

he built in Tipperary; and a third at Cluain-more Madoc, in Leinster, where he was buried. He died on the 2nd of February; but, says Colgan, his festival is kept on the 16th of March, at all the above-mentioned places. Sir James Ware speaks of two MS. histories of his life. See also Usher, (*Antiq. c. 17.*) Colgan, 17 Martii. Mr. Smith, in his natural and civil history of the county of Kerry, in 1755, p. 127.

MARCH XVII.

SAINT PATRICK, B. C.,

APOSTLE OF IRELAND.

The Irish have many lives of their great apostle, whereof the two principal are, that compiled by Jocelin, a Cistercian monk, in the twelfth century, who quotes four lives written by disciples of the saint; and that by Probus, who, according to Bollandus, lived in the seventh century. But in both are intermixed several injudicious popular reports. We, with Tillemont, chiefly confine ourselves to the saint's own writings, his Confession, and his Letter to Corotic, which that judicious critic doubts not to be genuine. The style in both is the same; he is expressed in them to be the author; the Confession is quoted by all the authors of his life, and the Letter was written before the conversion of the Franks under King Clovis, in 496. See Tillemont, t. 16. p. 455. and *Brittania Sancta*.

A.D. 464.

If the virtue of children reflects an honour on their parents, much more justly is the name of St. Patrick rendered illustrious by the innumerable lights of sanctity with which the church of Ireland, planted by his labours in the most remote corner of the then known world, shone during many ages; and by the colonies of saints with which it peopled many foreign countries; for, under God, its inhabitants derived from their glorious apostle the streams of that eminent sanctity, by which they were long conspicuous to the whole world. St. Patrick was born in the decline of the fourth century;* and as he informs us in his Confession,

They were continued by another hand to 1320. They are often quoted by Bishop Usher and Sir James Ware. An imperfect transcript is kept among the MSS. of the library of Trinity college, Dublin. Bishop Nicholson, in his *Irish Historical Library*, informs us, that the late duke of Chandos had a complete copy of them.

* According to Usher and Tillemont, in 372. The former places his death in 493; but Tillemont, about the year 455. Nennius, published by Mr. Gale, says he died fifty-seven years before the birth of St. Columba, consequently in 464.

in a village called Bonaven Taberniæ, which seems to be the town of Killpatrick, on the mouth of the river Cluyd, in Scotland, between Dunbriton and Glasgow. He calls himself both a Briton and a Roman, or of a mixed extraction, and says his father was of a good family named Calphurnius, and a denizen of a neighbouring city of the Romans, who not long after abandoned Britain, in 409. Some writers call his mother Conchessa, and say she was niece to St. Martin of Tours. At fifteen years of age he committed a fault, which appears not to have been a great crime, yet was to him a subject of tears during the remainder of his life. He says, that when he was sixteen, he lived still ignorant of God, meaning of the devout knowledge and fervent love of God, for he was always a Christian: he never ceased to bewail this neglect, and wept when he remembered that he had been one moment of his life insensible of the divine love. In his sixteenth year he was carried into captivity by certain barbarians, together with many of his father's vassals and slaves, taken upon his estate. They took him into Ireland, where he was obliged to keep cattle on the mountains and in the forests, in hunger and nakedness, amidst snows, rain, and ice. Whilst he lived in this suffering condition, God had pity on his soul, and quickened him to a sense of his duty by the impulse of a strong interior grace. The young man had recourse to him with his whole heart in fervent prayer and fasting; and from that time faith and the love of God acquired continually new strength in his tender soul. He prayed often in the day, and also many times in the night, breaking off his sleep to return to the divine praises. His afflictions were to him a source of heavenly benedictions, because he carried his cross with Christ, that is, with patience, resignation and holy joy. St. Patrick, after six months spent in slavery under the same master, was admonished by God in a dream to return to his own country, and informed that a ship was then ready to sail thither. He repaired immediately to the sea-coast, though at a great distance, and found the vessel; but could not obtain his passage, probably for want of money. Thus new trials ever await the servants of God. The saint returned towards his hut, praying as he went, but the sailors, though pagans, called him back, and took him on board. After three days' sail, they made land, probably in the north of Scotland: but wandered twenty-seven days through deserts, and were a long while distressed for want of provisions, finding

nothing to eat. Patrick had often entertained the company on the infinite power of God: they therefore asked him, why he did not pray for relief? Animated by a strong faith, he assured them that if they would address themselves with their whole heart to the true God, he would hear and succour them. They did so, and on the same day met with a herd of swine. From that time provisions never failed them till on the twenty-seventh day they came into a country that was cultivated and inhabited. During their distress, Patrick refused to touch meats which had been offered to idols. One day a great stone from a rock happened to fall upon him, and had like to have crushed him to death, whilst he had laid down to take a little rest. But he invoked Elias, and was delivered from the danger. Some years afterwards he was again led captive; but recovered his liberty after two months. When he was at home with his parents, God manifested to him, by divers visions, that he destined him to the great work of the conversion of Ireland. He thought he saw all the children of that country from the wombs of their mothers stretching out their hands, and piteously crying to him for relief.*

