meetings in the Ecclesiastical Canons of St. Patrick (Cf. Ap-

1. Joyce, op. cit., 323.

3. They sometimes had the tonsure of the monks so that they got the name of clerics, which they really were not. Ibid., 325.

4. It is certain that there was no interference by any foreign power such as the Roman bishop. DeVinne, op. cit., 83.

pendix I, C), although the authenticity of these writings is usually¹ rejected. But these Canons do bear record of the fact that Patrick did take special counsel with such men as Auxilius and Iserninus for the laying down of certain rules for church and monastic discipline. And no doubt the rulings which were made at such meetings were then spread among the Irish clergy by means of a circular letter.

In most cases the abbot had direct jurisdiction over the entire monastic community, including the bishop, in all matters² concerned with discipline and with general arrangements of the monastery. But the abbot was under the bishop in spiritual things and was expected to pay the bishop the personal respect due to his church office. "But the abbot might be, and often was, a bishop; in which case no other bishop³ was necessary."

1. Bury enumerated some of the provisions contained in these Canons which can give us an idea of the form of regulations. It is also very evident that the Canons had been interpolated under Roman influence in later centuries: "They testify to such irregularities as a bishop interfering in his neighbour's diocese; vagabond clerks going from place to place; churches founded without the permission of the bishop. It is ordained that no cleric from Britain shall minister in Ireland, unless he had brought a letter from his superior. All the clergy, from the priest to the doorkeeper, are to wear the complete Roman tonsure, and their wives are to veil their heads. A monk and a consecrated virgin are not to drive from house to house in the same car, or indulge in protracted conversations. Provision is made for the stringent enforcement of sentences of excommunication. One of the most important duties of Irish Christians at this period was the redemption of Christian captives from slavery; and this furnished an opportunity for imposture and deception. It is provided that no one shall privately and without permission make a collection for this purpose, and that, if there be any surplus from a collection, it shall be placed on the altar and kept for another's need." Bury, op. cit., 167.

2. Bede, speaking of Iona in his time: "That Island is governed by an abbot, who is a priest, to whose authority (in disciplinary matters) all the province, and even the bishops, are subject, ..." Joyce, op. cit., 324.

3. Ibid., 324.

Monastic discipline was outlined and defined in the "Rule" of the monastery. Each of the most distinguished founders drew up such a "Rule" for his own monastery and for those under his authority. As monastic institutions developed, so also these rules became more strict and elaborate. Eventually there resulted a set of regulations as to devotions, food, time for retiring and rising, occupations, and so forth, which were strictly followed in daily life. And every monastery usually followed some Rule¹, whether drawn up by its own head or adopted.

After the simple mission station had developed into a more complicated form of society, every important function of the monastery was in charge of some particular monk, who did the work himself or superintended it if several persons were required for the duty. The abbot appointed the persons for certain tasks, which were completely supervised by them. An ancient manuscript tells us: "For Enda's honourable school Mochuda did the fishing, Ciaren had the drying of corn, and Ailbe the bell-ringing and door-keeping." And so special duties were imposed upon everyone of the monastic community. Some would till the plot of ground which was attached to the monastery. Some would grind the corn in the mill, while others would make and mend clothing. There was also work to be done on the smith's forge and in the carpenter's shop and by the kitchen stove. Irish monks, who were skilled in simple herb remedies,

1. Several of these Rules have come down to us, and give an excellent idea of the conditions under which the monks lived. Ibid., 326.

would offer advice and medicine to sick folk in the neighborhood. And, if the monastery had been built on the bank of a large river, there would be a monk or two in charge of the ferry-boat in order to transport travellers across free of charge. ¹ And over all these general daily arrangements presided an officer ², who supervised these domestic and internal affairs of the monastery.

Among the many duties there should not be forgotten those connected with the "guest-house," where travellers were received and ³ lodged for the night. This form of hospice dates back to the days of Patrick and was usually built apart from the dwellings of the monks. Here it was the usual custom that the strangers would be entertained free for three days and three nights after which time the hosts were under no further obligation and were free to dismiss the lagging guests. ⁴

The fare, both of eating and drinking, was simple and sparing. Some members of their group, who were skilled in the art of cooking and

1. Ibid., 328-329.

2. Called in Irish fer-tighig and in Latin commonly known as the oeconomus. Ibid., 328. He also had to see that the house was supplied with fuel and all other necessaries.

3. Certain monks were appointed for this duty "whose business it was to receive the stranger, take off his shoes, wash his feet in warm water, and prepare supper and bed for him. Hospitality was enjoined, not only as a social virtue, but as a religious obligation." Ibid., 331.

4. Ibid., 331.

and baking, would prepare in one large kitchen the food which would then be served dormitory style in one common refectory. Sundays, festival days, and visits of special guests would be occasions when more rich and generous meals were allowed.¹

The sleeping quarters were also very plain, but such living conditions were normal when you compare them with the standard of living in the Ireland of that day. The first foundation had a common sleeping room in the "Great House"² where the monks generally slept on the bare ground or on a skin laid over a little straw. In some monasteries they even had beds of a very crude style.³ But later these monastic communities generally had individual cells for sleeping accommodations in which each monk would either have a sleeping place for himself, or would share it with three or four others.⁴

The appearance of the monk in that day must have been very unassuming. His clothing consisted of a simple habit of coarse undyed wool with a hood which could be pulled over the head. Sometimes he wore a short garment underneath his outer clothing. Within the monastery walls he generally went barefoot, although on missionary journeys or on trips.

1. Ibid., 327-328

2. Compare the dimensions given for the monastery of Armagh in the Trinartite Life.

3. Begley, op. cit., 60

4. Joyce, op. cit., 327.

to the neighboring monastery he wore sandals.¹

If his modest attire did not distinguish him as a member of a monastic community, it is certain that he would be immediately recognized by his tonsure. In the Catalogus (Appendix II, K) we learned that the clergy had "one tonsure from ear to ear," which was the Celtic tonsure of probably insular invention.² In regard to this Irish tonsure, there are two opinions among modern historians.³ Some hold that the forepart of the head, in front of a line drawn from one ear to the other, was completely shaved, while behind this line the hair was permitted to grow long over the shoulders. According to others, the clergy did indeed wear their hair long behind, but the forepart of the head was not wholly denuded, for a semicircle of hair ran from ear to ear above the forehead. Gougaud in his Christianity in Celtic Lands thinks that the latter view is the more likely.⁴

Religion of the monastery became the religion of the individual; it became a very personal matter. Already in the writings of Patrick one detects an endeavor to attain individual lives of holiness in their enthusiasm for the new faith. And in the sixth century there is definite

1. Begley, op. cit., 61.

2. The Druids wore this form of tonsure before the coming of Patrick to Ireland. Gougaud, op. cit., 202.

3. Bury thinks that the clergy in the day of Patrick wore the coronal tonsure which was introduced from the West, and then after his death the native clergy adopted the old national tonsure of the Druids. Bury, op. cit., 143.

4. Gougaud, op. cit., 202.

evidence that such efforts to attain personal righteousness developed into various forms of asceticism. Documents from Columba, who towards the end of the sixth century established a great monastery on the island of Iona, and of Columbanus, who early in the seventh century founded a number of Irish monasteries in central Europe, reveal that certain Irish monks practiced ascetic austerities of eastern hermits, prostrations, praying with their arms extended like a cross, and praying and sleeping in cold streams and springs.¹

But the average monk led a very normal Christian life. True, there was a deep realization of sin, and the need of denial for Christ was emphasized in their monastic life, but no ascetic would sing: "This is the husbandry I would take, the desire which I cannot hide -- Leek and salmon and trout and bees, and a hen or two beside. Raiment and food for my need, and I to be sitting there --- These gifts I ask from our fair Lord King -- these, and a place for prayer."² And such Irish poems (Cf. Appendix III, B, D, and E) by monks of later centuries picture the scribe in the monastery not only as a man with a great love for animal and plant life, but also with a wonderful sense of humor. Notes made by the scribe on the margin of the manuscript on which he had

1. J.W. Thompson and E.N. Johnson, An Introduction to Medieval Europe, 533.

2. From the "Hermit's Song" written by an Irish monk in the seventh, eighth, or ninth century (Cf. Appendix III, B)

been transcribing the Scriptures often are witty remarks concerning the coldness of the room or the cramped feeling of his fingers. The Philogorian and His Cat (Appendix III, E) describes such an Irish scribe fully appreciation the life moving about him.

