

UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE



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Mr. John





L I F E
OF
S T. B R I G I D,
Virgin,

*FIRST ABBESS OF KILDARE,
SPECIAL PATRONESS OF KILDARE DIOCESE, AND
GENERAL PATRONESS OF IRELAND.*

BY THE
REV. JOHN O'HANLON, M.R.I.A.

ILLUSTRATED WITH THIRTEEN ENGRAVINGS ON WOOD.

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PREFACE.

THE publication of a full and critical Life of Ireland's Virgin Patroness had long been desired, by the clergy and laity of our country. While preparing the following Biography, as a leading feature in his "Lives of the Irish Saints," the author was urged, by many devout clients of St. Brigid, to issue it in a separate form, to satisfy the wants and wishes of numerous kind friends. Not alone members of religious communities, under the special patronage of this holy virgin, and pastors or teachers, whose churches or educational institutions have been placed under her invocation, will be afforded a better opportunity, for becoming acquainted with her surpassing virtues and miracles, through this medium; but, even the general public can learn such particulars of her Life, as may serve still more to extend the love and veneration, due to her memory and merits.

Abroad, as well as at home, the Irish race has never ceased to regard this holy virgin as a bright example of the active and contemplative life, united in a purity of purpose and an energy of will, which enabled her to confer countless blessings, on the country of her birth, and during the period when she flourished; but, even in our own times, and to the most remote parts of the earth, her fame has been diffused; while, thousands of Erin's daughters, who have received her name in Baptism, and who have assumed it at Confirmation—not to speak of the numbers who have chosen to be called by it in the hallowed retirement of the cloister—are justly proud of and grateful for that distinction and those spiritual advantages, which are inseparably connected with a pious and faithful regard, for the efficacy of her intercession. After our illustrious Apostle, St. Patrick, no other Irish saint, probably, has secured a greater depth of affection and reverence, in the hearts of our people, than she, who, in so special a manner, has been designated, "the Mary of Erin." At a time, when our Island was just emerging from the darkness of heathen superstition, she obtained heavenly monitions and inspiration, while eagerly receiving the teaching and impulse that glorious missionary so triumphantly proclaimed and imparted to a believing nation. Seldom, if ever, has the Church witnessed more glorious and peaceful conquests than these effected, through the arguments and preaching of St. Patrick; while, among all his distinguished converts, none appear to move in more radiant light, than the nobly born and predestined child of grace, St. Brigid. To trace her brilliant career, from the cradle to the grave, forms a task of no ordinary difficulty for her

biographer ; to show forth, some of the wonderful manifestations of Divine Providence, in her behalf, is the effort so inadequately attempted in succeeding pages.

That peculiarly spiritual and national character of the people converted led this holy virgin to a sphere of usefulness, for which her talents and virtues were admirably adapted. The Irish nation even yet retains that impress, which it received from our glorious Apostle, Patrick, and in a manner, too, that no other Christian community has excelled. It has preserved the spirit and mould of his noble generosity and self-devotion, from the fifth to the nineteenth century. Among St. Patrick's spiritual daughters, the distinguished subject of the present biography holds a foremost place. Her bright example has brought numerous Irish females to a state of holiness on earth and to an eternal reward in Heaven. In the career of St. Brigid, impulses of religious zeal were tempered and purified by contact, with the duties of an active public life ; while, the rules of a virtuous discipline and the occupations of useful labour directed the communities and houses, over which she so happily presided. She travelled much to engage in the great work of her time—the conversion in detail of both pagans and believers. In this work, she seemed to care for no amount of toil, and hardly to know of any rest or relaxation.

It must appear evident, the writer has not been desirous of obtruding original views, on the reader's attention, at doubtful passages of her Life, for the mere purpose of supporting some favourite theory or paradox, not sufficiently borne out by legitimate proofs or inferences. He has rather preferred citing his authority for each statement, or indicating sources for information, which he found most available or useful. On the whole, the numerous notes and illustrations, comprising literary references and acknowledgments, which will be found interspersed throughout this biography, must tend to manifest distrust and hesitancy in forming opinions, and still more in resolving controvertible statements. The author has always been of opinion, that materials, available for historical investigation, should be employed in delineating only truthful pictures and a correct appreciation of the past, rather than be produced as mere adjuncts, giving undue prominence to the historian's peculiar opinions, prejudices, or prepossessions. And, with some slight modification, these remarks will apply to the biographer of eminent individuals, whose actions and character illustrate the personality of contemporaneous history. We have much to condemn, on the score of partial and incompetent writers, who have undertaken to treat matters, relating to general, and especially to ecclesiastical, Irish History. Happily, however, we have much reason to rejoice, that learned, laborious, and impartial investigators have wrought successfully, in various departments of native historical and literary enquiry. These have chased away many mists and misrepresentations, which had been accumulating through lapse of time, owing to various incorrect statements, made by injudicious or incompetent historians and antiquaries. While having occasion to lament irretrievable