Some think he had travelled into Gaul before he undertook his mission, and we find that, whilst he preached in Ireland, he had a great desire to visit his brethren in Gaul, and to see those whom he calls the saints of God, having been formerly acquainted with them. The authors of his life say, that after his second captivity, he travelled into Gaul and Italy, and had seen St. Martin, St. Germanus of Auxerre, and Pope Celestine, and that he received his mission, and the apostolical benediction from this pope, who died in 432. But it seems, from his Confession,

* St. Prosper, in his chronicle, assures us that Pope Celestine ordained St. Palladius bishop of the Scots in 431, and by him converted their country to the faith; this apostle seems to have preached to this nation first in Ireland, and afterwards in Scotland. Though Palladius be styled by St. Prosper and Bede their first bishop, yet the light of the faith had diffused its rays from Britain into Ireland before that time, as several monuments produced by Usher demonstrate. But the general conversion of the inhabitants of this island was reserved for St. Patrick.

The Scots are distinguished from the native Irish in the works of St. Patrick, and in other ancient monuments. As to their original, the most probable conjecture seems to be, that they were a foreign warlike nation who made a settlement in Ireland before the arrival of St. Patrick. We find them mentioned there in the fourth century. Several colonies of them passed not long after into Scotland. But the inhabitants of Ireland were promiscuously called Scots or Irish for many ages.

that he was ordained deacon, priest, and bishop, for his mission in his own country. It is certain that he spent many years in preparing himself for those sacred functions. Great opposition was made against his episcopal consecration and mission, both by his own relations and by the clergy. These made him great offers in order to detain him among them, and endeavoured to affright him by exaggerating the dangers to which he exposed himself amidst the enemies of the Romans and Britons, who did not know God. Some objected, with the same view, the fault which he had committed thirty years before as an obstacle to his ordination. All these temptations threw the saint into great perplexities, and had like to have made him abandon the work of God. But the Lord, whose will he consulted by earnest prayer, supported him, and comforted him by a vision; so that he persevered in his resolution. He forsook his family, sold, as he says, his birth-right and dignity, to serve strangers, and consecrated his soul to God, to carry his name to the end of the earth. He was determined to suffer all things for the accomplishment of his holy design, to receive in the same spirit both prosperity and adversity, and to return thanks to God equally for the one as for the other, desiring only that his name might be glorified, and his divine will accomplished to his own honour. In this disposition he passed into Ireland, to preach the gospel, where the worship of idols still generally reigned. He devoted himself entirely for the salvation of these barbarians, to be regarded as a stranger, to be condemned as the last of men, to suffer from the infidels imprisonment and all kinds of persecution, and to give his life with joy, if God should deem him worthy to shed his blood in his cause. He travelled over the whole island, penetrating into the remotest corners without fearing any dangers, and often visited each province. Such was the fruit of his preachings and sufferings, that he consecrated to God, by baptism, an infinite number of people, and laboured effectually that they might be perfected in his service by the practice of virtue. He ordained every where clergymen, induced women to live in holy widowhood and continency, consecrated virgins to Christ, and instituted monks. Great numbers embraced these states of perfection with extreme ardour. Many desired to confer earthly riches on him, who had communicated to them the goods of heaven; but he made it a capital duty to decline all self-interest, and whatever might dishonour his ministry. He took nothing

from the many thousands whom he baptized, and often gave back the little presents which some laid on the altar, choosing rather to mortify the fervent than to scandalize the weak or the infidels. On the contrary, he gave freely of his own, both to pagans and Christians, distributed large alms to the poor in the provinces where he passed, made presents to the kings; judging that necessary for the progress of the gospel, and maintained and educated many children whom he trained up to serve at the altar. He always gave till he had no more to bestow, and rejoiced to see himself poor, with Jesus Christ, knowing poverty and afflictions to be more profitable to him than riches and pleasures. The happy success of his labours cost him many persecutions.