One thing that was emphasized in the religious life of the Irish monk was prayer. This would also explain the tendency in later centuries to live in single cells and here devote a large portion of the day to private devotion based on Scripture. His prayer would express his weaknesses of the flesh and his complete dependence on Christ. (Cf. Appendix III, C). They had the custom of praying with their arms extended in front, so as to form a cross. This was so well recognized as a practice that it had the special name, Cros-figill.¹

They would also worship together in the chapel of the monastery. Although we have no direct testimony as to the liturgy which Patrick introduced, Bury is convinced that it was Gallican. "The Gallican liturgy, which differs from the Roman by its oriental character, prevailed in Ireland and Britain up to the end of the seventh century; and we are entitled to conjecture, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, that Patrick, trained at Auxerre, introduced the usage to which he was accustomed to that church."²

In connection with Irish worship is usually discussed the Easter

1. Joyce, op. cit., 390.

2. Bury, op. cit., 170.

festival. The Catalogus (Appendix II, K) tells us that "they celebrated one easter, from the fourteenth moon to the vernal equinox." ¹

Bury is convinced that the Paschal system, which prevailed in Britain in the fourth century and survived to the seventh, had been introduced from Britain into Ireland, and there had taken root among the Christian communities before the coming of Patrick. ²

CHAPTER IV: WOMEN AND THE MONASTERY

The zeal and enthusiasm to help build and spread the church of Patrick was shared by the womenfolk of Ireland. In his writings Patrick expressed surprise at the number of these "virgins of Christ" ³ who had devoted their lives to the Irish church. He related in his Confession of an instance when one of these Irish maidens of noble

1. "The Paschal table drawn up by Dionysius (based on a cycle of 19 years like the Alexandrine) superseded the Paschal canon of Victorius of Aquitaine about 525 A.D. in the Roman Church. The canon of Victorius (based on a cycle of 532 years) had been introduced in 457 A.D. and continued to be used in Gaul to the end of the eighth century. Before the reception of the Victorian system, the date of Easter was calculated in the west by a cycle of 84 years. In the time of St. Patrick, the terms between which Easter could fluctuate, according to the sannutatio Romana based on this cycle, were the 16th and 22nd of the lunar month, the 22nd March and 21st April of the calendar. These terms were due to modifications (which had been introduced in 312 and 343 A.D.) of an older computation, in which the lunar limits were the 14th and 20th of the lunar month, the calendar limits the 25th March and 21st April." Bury, op. cit., 371-372.

2. Ibid., 373.

3. Jerome in the fourth century had encouraged and founded monastic foundations for women at Rome and in Palestine.

birth dedicated herself to Christ:

The sons of the Scotti and the daughters of princes are seen to be monks and virgins of Christ. And there was one blessed Irish maiden, of adult age, noble and very beautiful, whom I baptised, and after a few days she came to us for a reason, and gave us to understand that she had received a command from God, and was informed that she was to become a virgin of Christ, and to draw near to God. Thanks be to God, six days after this she most excellently and eagerly entered on this state of life, which all the virgins of God now adopt, even against the will of their parents, even enduring reproaches and persecution from them, and notwithstanding they increase in number; and as for those who are born again in this way, we know not their number except the widows and those who observe continency.¹

According to Ryan in his Irish Monasticism these women were placed in small groups to assist the clergy in the service of churches, rather than in the monastic community proper.² And what services they they rendered to Patrick and his colleagues cannot be accurately estimated, but we read in the Catalogus (Appendix II, K) that the saints did not disdain the ministrations and society of women. Ryan claims that they provided vestments for the clergy, cloths for the altars, decorative hangings for the walls, and kept the church interior clean and beautiful. They not only acted as school teachers for the small children of the community,³ but they also looked after the sick, the aged and the orphans, especially of their own sex. "They prepared women neophytes for baptism, and in an age when this sacrament was conferred commonly by immersion, helped them to and from the sacred waters."⁴

1. St. Patrick, op. cit., 601-602.

2. Ryan, op. cit., 93.

3. Ibid., 134.

4. Ibid., 183.

In the early history of Irish monasticism the "virgins of Christ" were generally attached to definite churches or monastic settlements, where there were no rules or restrictions in regard to their mixing with the monastic group within the enclosure. During the first century and a quarter following Patrick's arrival we read that they "did not reject the service and society of women because founded on the rock, Christ, they feared not the blast of temptation."¹ (Appendix II, K) They were often transferred without difficulty from one station to another, if the welfare of the mission so demanded.² But later in the sixth century monastic discipline became more regulated and we notice in the Catalogus that the monasteries refused the services of women in their midst.

These small groups of deaconesses living near the monastic settlements were under the spiritual supervision of the neighboring abbot or bishop, who would conduct their church services and would minister unto them.³

St. Brigid,⁴ a contemporary of Patrick, was the outstanding woman personality of this period, although the facts relating to her life and work are lost in the mists of tradition. Patrick made no

1. Ibid., 97.

2. Ibid., 134.

3. "No semblance of an order corresponding to that of priest or bishop was ever conceded to the female sex." Ibid., 184.

4. "Most scholars hold that the saint was given the name of Brigit from a goddess in Celtic mythology, who was so named, and they interpret the word as signifying Fiery Arrow." Hugh DeBlacam, The Saints of Ireland, 16.

mention of her person or monastery of Kildare. According to later tradition she was born about 450, was baptized by a disciple of Patrick and died in 513.¹ Her monastery of Kildare was organized² in the same manner as the first missionary stations in Ireland. Here St. Brigid lived the greater part of her life.

Cogitosus, who wrote about a century and a quarter after St. Brigid's death, related how she secured a spiritual pastor, Conleth, for her monastic foundation: "She sent accordingly for a distinguished man, adorned with all virtues, then leading a solitary life in the desert. Going herself to meet him, she brought him back in her company to govern the church"³

Not only was St. Brigid famous for the founding of two great monastic institutions (one for men and one for women), but she is also remembered as a patroness of students, the founder of a school of art,⁴ and the social welfare worker of all Ireland.⁵

1. Robinson, op. cit., 63.

2. "She had seven companions -- girl comrades, no doubt, whom she had inspired with her project for the establishment of conventual life in Ireland. With these, who were to remain her lifelong comrades, she travelled to a place named Cruschan Bre Ele (Croghan Hill) in Offaly, having heard that Bishop Mel was there." DeBlacam, op. cit., 36.

3. Ryan, op. cit., 180.

4. Catholic Encyclopedia, II, 784.

5. Old accounts say that St. Brigid founded subordinate houses from sea to sea and were occupied by nuns numbering over ten thousand. This "pious exaggeration" does reveal the extent of her work and influence. DeBlacam, op. cit., 42.

CHAPTER V: LEARNING IN THE MONASTERY

Patrick himself realized that he lacked the complete classical education that was available in his day. Several times in his writings he lamented that he had not been trained in the "sacred writings in the best way,"¹ even though this intellectual handicap in no way hindered his mission. Although Patrick was no scholar, it is certain that he did encourage the idea of monastic schools which were to make Ireland the light of higher learning for the civilized world in the following centuries. Already when these monastic communities were mere mission stations, they became the colleges of the neighborhood where the youth² were instructed without charge.

The missionary monks who accompanied Patrick across the channel, had been educated in such Gallic strongholds of classical studies as Auxerre. These men were to become the first instructors³ in the Irish monastic schools. But the greatest influx of scholars into Ireland was made when the populous and fertile regions of Gaul, dotted with many monastic foundations, were being overrun by barbarian hordes. In 451 Attila, the "Scourge of God" led his united tribes

1. St. Patrick, op. cit., 584.

2. M.J. Brennan, An Ecclesiastical History of Ireland, 53.

3. According to Bishop Ussher Patrick founded nearly a hundred monastic institutions. DeVinne then concludes from their number and the sparseness of the Christians at that time in Ireland, that they must have been mere ordinary schools. DeVinne, op. cit., 164.

of Huns and a large number of conquered Germans over the whole of Gaul¹, and before his looting armies fled a large number of learned men with their manuscripts to Ireland, "for this was a Celtic country inhabited by a people of nearly related descent who spoke a language apparently not greatly different from their own."² Even the teaching staff of the chief university of Gaul, Burdigala or Bordeaux, seems to have founded a school of learning at Bordgal in Wido. Here men trained in the best classical traditions of Latin and Greek studies preserved for the civilized world a culture which had been rudely interrupted by barbaric³ invasions on the Continent.