losses, sustained by lovers of archæological researches, from the mutilation and total destruction of so many national records, inscriptions, and monuments of past ages ; yet, it is a fortunate circumstance, that very many curious manuscripts and memorials have escaped the general wreck, and that several material landmarks have survived the ravages of time. These greatly tend to elucidate the incidents of distant periods, and to corroborate many traditions, which, otherwise, must rest upon rather doubtful authority. In no department of archaic research are those evidences more desirable—and happily better perpetuated—than in that of our ecclesiastical Antiquities and Biography.

In compiling the following “*Life of St. Brigid*,” the author has been careful to consult original authorities, when these were attainable, for nearly all his statements. By adopting this practice, throughout, as a development of the system on which his biography has been prepared, it will enable readers to discriminate, between the authority on which each statement is made, and the author’s individual opinions, in certain cases. And, in this connection, it must be remarked, he would not have the reader infer, that any degree of credence should be attached to such opinions or statements—however carefully or impartially formed—unless these carry with them a sufficient amount of evidence or probability, to satisfy the unbiassed judgment of persons, fully capable of entering upon a course of strict historical investigation and enquiry.

Our very earliest recollections carry us back to the time, when often we were accustomed to gaze on the tall Round Tower of Kildare, and its pile of adjoining ruins, which, even in decay, lifted their mysterious battlements high over the wide-spreading plains around them, and when, altogether unconscious, regarding the hallowed associations of their age and place, in the simple character of pilgrim, we could hardly analyse what we saw and felt, on the site itself. Those memories, which were awakened within us, when we visited for the first time “*Kildare’s holy fane*,” were merely the vague impressions of childhood ; but, there remained a curiosity to be gratified with growing years, and, more especially, when that veneration, entertained by the people for their great Patroness, formed a spell-word of interest and admiration throughout the whole diocese. Nothing then remained, but those cold gray ruins, that had no type in the present day, and that dismantled aspiring tower, which reared its graceful and yet massive pile, as we scanned its hoary, moss-grown walls, to the very highest string-course of wonderful masonry. In the midst of present desolation, the glories of the past flitted, with the haze and indistinctness of a dream, before our mental vision. The local traditions, regarding St. Brigid, were still more tantalizing and wonderful. Our after studies, however, served to draw from void and obscurity, some glimpses of reality. If the shadows be not wholly dissipated, we have reason to feel gratified and assured, that effort and will shall be exercised, by millions of the Irish race, even yet unborn, to become familiar with the details of her extraordinary labours, virtues and miracles.

Eloquence, piety, imagination, taste, and genius, will long unite to perpetuate their memory, and to invest with their attractions, the story of St. Brigid. This unpretending record, which the writer has here presented, may help the reader to some comprehension of a remote period, of social customs and manners now become obsolete, of exalted enthusiasm in the practice of great and heroic deeds, and of a triumphant success, in the achievement of a civilization, which has no abiding force, except when directed and controlled by the Science of the Saints.

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Feast of Saint Brigid, 1877.

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LIFE OF ST. BRIGID,

Virgin,

FIRST ABBESS OF KILDARE.

SPECIAL PATRONESS OF KILDARE DIOCESE,

AND

General Patroness of Ireland.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION—AUTHOR'S PLAN AND TREATMENT—AUTHORITIES, ANCIENT AND MODERN, FOR THE LIFE OF ST. BRIGID—CRITICAL REMARKS—THE HOLY VIRGIN'S PARENTAGE—PLACE AND DATE OF HER BIRTH.