A certain prince named Corotick, a Christian, though in name only, disturbed the peace of his flock. He seems to have reigned in some part of Wales, after the Britons had been abandoned by the Romans. This tyrant, as the saint calls him, having made a descent into Ireland, plundered the country where Saint Patrick had been just conferring the holy chrism, that is, confirmation, on a great number of Neophytes, who were yet in their white garments after baptism. Corotick, without paying any regard to justice, or to the holy sacrament, massacred many, and carried away others, whom he sold to the infidel Picts or Scots. This probably happened at Easter or Whitsuntide. The next day the saint sent the barbarian a letter by a holy priest whom he had brought up from his infancy, entreating him to restore the Christian captives, and at least part of the booty he had taken, that the poor people might not perish for want; but was only answered by raileries, as if the Irish could not be the same Christians with the Britons: which arrogance and pride sunk those barbarous conquerors beneath the dignity of men, whilst by it they were puffed up above others in their own hearts. The saint, therefore, to prevent the scandal which such a flagrant enormity gave to his new converts, wrote with his own hand a public circular letter. In it he styles himself a sinner and an ignorant man; for such is the sincere humility of the saints, (most of all when they are obliged to exercise any acts of authority,) contrary to the pompous titles which the world affects. He declares, nevertheless, that he is established bishop of Ireland, and pronounces Corotick and the other

parricides and accomplices separated from him and from Jesus Christ, whose place he holds, forbidding any to eat with them. or to receive their alms, till they should have satisfied God by the tears of sincere penance, and restored the servants of Jesus Christ to their liberty. This letter expresses his most tender love for his flock, and his grief for those who had been slain. yet mingled with joy, because they reign with the prophets, apostles, and martyrs. Jocelin assures us, that Corotick, was overtaken by the divine vengeance. St. Patrick wrote his Confession as a testimony of his mission, when he was old.* It is solid, full of good sense and piety, expresses an extraordinary humility and a great desire of martyrdom, and is written with spirit. The author was perfectly versed in the holy scriptures. He confesses every where his own faults with a sincere humility, and extols the great mercies of God towards him in this world, who had exalted him, though the most undeserving of men: yet, to preserve him in humility, afforded him the advantage of meeting with extreme contempt from others, that is from the heathens. He confesses, for his humiliation, that, among other temptations, he felt a great desire to see again his own country, and to visit the saints of his acquaintance in Gaul: but durst not abandon his people: and says, that the Holy Ghost had declared to him that to do it would be criminal. He tells us, that a little before he had written this, he himself and all his companions had been plundered and laid in irons, for his having baptized the son of a certain king against the will of his father: but were released after fourteen days. He lived in the daily expectation of such accidents, and of martyrdom; but feared nothing, having his hope as a firm anchor fixed in heaven, and reposing himself with an entire confidence in the Almighty. He says, that he had lately baptized a very beautiful young lady of quality, who some days after came to tell him, that she had been admonished by an angel to consecrate her virginity to Jesus Christ, that she might render herself the more acceptable to God. He gave God thanks, and she made her vows with extraordinary fervour six days before he wrote this letter.

* The style is not polished; but the Latin edition is perhaps, only a translation: or his captivities might have prevented his progress in polite learning being equal to that which he made in the more sublime and more necessary studies.

St. Patrick held several councils to settle the discipline of the church which he had planted. The first, the acts of which are extant under his name in the editions of the councils, is certainly genuine. Its canons regulate several points of discipline, especially relating to penance.* St. Bernard and the tradition of the country testify, that St. Patrick fixed his metropolitan see at Armagh. He established some other bishops, as appears by his council and other monuments. He not only converted the whole country by his preaching and wonderful miracles, but also cultivated this vineyard with so fruitful a benediction and increase from heaven, as to render Ireland a most flourishing garden in the church of God, and a country of saints. And those nations, which had for many ages esteemed all others barbarians, did not blush to receive from the utmost extremity of the uncivilized or barbarous world, their most renowned teachers and guides in the greatest of all sciences, that of the saints.

Many particulars are related of the labours of St. Patrick, which we pass over. In the first year of his mission he attempted to preach Christ in the general assembly of the kings and states of all Ireland, held yearly at Taraghe, or Temoria, in East-Meath, the residence of the chief king, styled the monarch of the whole island, and the principal seat of the Druids or priests, and their paganish rites. The son of Neill, the chief monarch, declared himself against the preacher: however, he converted several, and, on his road to that place, the father of St. Benen, or Benignus, his immediate successor in the see of Armagh. He afterwards converted and baptized the kings of Dublin and Munster, and the seven sons of the king of Connaught, with the greater part of their subjects, and before his death almost the whole island. He founded a

* A second council, extant in the same collection, ought rather to be ascribed to a nephew of this saint. Other Irish canons, published in the ninth tome of D'Achery's *Spicilege*, and more by Martenne, (*Anecd. tome 4. part 2.*) though they bear the name of St. Patrick, are judged to have been framed by some of his successors. See Wilkins, *Conc. Britan. & Hibern. t. 1. p. 3.*