Just as the monastic institutions spread and developed in Ireland, so also there was a rapid growth of schools and colleges which were attached to almost every large monastery. Students were usually attracted by the reputation of a scholar at some house of learning. And by the sixth century there existed schools whose attendance ran in the thousands,⁴ although the average number of students in the smaller monastic schools was 50.

1. Thompson and Johnson, op. cit., 99.

2. Philip S. Allen, The Romanesque Lyric, 156.

3. Ibid., 156.

4. Under each of the three outstanding scholars, St. Finnen in Clonard, St. Comgall in Bangor, and St. Brendan in Clonfert, there were 3000. St. Molaise had 1500; St. Gobban had 1000; and so on down to the school of Glasnevin, where St. Mobi had 50 pupils. Joyce, op. cit., 408-409.

From the very beginning these monastic schools had the primary purpose to train clergy for monastic congregations or for Irish and foreign mission fields. Ussher wrote that Irish "monasteries, in ancient times, were seminaries of the ministry, being more colleges of learned divines, where the people did resort for instruction, and got their supply of able ministers."¹ But in these schools secular learning was also carefully taught because a large proportion of the students were young men, such as the sons of kings and chiefs, who had no intention to enter the service of the church. They would attend in order to receive a good general education for ordinary civil or even military² life.

Besides a thorough study of the Scriptures,³ the student was instructed in general literature, classics, philosophy, and science. According to Zimmer this great increase of learning under native and foreign scholars, brought about a sort of early renaissance, because all Latin authors old and new were studied, together with grammar,

1. DeVinne, op. cit., 164-165.

2. Joyce, op. cit., 400.

3. Evidence of such thorough study of Scripture can be seen in Patrick's Confession (Appendix I, A, 1), Letter (Appendix I, A, 2), and Lorica (Appendix I, D). The hymns of St. Cechnall (Appendix I, E, 1 and 2), a contemporary of Patrick, reveal a thorough understanding of the Bible. The Altus Prosator (Appendix III, A) of Columba of the next century is another example of Bible study.

¹
 metrics, chronology, and astronomy. Latin was taught from the beginning
 to the end of the course with all the Latin classics then available.
 Allen claims that the "tradition of solid hard work and devoted pursuit
 of knowledge to the limit of scholarship gave Irish universities the
 renown of possessing the acme of Latin learning. Along with Vergil,
 Ovid, Horace, Tacitus, Sallust, and the rest, students read the new works
 from Gaul and Spain -- Orosius and Isidore, Jerome and Victorinus --
 writers of a later Latin that carried on a vital tradition and remained
 the living tongue of thought and education."² Latin, therefore, was
 written and spoken quite familiarly in the schools³, especially among
 the students of the upper classes. For that reason much of the Irish
 historical literature which we have is a mixture of Gaelic and Latin,
 because both languages were spoken in the monasteries.⁴ Greek was
 also taught in the monastic school, especially in the upper classes

1. Allen, op. cit., 156.

2. Ibid., 157.

3. Patrick by these schools made Latin the ecclesiastical language of Ireland. Tradition tells us that he used to write alphabets for youths who were chosen for a clerical career. Bury, op. cit., 184.

4. Allen supported the claim that the Greek language was studied in Ireland during the latter part of the fourth century. He also supported the theory that Pelagius learned his Greek in Ireland. Allen, op. cit., 155.

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where it was studied and taught with success.

In his "Irish Love of Learning" P.S. Dinneen traces the life of an average Irish student in the monastery:

Our type is the student in one of these monastic schools. He goes out from his parents and settles down to study in the environs of the monastery. He is not rich; he resides in a hut; his time is divided between study, prayer, and manual labor. He becomes a monk, only to increase in devotion to learning and to accentuate his privations. He copies and illuminates manuscripts. He memorizes the Psalms. He glosses the Vulgate Scriptures with vernacular notes. He receives ordination, and, realizing that there are benighted countries ten times as large as his native land beyond the seas, and, burning with zeal for the spread of the Gospel and the advancement of learning, sails for Britain, or passes into Gaul, or reaches the slopes of the Apennines, or the outskirts of the Black Forest. The rest of his life is devoted to the foundation of monasteries to which schools are attached, to the building of churches and to the diffusion around him of every known branch of knowledge. He may have taken books from Ireland over seas, and, of these, relics are now to₂ be found among the treasures of the ancient libraries of Europe.

About the middle of the sixth century men of the Irish mission went out into all parts of the surrounding countries from one of the largest monastic schools of Ireland; namely, Clonard. This monastery was founded by St. Finnen about A.D. 527, who had spent many years in Wales. His learning and holiness attracted students in vast numbers from Ireland and the Continent. And from Clonard missionaries left Ire-

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1. Joyce, op. cit., 425.

2. P.S. Dinneen, "Irish Love of Learning," The Glories of Ireland, 39.

3. At Clonard St. Finnen educated and trained for monastic and missionary work the outstanding men in the Irish church, including the "Twelve Apostles of Erin:" Kieran of Saeghir; Kieran of Clonmacnoise; Columba of Iona; Brendan of Clonfert; Brendan of Birr; Columba of Terryglass; Molaisse of Devenish; Canice of Aghaboe; Ruadan of Lorrha; Mobi of Glasnevin; Sinnell of Cleenish; and Nenni of Inishmacsaint. Joyce, op. cit., 322.

land to preach, teach, and to found other monasteries or schools in
¹
 other countries.

Another great Irish institution for producing missionaries and monastic founders in the sixth century was Bennohor (or Bangor) This monastery was founded by St. Comgall, who was born at DalnAraide in A.D. 517 and settled at Bennohor "in the Ards of Ulster," on the southern shores of Belfast Loch in A.D. 555 or 559². St. Bernard called it "a place truly sacred, the nursery of saints which brought forth fruit most abundantly for the glory of God." One member of the monastery, he goes on to say, is reputed to have founded a hundred³ monasteries.

Two names are to be remembered especially in the spread of monastic learning outside of Ireland; namely, Columba and Columban. Columba was born in Ulster A.D. 521 and at the age of forty-two he left Ireland with twelve followers to found a monastery on Iona. By the time of his death in 597 he had established twenty-three mission stations among the Scots and eighteen in the country of the Picts.⁴ Columban was born in Leinster A.D. 543 to become the Irish apostle to Burgundy, Switzerland, and Italy. "He was the greatest of all the

1. Short, op. cit., 120.

2. Ryan, op. cit., 517.

3. Ibid., 125.

4. Allen, op. cit., 162.

teachers sent forth from Irish shores."¹

The Irish monasteries, therefore, trained men who were to spread Christianity and culture in lands which were still gasping from the onslaught of barbaric invasions. But these monastic schools also preserved a classical heritage and made a lasting contribution to the cultural world. It was mentioned above how Latin and Greek literature had been carried to Ireland from Gaul to be taught in the monastic schools. So also were preserved the ancient traditions of an art native to Europe, the "Neolithic art of La Tene."² This style is not made up of regular combinations of straight lines, but is formed entirely of curves, circles, and spirals in trumpet form. The intersecting and interlocking curves cover a flat background with an amazing number of variations of this shape.³

The Irish scribe decorated his manuscripts in La Tene, the initial letters being the chief object of his artistic pen. He had a keen knowledge of color⁴ and an exceptional appreciation of color values. "Thus it was that in the early centuries of Christian Ireland the learned monks, transcribing the Gospels and longing to make the book beautiful, were able to bring to their task an artistic skill which

1. Ibid., 162.

2. Joseph Pijoan, Art in the Middle Ages, II, 134. This style is called La Tene, because the first and also the largest number of Celtic objects decorated in this way were found at the village of La Tene. Ibid., 133.