The treatise, of the Twelve Abuses, published among the works of St. Austin and St. Cyprian, is attributed to St. Patrick, in a collection of ecclesiastical ordinances made in Ireland, in the eighth age, by Arbedoc, and in other ancient monuments. The style is elegant; but it may be a translation from an Irish original. Sir James Ware published the works of St. Patrick at London, in 1658, in octavo.

monastery at Armagh; another called Domnach-Padraig, or Patrick's church; also a third, named Sabhal-Padraig, and filled the country with churches and schools of piety and learning; the reputation of which, for the three succeeding centuries, drew many foreigners into Ireland.* Nennius, abbot of Bangor, in 620, in his history of the Britons,(1) published by the learned Thomas Gale, says, that St. Patrick took that name only when he was ordained bishop, being before called Maun; that he continued his missions over all the provinces of Ireland, during forty years; that he restored sight to many blind, health to the sick, and raised nine dead persons to life.† He died and was buried at Down, in Ulster. His body was found there in a church of his name in 1185, and translated to another part of the same church. His festival is marked on the 17th of March, in the Martyrology of Bede, &c.

The apostles of nations were all interior men, endowed with a sublime spirit of prayer. The salvation of souls being a supernatural end, the instruments ought to bear a proportion to it, and preaching proceed from a grace which is supernatural. To undertake this holy function, without a competent stock of sacred learning, and without the necessary precautions of human prudence and industry, would be to tempt God. But

(1) C. 55, 56, 57, 58. 61.

* It seems demonstrated that the St. Patrick who flourished among the hermits of Glastenbury, and was there buried, was distinct from our saint, and somewhat older.

† The popular tradition attributes the exemption of their country from venomous creatures to the benediction of St. Patrick, given by his staff, called the staff of Jesus, which was kept with great veneration in Dublin, as is mentioned in the year 1360, by Ralph Higden, in his Polychronicon, published by Mr. Gale and by others. The isle of Malta is said to derive a like privilege from St. Paul, who was there bitten by a viper.

St. Patrick's purgatory is a cave in an island in the lake Dearg, in the county of Donnegal, near the borders of Fermanagh. Bollandus shows the falsehood of many things related concerning it. Upon complaint of certain superstitious and false notions of the vulgar, in 1497, it was stopped up by an order of the pope. See Bollandus, Tillemont, p. 787, Alemand in his Monastic History of Ireland, and Thiers, Hist des Superst. t. 4. ed. Nov. It was soon after opened again by the inhabitants; but only according to the original institution, as Bollandus takes notice, as a penitential retirement for those who voluntarily chose it, probably in imitation of St. Patrick, or other saints, who had there dedicated themselves to a penitential state. The penitents usually spend there several days, living on bread and water, lying on rushes or furze, and praying much, with daily stations which they perform barefoot.

sanctity of life and the union of the heart with God, are a qualification far more essential than science, eloquence, and human talents. Many almost kill themselves with studying to compose elegant sermons, which flatter the ear yet reap very little fruit. Their hearers applaud their parts, but very few are converted. Most preachers, now-a-days, have learning, but are not sufficiently grounded in true sanctity, and a spirit of devotion. Interior humility, purity of heart, recollection, and the spirit and the assiduous practice of holy prayer, are the principal preparation for the ministry of the word, and the true means of acquiring the science of the saints. A short devout meditation and fervent prayer, which kindle a fire in the affections, furnish more thoughts proper to move the hearts of the hearers, and inspire them with sentiments of true virtue, than many years employed barely in reading and study. St. Patrick, and other apostolic men, were dead to themselves and the world, and animated with the spirit of perfect charity and humility, by which they were prepared by God to be such powerful instruments of his grace, as, by the miraculous change of so many hearts, to plant in entire barbarous nations not only the faith, but also the spirit of Christ. Preachers, who have not attained to a disengagement and purity of heart, suffer the petty interests of self-love secretly to mingle themselves in their zeal and charity, and have reason to suspect that they inflict deeper wounds in their own souls than they are aware, and produce not in others the good which they imagine.

MANY MARTYRS AT ALEXANDRIA, IN 392.

THEOPHILUS, patriarch of Alexandria, obtained a rescript of the Emperor Theodosius, to convert an old deserted temple of Bacchus into a Christian church. In clearing this place, in the subterraneous secret caverns, called by the Greeks Adita, and held by the pagans as sacred, were found infamous and ridiculous figures, which Theophilus caused to be exposed in public, to show the extravagant superstitions of the idolaters. The heathens in tumults raised a sedition, killed many Christians in the streets, and then retired into the great temple of Serapis as their fortress. In sallies they seized many Christians, and upon their refusing to sacrifice to Serapis, put them to death by cruel torments, crucifying them, breaking their legs, and throwing them into the sinks