3. Ibid., 133.

4. The colors used were derived from mineral substances and the black was carbon, made, it is conjectured, from charred fish bones. With these was mixed some gummy substance which made them cling to the vellum. Louis E O'Carroll, "Irish Manuscripts," op. cit., 84.

was hereditary and almost instinctive." ¹ The development of this art of illumination can be seen in the Book of Kells which is characterized by infinite interweaving of tiny colored lines that end up in the head or tail of some fantastic animal or human form. J. O. Westwood who has devoted the greater part of his life working on these Irish manuscripts writes:

I have examined, with a magnifying glass, the pages of the Gospels of Lindisfarne and the Book of Kells, for hours together, without ever detecting a false line or an irregular interlacement; and, when it is considered that many of these details consist of spiral lines, and are so minute as to be impossible to have been executed with a pair of compasses, it really seems a problem not only with what eyes, but also with what instruments, they could have been executed. One instance of the minuteness of these details will suffice to give an idea of this peculiarity. I have counted in a small space, measuring scarcely three quarters of an inch by less than half an inch in width, in the Book of Armagh, no fewer than one hundred and fifty-eight interlacements of a slender ribbon-pattern, formed of white lines edged by black ones upon a black ground. No wonder that an artist in Dublin, lately applied to by Mr. Chambers to copy one of the pages of the Book of Kells, excused himself from the labour on the ground that it was a tradition that the lines had been traced by angels.

Celtic decorations carved in stone are today monuments of art from the first few centuries of Irish Christianity. Both within and without the circular enclosures of the monasteries were chiselled crosses of stone. The typical one was with a tall slender support and a small central cross enclosed within a circle at the point where the arms of the cross intersected. It was then set upon a large base. ³ Of the forty-five "High-Crosses" in Ireland today thirty-two are "wayside

1. Ibid., 84.

2. Gougaud, op. cit., 164.

3. Tradition tells how Patrick was accustomed to visit a large number of these places of prayer every day. Pijoan, op. cit., 139.

preachers" because they are completely carved with Biblical figures and parables. Still others are either covered with geometrical patterns or are unornamented, crude models, and stark symbols on slabs. "The peer among crosses is the High Celtic Cross with arms and shaft embodied in circle."¹

The oratory of the early missionary station also grew into a church which was architecturally beautiful. On the doorway moldings were carved in Hiberno-Romanesque style to become "wrought in bead and chevron designs and capitals carved with heads and serpents snarling the hair."²

Much of the early history concerning Irish monastic communities and their founders has been clouded by later traditional and biased records of the outstanding ecclesiastical foundations of Ireland. But the writings of Patrick supported by the most ancient Irish documents reveal monastic institutions which were founded for the primary purpose of spreading the teachings of Scripture. The simple mission stations at the time of Patrick were soon to develop into more advanced seminaries and colleges for the Irish clergy, foreign missionaries, and scholars of the educated world. Its great importance to the community life in

1. Edythe Browne, "Antique Ireland," The Catholic World, (May, 1932), 149.

2. Ibid., 149.

Ireland is enthusiastically pictured by P.S. Allen:

Such institutions as Bangor were schools, all the way from kindergarten to university, hospitals, hotels, publishing houses, libraries, law-courts, art academies, and conservatories of music. They were houses of refuge, places of pilgrimage, marts for barter and exchange, centers of culture, social foci, newspaper offices, and distilleries. A score of other public and practical things were they: garrison, granary, orphan asylum, frontier fort, postoffice, savings bank, and general store for surrounding agricultural districts. We carelessly imagine the early monasteries as charnel houses of cant and ritual-- whereas they were the best-oiled machines for the advancement of science, the liveliest accelerators of human thinking, precedent to the University of Paris.

1. Allen, op. cit., 164.

APPENDIX

I. WRITINGS OF PATRICK, AND DOCUMENTS OF THE FIFTH CENTURY.

A. The Confession and the Letter against Coroticus.

The most important sources for the life of Patrick are his own writings, namely, the document which has been called his Confession,¹ and his Letter against Coroticus. The manuscripts known to exist are seven in number; the oldest being that contained in the Book of Armagh,² transcribed between A.D. 807 and 846. The other manuscripts belong to the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries. There is no doubt as to the authenticity of these two writings, because of the strong internal evidence that the writings belong to the fifth century A.D. The points to prove this are enumerated by N.J.D. White:

(1) The text of the Latin Bible used by the author is, in the Old Testament, that current before St. Jerome published his retranslation from the Hebrew (A.D. 391-404); while the quotations from the New Testament seem to follow partly St. Jerome's revision (A.D. 383) and partly earlier versions. The author's New Testament was of the type current in South Gaul, where Patrick was educated.

(2) The Franks are alluded to as heathens in the Letter³; in A.D. 496 they followed their king, Clovis, into the Christian church.

(3) There are polemical allusions to sun-worship in Confession⁴. This was a prominent feature in the religion of Mithraism, which was popular all over the Roman Empire during the first four and five centuries of our era. Other points supporting the date claimed for these writings are: The style of Latin, the references to the Roman organization of Britain, the casual mention of a married clergy, and the application of the term "apostate" to the Picts. St. Ninian's mission to the Picts is dated A.D. 398-432 or earlier.⁵

1. The last words of his Confession are: "Et haec est confessio mea antequam moriar." St. Patrick, op. cit., 611.

2. The Book of Armagh does not contain the Letter; and the copy of the Confession followed by the scribe was mutilated and in parts illegible. White, op. cit., 4.

3. St. Patrick, (Appendix I, A, 2).

4. St. Patrick, op. cit., 611.

5. White, op. cit., 3.

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The Confession is not only a clear confession of his faith, but it is also a portrayal of the wonderful way of God in dealing with his own life. In it we find a defence of his mission to Ireland, evidently a reply to charges² that had been brought against him. It is probable that his Letter, as his Confession, was also written in the author's old age.³ This letter was addressed to Christian subjects of Coroticus, a ruler in north Britain,⁴ who had killed and carried off some of Patrick's converts in a raid on the Irish coast.

1. The text of the Confession is to be found in the Appendix of DeVinne's History of the Irish Primitive Church, 207-228 (Pritzlaff Memorial Library, St. Louis, Missouri). The Latin text from Migne's Patrologia and English translation are given in parallel columns.
2. The text of the Letter has been taken from the Cotton manuscript in the British Museum which H. F. Cusack includes in his Life of Saint Patrick, 612-620. The original Latin and the English translation are placed in parallel columns.

5

ST. PATRICK'S EPISTLE TO COROTICUS (St. Patrick's Epistle to the Christian subjects of the tyrant Coroticus.)

Patrick, a sinner and unlearned, have been appointed a bishop in Ireland, and I accept from God what I am. I dwell amongst barbarians as a proselyte and a fugitive for the love of God. He will testify that it is so. It is not my wish to pour forth so many harsh and severe things; but I am forced by zeal for God and the truth of Christ, who raised me up for my neighbors and sons, for whom I have forsaken

1. "Surely no one can read this remarkable confession of his faith and not see how utterly different it is from the superstitious doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. You look in vain for any reference to the merits of saints, or salvation by sacraments. There is no reference to the invocation of the blessed Virgin, and no hint of a partial salvation which might need to be completed in purgatory after death. It is as different as possible from the papal system." H. A. Ironside, "The Real Saint Patrick," Revelation, (March, 1938), 139.

2. One charge that was brought against him was his lack of literary education. His deficiency in this respect was probably urged as a disqualification for the eminent position which he had won by his practical labors. Bury, op. cit., 198. There was also the sin which he confided in a friend who later betrayed this trust. St. Patrick, op. cit., 595.

3. Bury, op. cit., 195.

4. Ibid., 228.

5. Cusack, op. cit., 612-620.

my country and parents, and would give up even my life itself, if I were worthy. I have vowed to my God to teach these people, though I should be despised by them, to whom I have written with my own hand to be given to the soldiers to be sent to Corotious -- I do not say to my fellow-citizens, nor to the fellow-citizens of pious Romans, but to the fellow-citizens of the devil, through their evil deeds and hostile practices. They live in death, companions of the apostate Scots and Piets, blood-thirsty men, ever ready to redden themselves with the blood of innocent Christians, numbers of whom I have begotten to God and confirmed in Christ.

On the day following that in which they were clothed in white and received the chrism of neophytes, they were cruelly cut up and slain with the sword by the above mentioned; and I sent a letter by a holy priest, whom I have taught from his infancy, with some clerics, begging that they would restore some of the plunder or the baptized captives, but they laughed at them. Therefore, I know not whether I should grieve most for those who were slain, or for those whom the devil insnared into the eternal pains of hell, where they will be chained like him. For whoever commits sin is the slave of sin, and is called the son of the devil.

Wherefore, let every man know who fears God that they are ostranged from me, and from Christ my God, whose ambassador I am; these patrioides, fratrioides, and ravening wolves, who devour the people of the Lord as if they were bread; as it is said: "The wicked have dissipated thy law;" wherein in these latter times Ireland has been well and prosperously planted and instructed. Thanks be to God, I usurp nothing; I share with these whom He hath called and predestinated to preach the Gospel in much persecution, even to the ends of the earth. But the enemy hath acted invidiously towards me through the tyrant Corotious, who fears neither God, nor His priests, whom He hath chosen, and committed to them the high, divine power, "Whomsoever they shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven."

I beseech you, therefore, who are the holy ones of God and humble of heart, that you will not be flattered by them, and that you will neither eat nor drink with them, nor receive their alms, until they do penance with many tears, and liberate the servants of God and the baptized handmaids of Christ, for whom he was crucified and died. "He that offereth sacrifice of the goods of the poor, is as one that sacrificeth the son in the presence of the father." "Riches, he saith, which the unjust accumulate, shall be vomited forth from his belly, the angel of death shall drag him away, he shall be punished with the fury of dragons, the tongue of the adder shall slay him, inextinguishable fire shall consume him." Hence, "Woe to those who fill themselves with things which are not their own." And "what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and

suffer the loss of his soul?" It were too long to discuss one by one, or to select from the law, testimonies against cupidity. Avarice is a mortal sin. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods." "Thou shalt not kill." The homicide cannot dwell with Christ. "He who hateth his brother is a murderer, and he who loveth not his brother abideth in death." How much more guilty is he who hath defiled his hands with the blood of the sons of God, whom He hath recently acquired in the ends of the earth by our humble exhortations!

Did I come to Ireland according to God or according to the flesh? Who compelled me, I was led by the Spirit, that I should see my relatives no more? Have I not a pious mercy towards that nation which formerly took me captive? According to the flesh I am of noble birth, my father being a Decurio. I do not regret or blush for having bartered my nobility for the good of others. I am a servant in Christ unto a foreign people, for the ineffable glory of eternal life, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord: though my own people do not acknowledge me: "A prophet is without honor in his own country." Are we not from one stock, and have we not one God for our Father? As He has said: "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth." Is it not agreed that one pulleth down and another buildeth? I seek not my own.

Not to me be praise, but to God, who hath put into my heart this desire, that I should be one of the hunters and fishers, whom, of old, God hath announced should appear in the last days. I am reviled -- what shall I do, O Lord? I am greatly despised. Lo! thy sheep are torn around me, and plundered by the above-mentioned robbers, aided by the soldiers of Corotius: the betrayers of Christians into the hands of the Picts and Scots are far from the charity of God. Ravening wolves have scattered the flock of the Lord, which, with the greatest diligence, was increasing in Ireland; the sons of the Irish, and the daughters of kings, who are monks and virgins of Christ, are too many to enumerate. Therefore, the oppression of the great is not pleasing to thee now, and never shall be.

Who of the saints would not dread to share in the feasts or amusements of such persons? They fill their houses with the spoils of the Christian dead, they live by rapine, they know not the poison, the deadly food which they present to their friends and children: as Eve did not understand that she offered death to her husband, so are all those who work evil; they labor to work out death and eternal punishment.

It is the custom of the Christians of Rome and Gaul to send holy men to the Franks and other nations, with many thousand solidi, to redeem baptized captives. You, who slay them, and sell them to foreign nations ignorant of God, deliver the

members of Christ, as it were, into a den of wolves. What hope have you in God? Whoever agrees with you, or commands you? God will judge him. I know not what I can say, or what I can speak more of the departed sons of God slain cruelly by the sword. It is written: "Weep with them that weep." And again: "If one member suffers anything, all the members suffer with it." Therefore, the Church laments and bewails her sons and daughters, not slain by the sword, but sent away to distant countries, where sin is more shameless and abounds. There free-born Christian men are sold and enslaved amongst the wicked, abandoned, and apostate Picts.

Therefore, I cry out with grief and sorrow. O beautiful and well beloved brethren and children, whom I have brought forth in Christ in such multitudes, what shall I do for you? I am not worthy before God or man to come to your assistance. The wicked have prevailed over us. We have become outcasts. It would seem that they do not think we have one baptism and one Father, God. They think it an indignity that we have been born in Ireland; as He said: "Have ye not one God? -- why do ye each forsake his neighbor?" Therefore, I grieve for you, I grieve, O my beloved ones. But, on the other hand, I congratulate myself I have not labored for nothing -- my journey has not been in vain. This horrible and amazing crime has been permitted to take place. Thanks be to God, ye who have believed and have been baptized have gone from earth to paradise. Certainly ye have begun to migrate where there is no night, nor death, nor sorrow, but ye shall exult, like young bulls loosed from their bonds, and tread down the wicked under your feet as dust.

Truly you shall reign with the apostles and prophets and martyrs, and obtain the eternal kingdom, as He hath testified, saying: "They shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." Without are dogs, and sores, and murderers, and liars, and perjurers, and they shall have their part in the everlasting lake of fire. Nor does the Apostle say without reason: "If the just are scarcely saved, where shall the sinner, the impious, and the transgressor of the law appear?" Where will Corotius and his wicked rebels against Christ find themselves, when they shall see rewards distributed amongst the baptized women? What will he think of his miserable kingdom, which shall pass away in a moment, like clouds or smoke, which are dispersed by the wind? So shall deceitful sinners perish before the face of the Lord, and the just shall feast with great confidence with Christ, and judge the nations, and rule over unjust kings, for ever and ever. Amen.

I testify before God and His angels that it shall be so, as He hath intimated to my ignorance. These are not my words that I have set forth in Latin, but those of God and the prophets and apostles, who never lied: "He that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned."

God hath said it. I entreat whosoever is a servant of God, that he be a willing bearer of this letter, that he be not drawn aside by any one, but that he shall see it read before all the people in the presence of Corotious himself, that, if God inspire them, they may some time return to God, and repent, though late; that they may liberate the baptized captives, and repent for their homicides of the Lord's brethren; so that they may deserve of God to live and to be whole here and hereafter. The peace of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

B. Diota Patricii.

There is preserved in the Liber Armaehanus a brief section entitled Diota Patricii, consisting of the three following utterances:

- (1) Timorem Dei habue duces itineris mei per Gallias atque Italiam etiam in insolis quae sunt in mari Tyrreno.
- (2) De saeculo recessistis ad paradysum, Deo gratias.
- (3) Ecclesia Sctorum, immo Romanorum, ut Christiani ita ut Romani sitis, ut decantetur uobiscum oportet, omni hora orationis, nox illa laudabilis Cyrie lession, Christe lession. Omnis ecclesia quae sequitur me cantet Cyrie lession, Christe lession. Deo gratias.¹

After studying the authenticity of these diota Bury concludes: "On the whole I am strongly disposed to think that the third dictum is spurious and was added, perhaps, after A.D. 700, to the two genuine diota."²

C. Ecclesiastical Canons of St. Patrick.

The document begins thus: Gratias agimus Deo patri et filio et spirituo sancto. Presbiteris et diaconibus et omni clero Patricius Auxilius Isserninus episcopi salutem. Satius nobis negligentibus praemonere (quam) culpae quae facta sunt, Solomone dicente, Melius est arguere quam irasci. Exemple difinitionis nostrae inferius conscripta sunt et sic inchoant. Thus the document professes to be a circular letter addressed by Patricius, Auxilius, and Isserninus

1. Bury, op. cit., 228-229.

2. Ibid., 232.

3. Ibid., 234.

4. Bury thinks that it was clearly one of Patrick's duties to take measures to establish and secure harmony and unity of ecclesiastical administration between the north of Ireland, the special field of his own activity, and the south, which lay outside his immediate sphere of operations. Ibid., 233-245.

to the clergy, and embodying ecclesiastical rules and penalties on which the three agreed. This early date has been rejected by Todd, Hadden, Stubbs, and Wasserschleber, but still Bury supports the authenticity of this document, although he admits the possibility of interpolations in regard to those canons which reflect the adoption of the Roman customs¹ in the seventh century A.D. But it is fairly certain that, even if the canons themselves were spurious, still the above superscription must have been founded on the fact that genuine canons had been issued by these three men. Bury claims that this is evidence for the cooperation of Patricius, Auxilius, and Isernius in organising the church in Ireland.²

D. The Lorica of St. Patrick.

The Lorica of St. Patrick is an unmetrical quasi-poetical composition of great antiquity. It is called the Faeth Fiada, interpreted the "Deer's Cry," Tradition has it that Patrick composed this hymn on Easter morning while journeying to Tara. Bury reviews the various arguments in favor of its authenticity and then writes: "It may be said, then, that the Lorica may have been composed by Patrick; but in any case it is an interesting document for the spirit of early Christianity in Ireland."³

ST. PATRICK'S LORICA⁴

I bind to myself to-day
The strong virtue of the Invocation of the Trinity,
The Faith of the Trinity in unity,
The Creator of the elements.

1. Such customs were pointed out by Todd: (1) The injunction in canon 6 that clergy should wear the Roman tonsure. (2) The implication of a more near approach to diocesan jurisdiction, as well as a more settled state of Christianity in the country than was possible in the days of St. Patrick. (3) The reference in canon 25 to the offerings made to the bishop (pontificalia dona) as a mos antiquus. Ibid., 234.

2. Ibid., 234.

3. Ibid., 246.

4. Cusaack, op. cit., 264-267.

I bind to myself to-day
 The virtue of the Incarnation of Christ with His Baptism,
 The virtue of His crucifixion with His burial,
 The virtue of His Resurrection with His Ascension,
 The virtue of His coming to the sentence of judgment.

I bind to myself to-day
 The virtue of the love of seraphim,
 In the obedience of angels,
 In the hope of resurrection into reward,
 In prayers of Patriarchs,
 In predictions of Prophets,
 In preaching of Apostles,
 In faith of Confessors,
 In purity of holy Virgins,
 In deeds of righteous men.

I bind to myself to-day
 The power of Heaven,
 The light of the sun,
 The whiteness of snow,
 The force of fire,
 The flashing of lightning,
 The swiftness of wind,
 The depth of sea,
 The stability of earth,
 The hardness of rocks.

I bind to myself to-day
 The power of God to guide me,
 The might of God to uphold me,
 The wisdom of God to teach me,
 The eye of God to watch over me,
 The ear of God to hear me,
 The word of God to give me speech,
 The hand of God to protect me,
 The way of God to lie before me,
 The shield of God to shelter me,
 The host of God to defend me,
 Against the snares of demons,
 Against the temptations of vices,
 Against the lusts of nature,
 Against every man who meditates injury to me,
 Whether far or near,
 Whether few or with many.

I have invoked all these virtues
 Against every hostile savage power
 Directed against my body and my soul,
 Against the incantations of false prophets,
 Against the black laws of heathenism,
 Against the false laws of heresy,
 Against the deceits of idolatry,
 Against the spells of women, and smiths, and druids,
 Against all knowledge which blinds the soul of man.

Christ protect me to-day
 Against poison, against burning,
 Against drowning, against wound,
 That I may receive abundant reward.

Christ with me, Christ before me,
 Christ behind me, Christ within me,
 Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
 Christ at my right, Christ at my left,
 Christ in the fort,
 Christ in the chariot seat,
 Christ in the poop,¹
 Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,
 Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks to me,
 Christ in every eye that sees me,
 Christ in every ear that hears me.

I bind to myself to-day
 The strong virtue of an invocation of the Trinity,
 The faith of the Trinity in unity,
 The Creator of elements.

Domini est salus,
 Domini est salus,
 Christi est salus,
 Salus tua Domine sit semper nobiscum.

1. A short deck built over the after part of the spar-deck of a vessel of war; hence, generally, the stern of a vessel.

E. Hymns of St. Sechnall.

1. Audite, omnes amantes Deum.

The Latin Hymn of St. Sechnall or Secundinus, the co-worker of Patrick, preserved in the manuscript of the Liber Hymnorum, is certainly very ancient. It might be rash if he were alive, and the absence of all references to particular acts of the saint or episodes in his life confirms the view that it was composed before his death; hymnographers of later times would hardly have omitted such references. There is no mention of miracles. As the author thus confined himself to generalities, the hymn supplies no material for Patrick's biography.¹

THE HYMN OF ST. SECHNALL OR SECUNDINUS²

All ye who love God
The praises now hear
Of Patrick, the bishop,
To Christ ever near;
Who, like unto angels,
In glory is found,
And, like the apostles,
For ever is crowned.

Brightly his light shines,
He keepeth the word
Of Christ, ever blessed,
And so like his Lord;
Then follow him, praising
The good he hath done,
To the Father give glory,
And unto the Son.

Christ's fear still upholds him,
In faith he stands fast,
With the Church he will conquer
And triumph at last,
Like Peter, whose mission
From God cannot fall,
For hell's gates shall never
Against him prevail.

1. Bury, op. cit., 246-267.

2. Cusack, op. cit., 563-568.

Divinely he's chosen
 A fisher of souls;
 With the net of the Gospel
 He gathereth shoals;
 From barbarous nations
 He wins God a race
 Who in heaven hereafter
 Shall be crowned by His grace.

Each talent he uses,
 For God he would win
 The people of Erin
 From the evil of sin;
 And he gets for his labor
 Eternal reward,
 And usury tenfold,
 From Jesus, his Lord.

From his actions he preaches,
 So that all men may see
 What a faithful apostle
 In his conduct should be.
 By deeds thus he winneth
 Whon words cannot gain,
 So great is the grace
 Of a life without stain.

Great glory Christ gives him,
 By men still revered;
 As an angel of God
 He is honored and feared;
 To the Gentiles, like Paul,
 He is sent to proclaim
 The kingdom of heaven,
 And to preach in God's name.

He sets on each action
 God's Spirit, a seal
 Of heav'nly grace places,
 And blesses his zeal:
 The marks of Christ bearing,
 Still humble and meek,
 God's glory alone
 In each action he'll seek.

In all things like his master,
 He tendeth the weak,
 And the faint and the weary
 He ever will seek;
 Like the manna increasing,
 While giving to each,
 The word of the Gospel
 To all he will teach.

Keeping pure, for God's sake,
His flesh undefiled,
By no evil ensnared,
By no tempter beguiled;
A holocaust living,
A sacrifice true,
He offers to God
Each moment anew.

Like a candlestick placed
To diffuse Gospel light,
He shines through the world,
Dispelling its night;
A city established
On a hill ever sure
He keepeth Christ's riches
In his fortress secure.

Meetsly honored in heaven,
The greatest is he
Whose words and whose actions
In virtue agree;
Good example he giveth,
With heart ever pure,
A pattern of virtue
To rich and to poor.

Now to Gentiles he preaches,
In the name of the Lord,
Of salvation's pure laver,
And God's holy word;
For them, too, he prayeth,
And offereth each day
A holocaust worthy
All evil to stay.

Opposing things earthly,
For God's holy law,
As the pure wheat is severed
From chaff and from straw;
Unmoved by affliction,
He heeds no rebuke,
Nor the threats of the sinner,
Nor the scoffer's proud look.

Pastor most faithful,
 He guards Gospel sheep,
 Whom God in His wisdom
 Hath given him to keep;
 He hopes, like his Master,
 That his life may be given
 For the souls whom he teaches
 And guides on to heaven.

Quite plain are his merits:
 As a bishop, he'll guide
 The clergy to conflict,
 With truth on their side;
 He clothes them in vestments,
 He gives them true bread,
 And they learn from his teaching
 How Christ's flock must be fed.

Raised up as a herald,
 He calls rich and poor
 To come to the nuptials
 In raiment all pure;
 In vessels celestial
 He gives heavenly wine,
 And pledges the people
 In a chalice divine.

Scripture's rich mine he openeth,
 Well taught in its lore,
 And daily he gaineth
 Of merit yet more;
 As an Israel counted,
 For in all things he sees
 His God and his Saviour,
 And from evil he flees.

The witness most faithful,
 All truth he'll unfold,
 And the Catholic Faith
 By his preaching is told;
 No human taint ever
 His words shall profane,
 The salt of true wisdom
 Shall keep him from stain.

Vast Gospel fields tilling,
 He sows the good seed
 Of the Gospel of Christ,
 Without tare or weed;
 And the words which he speaks
 In the ears of the wise,
 In a rich crop of grace
 From their hearts shall arise.

Xt. Jesus hath chosen,
 That here in His place
 He should liberate captives
 From two-fold disgrace;
 From slavery some,
 But from Satan still more,
 Thus freed from all chains
 Which in bondage they wore.

Yet hymns and Apocalypse
 This great chanter sings,
 And with psalmody sweet
 To his Lord honor brings;
 The people thus teaching
 The God One in Three,
 He worships Three Persons
 In one Unity.

Zoned with God's cinoture,
 By night and by day,
 With fervor unceasing,
 He fails not to pray,
 And with the apostles,
 As reward for his pains,
 A saint over Israel
 In glory he reigns.

2. To St. Sechnall is also attributed this Post-Communion hymn.¹
 Is there a reference to transubstantiation in the sixth verse?

Sanoti venite,
 Christi corpus sumite;
 Sanctum bibentes,
 Quo redempti sanguinem.

Salvati Christi
 Corpore et sanguine,
 A quo refecti,
 Laudes dicemus Deo.

1. M. J. Brennan, An Ecclesiastical History of Ireland, 45.

Hoc sacramento
Corporis et sanguinis,
Omnes exuti
Ab inferni faucibus.

Dator salutis,
Christus filius Dei
Mundum salvavit,
Per crucem et sanguinem.

Pro universis
Imolatus Dominus,
In se sacerdos
Existit et hostia.

Lege praeceptum
Immolari hostias,
Quae adumbrantur
Divina mysteria.

Lucis indultor
Et salvator omnium,
Praeclaram sanctorum
Largitus est gratiam.

Accedant omnes
Pura mente creduli
Sumant aeternam
Salutis custodiam.

Sanctorum custos,
Rector quoque Dominus,
Vitae perennis
Largitor credentibus.

Coelestem panem
Dat esurientibus,
De fonte vivo
Praebet sitientibus.

Alpha et omega
In se Christus Dominus
Venit, venturus
Judicare homines.

1

II. LIVES AND DOCUMENTS OF PATRICK.

2

A. Life by Tirechan.

This memoir was written in the second half of the seventh century by Tirechan, a bishop, who had been a disciple of Bishop Ultan of Ardraccan in Meath. He wrote in the interests of the diocese of Patrician communities, of which Armagh claimed to be the head. He is chiefly concerned with Patrick's work in parts of Ireland, especially in Connaught.

3

B. Notices from the Book of Armagh.

Such notices from the Book of Armagh (which was compiled in the 9th century by Ferdomnach) give an ancient Latin account of foundation of the church of Trim and of the grants to Patrick in Connaught, Sligo, and Leitrim. Then in Irish tongue is described the ecclesiastical grants and acts of Patrick in Connaught and Leinster. These notices supplement the Life by Tirechan. Most likely both men used the same sources.

4

C. Life by Muirchu.

The first formal biography was composed by Muirchu at the end of the seventh century. He used written sources, although he implied that the documents were anonymous and that he was sceptical about their statements. The first part of the Life is free from the mythical element; whereas the narrative of Patrick's work in Ireland is characterised by its legendary setting. There is evidence that Muirchu and Tirechan used the same written sources. At the time of the writing of the Life there was a movement to bring about uniformity between northern and southern Ireland, and there is no doubt but that Muirchu was influenced by the church politics of his day.

1. "Regarding the various 'Lives' of St. Patrick, written by monks of the Middle Ages, they are mostly composed of a mixture of truth and legend in which the latter greatly predominates. Superstition, miraculous signs, monkish practices, and papal dogmas abound in these books, to all of which the real Patrick was probably a total stranger. They generally tell us that he was sent to Ireland by Pope Celestine in the closing years of the fourth century, but Patrick himself makes no mention of this as he certainly would have done if he had entered Ireland as a papal representative." Ironside, op. cit., 109.

2. Bury, op. cit., 248-251.

3. Ibid., 251-255.

4. Ibid., 255-263.

D. Hymn of Fiacc,¹

The Irish hymn on the life of St. Patrick, Hymn of Fiacc or Fonnair Patraicc, was included in the collections of Irish hymns preserved in two manuscripts of the eleventh or twelfth century. They ascribe the authorship to the poet Fiacc, who lived in the time of Patrick and became the bishop of Slebte. But philological evidence shows that it could not have been written before A.D. 800. The author used written documents, maybe Muirchu's Life, or at least the same sources as Muirchu.

Here are the fifteen stanzas which Bury believes to belong to the original uninterpolated hymn:

Patrick was born in Nemthur,
 this is what he narrates in stories;
 A youth of sixteen years,
 when he was brought under tears.

Sueat his name, it was said;
 what his father was, were worth knowing;
 Son of Calpurn, son of Potid,
 grandson of deacon Odasse.

He was six years in bondage;
 men's good cheer he shared not.
 Many were they whom he served,
 Cothraige of four households.

Said Victor to Milchu's bondsman,
 that he should go over the waves;
 He struck his foot on the stone,
 its trace remains, it fades not.

(The angel) sent him across all Britain-great God,
 it was a marvel of a course!
 So that he left him with Germanus in the south,
 in the southern part of Letha.

In the isles of the Tyrrhene Sea he fasted,
 in them he computed,
 He read the Canon with Germanus,
 that is what writings narrate.

1. Ibid., 263-266.

A help to Ireland was Patrick's coming,
 which was expected;
 Far away was heard the sound of the call
 of the children of Fochlad wood.

His druids from Loigaire
 hid not Patrick's coming;
 The prophecy was fulfilled
 of the prince of which they spoke.

Hymns and Apocalypse, the Three Fifties,
 he used to sing them;
 He preached, baptized, prayed;
 from God's praise he ceased not.

Patrick preached to the Scots,
 he suffered great labour widely.
 That around him they may come to Judgment,
 every one whom he brought to life.

When Patrick was ailing,
 he longed to go to Armagh:
 An angel went to meet him
 on the road at mid-day.

He said, "(Leave thy) dignity to Armagh,
 to Christ give thanks;
 To heaven thou shalt soon go:
 thy prayers have been granted thee."

(Patrick) set a boundary against night
 that no light might be wasted with him;
 Up to the end of a year there was light;
 that was a long day of peace!

Patrick's soul from his body
 after labours was severed;
 God's angels on the first night
 kept watch thereon unceasingly.

Patrick, without sign of pride,
 much good he meditated;
 To be in the service of Mary's son,
 it was a pious fortune to which he was born.

1

E. Early Acts in Irish.

Tirechan, Muirchu, and the Notices from the Book of Armagh used these Acts of Patrick, which circulated in the sixth century and "supplied the public with what they liked -- miraculous legends in a historical setting." "The character as well as the language of the hagiographical stories, which were doubtless read aloud in the pulpit, was determined by the needs of the public for which they were intended."²

F. Vita Secunda and Vita Quarta.³

These two anonymous Lives are closely related, and taken together have considerable importance for the criticism of Muirchu's Life. They both have a common Irish source which is older than the seventh century.

G. Vita Tripartita.⁴

This Life of Patrick was written in Irish, although largely interspersed with Latin passages and clauses. It was written during the eleventh century from an older Life which was compiled during the life of Joseph, bishop of Armagh (d. A.D. 936). Like the Life of Tirechan, it was intended to support the claims of Armagh. It used the same older written materials as selected by Tirechan, which existed in the eighth century.

H. Vita Tertia.⁵

This anonymous Life of Patrick was written in Ireland by an Irishman in the ninth century. "The author of the Life used the Confession, Muirchu, Tirechan; but he also incorporated a number of stories and incidents not found in any of the documents in the Liber Armachenus -- Some of these stories are also found in the Vita Tripartita or the Vita Quarta, but others are not found elsewhere."

1. Ibid., 266-268.

2. Ibid., 267-268.

3. Ibid., 268-269.

4. Ibid., 269-272.

5. Ibid., 272-273.

1

I. Life by Probus.

Probus compiled this Life in the 10th century at the request of a certain Paulinus. He made use of Muirchu's Life, but reconstructed certain parts of it, introducing matter from other sources. These interpolations into his Life are oftentimes quite clumsy.

2

J. The Irish Annals.

The extant chronicles which supply material for the history in the fifth century are:

1. Annales Ultonienses or Annals of Ulster, compiled by Cathal MacManus of Shanad, who died in 1498. The Chronicle begins at A.D. 431 and comes down to the compiler's own time. For the early Middle Ages it is the most valuable of the extant Irish Annals. Its greatest merit consists in the fact that the compiler did not attempt to solve chronological difficulties, but copied the data which he found.
2. Annals of Inisfallen (in Kerry) is regarded as "the most ancient body of chronicles we possess." It has been shown that the early part was based on the Victorian cycle.
3. Tigernoch (d. 1088) composed a chronicle at Clonmacnois, beginning in the remotest ages, of which only portions are preserved. His chronology is unreliable.
4. The Annals of the Four Masters is a chronicle in Irish from the earliest times, compiled in Donegal by O'Clery and three others in the seventeenth century. It has some value for the early chronicles that are not extant. But its dates are untrustworthy because the compilers had no skill in chronological computation.

3

K. The Catalogus Sanctorum Hiberniae.

The Catalogus sanctorum Hiberniae secundum diversa tempora is a very brief sketch of the ecclesiastical history of Ireland from the time of St. Patrick to the year 665 A.D. Its composition belongs to the first half of the eighth century. Three definite periods are distinguished, and to each is assigned a different category of saints. The chronology is marked by the reigns of the kings of Ireland, and the three periods are as follows:

1. Ibid., 273-277.

2. Ibid., 279-285.

3. Ibid., 285-287.

1. 432-544 A.D. ordo sanotissimus.
2. 544-598 A.D. ordo sanotior or sanotus sanotorum.
3. 598-665 A.D. ordo sanotus.

J. B. Bury outlines the distinctive features of these three periods in the following manner:

First Period:

1. All the saints were bishops.
2. There was unity in the Churoy, one liturgy, one tonsure (the Celtic), one mode of observing Easter, and all obeyed the guidance of Patrick.
3. The saints did not disdain the ministration and society of women.

Second Period:

1. This order of saints consisted chiefly of presbyters, there were few bishops.
2. The unity of the church was not wholly maintained; it was maintained in regard to the tonsure and the Paschal cycle, but different liturgies were introduced, and different monastic rules; it could no longer be said that unum ducesm Patricium habebant.
3. Women were separated from the monasteries.

Third Period:

1. It consisted of prebyters and only few bishops.
2. The conversion of the south of Ireland to Roman usages falls into this period, so that it is marked by still more diversity than the second, since two different modes of tonsure and of the determination of Easter prevailed in Ireland.
3. There was a tendency among the saints to betake themselves to the solitary life of hermits.

Bury considers this arrangement to be very artificial and claims that historical accuracy has been sacrificed to symmetry (the author conceives each period to be coincident with exactly four reigns). But I have followed Joyce in the use of this Catalogus for the rough outline of this thesis, because the outstanding characteristics of the early Irish church are so clearly stated and because they are the natural and logical outgrowth of the Christianity described in Patrick's Confession and Letter. Here we also find the historical explanation of Irish tonsure and Easter which were to be contested by the entrance of the Roman church in the Third Period.

III. IRISH HYMNS AND POETRY OF LATER CENTURIES.

1

A. Altus Prosator of Columba.

-
1. Allen, op. cit., 162-163.

Ancient of Days, Creator High, Unending Unbeginner God,
 Who shall throughout time's period by infinite eternally,
 With whom is Christ, Thine only Son, with whom the Holy Ghost
 shall be

In glory co-eternally, perpetual God in unison,
 The Deity whom we proclaim is not three deities but one,
 Three persons though we wonder on, our saving faith is in His
 name.

Beneficent the angels and archangels, the authorities,
 The powers, principalities, and thrones are ordered by His hand.
 Lost the majestic goodness of His trinity inactive stand,
 Creations such as these He planned to hold the largeness of His
 love.

They have their offices to show, as in His mighty word they move,
 The riches of celestial love, the privilege His hands bestow.

Celestial glory in His face, with archangelic splendor crowned,
 Out of the heaven's highest round of light and sempiternal space,
 Though God had made him, Lucifer the arrogant fell to disgrace.

And rebel angels lost their place, whom vanity lured on to err.
 Because the rest in glorious and princely kingdoms faithful were,
 Their captain sinned the deeper, for pride had made him envious.

Down to dark cells of divers make, into the deep abyss of hell,
 The Dragon great and terrible, the ancient, foul, and subtle
 Snake,

A third part of the shining stars drew with him in his slimy wake!
 Our Adversary, whose mistake hurled headlong to eternal ward
 Apostate angels, in his den imprisoned under horred bars,
 Is crueller than human scars, and subtler than are beasts or men.

1

B. The Hermit's Song.

I wish, O eternal and ancient King, Thou Son of the living God,
 For a hut to dwell in, a little hut, hidden where none has trod.
 And near it a little lark should sing, a blithe little bird,
 all gray;

By the grace of the Ghost a clear pool there might wash my sins
 away.

A wood of beauty should bound it in a stone-throw on every side,
 And the living voices of birds therein should live and be multiplied.

The door might face to the sun, and a brook should lie on the
 forest floor,

And the land be gracious to plants and seeds that should grow
 in front of my door.

And goodly comrades to chant the hours, sensible men each one,
Humble souls and obedient hearts, should pray to the King of
the Sun.

A pleasant church with a lincn cloth where Christ sits by the
board,
And shining candles to shed their light on the pure white words
of the Lord.

One house where all might go for the care of the soul and the
body's care,
And say no evil or ribald thing, and speak with no braggart air.
This is the husbandry I would take, the desire which I cannot
hide --

Leek and salmon and trout and bees, and a hen or two beside.
Raiment and food for my need, and I to be sitting there --
These gifts I ask from our fair Lord King -- these, and a place
for prayer.

1

C. Flightiness of Thought.

I am ashamed of thoughts that idly go astray.
I shall have dangor from them on the Judgment Day.
They wander wickod ways at quiet psalm-singing,
They fret in God's great eyes, they think an evil thing.
In companies of women, throngs of wickedness,
Through woods and cities, swifter than swift wind they pass.
Unferried, never missing step, they cross the sea,
And in one bound from heaven to earth they shortly flee.
Upon a race of folly hither and yon they roam,
And after dizziness they come at length back home.
Though one should bind them or put shackles on their feet,
No resting spell shall make them constant or more meet.
Nor whip nor sword-edge serves to keep them under hasp;
Like slippery eels they glide and slip beyond my grasp.
Lock nor deep-bolted dungeon nor earthly chain may serve.
Nor fort nor sea nor barren desert makes them swerve.
Beloved and chaste Christ, Thine eyes are clear to see --
Come with Thy sevenfold grace and keep them nearer Thee!

2

D. The Scribe.

The trees like a hedge surround me,
And a blackbird sings to me,
And on my back and around me
The birds spill melody.
From the topmost twig in the bushes falls
The gray-frock cuckoo's glee;
O it's good to write in the dear Lord's sight
Under the greenwood tree.

1. Ibid., 188.

2. Ibid., 186.

1

E. The Philogogian and His Cat.

Pangur is proof the arts of cats
 And men are in alliance;
 His mind is set on catching rats,
 And mine on snaring science.
 I make my book, the world forgot,
 A kind of endless class-time;
 My hobby Pangur envies not --
 He likes more childish pastime.
 When we're at home time quickly flies --
 Around us no one bustles;
 Untiringly we exercise
 Our intellectual muscles.
 Caught in his diplomatic net,
 And sometimes I can half-way get
 A problem when I mull it.
 He watches with his shining eye
 The wall that guards his earnings;
 As for my eyesight -- well, I try
 To match my stare with learning's.
 His joy is in his lightning leap;
 Me -- I'm a mental wizard;
 My claws are sunk in problems deep,
 His, in a mouse's gizzard.
 As comrades we admit we shine,
 For each observes his station;
 He practices his special line,
 And I, my avocation.
 Our rivalry you'll find is nice,
 If in the scale you weigh us:
 Each day Pangur goes hunting mice,
 I bring forth light from chaos.

1. Ibid., 184.

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