THE path of a modern biographer, while treating about the Acts of Ireland's great Patroness, is beset with difficulties of a varied nature. These arise, owing not so much to a want of materials for his task, as from the legendary, conflicting, and oftentimes contradictory accounts, so frequently met with, in several ancient tracts, relative to this holy virgin. Occasionally, however, the most exacting investigator of our traditions and antiquities will find facts or circumstances, mingled with legendary or irreconcilable narratives, deserving more than ordinary significance and having much historic importance. It can hardly admit of question, how pleasure and instruction, derivable from reading the most celebrated epic poems of ancient and modern times, should be materially lessened, if presented by their authors, in a didactic or an unimaginative style, avoiding the introduction of mythic episodes and personages, or the use of exaggerated metaphors and fancies. We must be ready to allow, that an undercurrent of historic truth sometimes sustains a superstructure of mythology, in such poems, and that it directs the interest and moral, evolved from poetic imaginings. By a parity of reasoning—although in a widely different sense—the truly religious and disciplined spirit of an enlightened and a pious Christian will not too readily reject various interesting legends, contained in the acts of our national Saints, when he is free to receive them on the weight, or set them in abeyance on the want, of sustaining evidence. Many sceptical or over fastidious critics undervalue the force of popular traditions, and regard such attested miracles as incredible or legendary; but, while those persons desire to remove cockle from the field of Irish hagiology, they possibly incur some risk, at the same time, of rooting up good seed with the tares. Our Divine Redeemer, regarding the existence of good and evil, has already observed,

in a most beautiful and instructive parable, "Suffer both to grow until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest, I will say to the reapers: 'Gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn, but the wheat gather ye into my barn.'" The known application of this parable, respecting the sower and the cockle, is obvious to the mind of every well-instructed Christian. Without any unnatural perversion of meaning, it may likewise apply to topics here introduced, but in a mode somewhat different. A multitude of legends will doubtless be found interpolated, among St. Brigid's authentic acts and miracles. Such fictions create so much embarrassment, in any effort to discriminate truth and error, that it may be regarded as an utterly impracticable project, at the present day, to draw in many cases a very marked line of distinction. Perhaps, no complete biography can be presented to the reader, without running some risk of overloading it with unnecessary, and frequently with incongruous, matter. It must be observed, while depreciating an insertion of fables, as opposed to correct taste and sound historic deduction, the plan of this present biography may not warrant absolute departure from records left us by ancient writers, however traditional and unsatisfactory such accounts happen to appear; especially, when no amount of credit is claimed for their authenticity, but such as may be established, by tests of strict evidence, or by the dictates of acute judgment. Religious feeling and Christian faith do not require for their preservation and growth, the production and publication of many legends, to be found in special Acts of our national saints. Those narratives, however, were consonant with a prevalent taste, and with the sentiments of our ancestors, in past ages. Even yet, when received with due caution, and with a just, discriminating spirit, such legends may be found, not altogether devoid of edification, granting their authenticity to be very questionable. A well-regulated mind will regard them, chiefly as emanations of a former period, and as illustrations of popular opinion, national feeling or religious impressions, which widely prevailed during times, when those narratives had been written.

Entering upon the subject of our great saint's biography, it will be necessary to premise a few observations concerning its plan and treatment, before referring to authorities, on which subsequent statements are made. It is the writer's intention, to embody at least the most probable and substantial accounts former chroniclers have handed down, regarding this holy virgin, according to the best possible chronological order, and most consecutive form, consistent with the intricacy of his subject.

Wherever discrepancies may be detected, in accounts left by various writers, those differences are faithfully pointed out, either in the text or in its accompanying notes. Again, several disquisitions or comments, not claiming the character of being original, in most cases, are usually the result of attentive reading or careful enquiry; while those dissertations are placed, according to the writer's best opinion, in their most appropriate position. He has also preferred allowing the studious reader's exercise of his own sagacity and critical discrimination, rather to test the accuracy of statements made, than to assume their solution, where mistakes might so easily be introduced. The author supposes, those authorities quoted so frequently must exonerate himself from any necessity for obtruding judgments, often liable to be ill-founded. In this life, it was deemed advisable to present the fullest and most complete narrative of St. Brigid's Acts, hitherto found in the English language. Sensible of those obvious and consequent difficulties he must expect to encounter, mistakes are frequently inevitable, while the

writer is almost as certain to incur censure from the learned and critical, for its many elaborations and redundancies, as for its numberless defects, and unavoidable inaccuracies.

Already several elegantly written, and tolerably correct, compendiums of Saint Brigid's Acts have appeared in an English dress. Many of these are most creditable to the literary taste and correct judgment of their respective authors. Such publications have supplied an admitted void in our popular literature. Still a critical and researchful life of Ireland's holy Patroness the writer chiefly desires to produce; and, however he may disappoint the expectations of capable students, he cannot conceal from himself the inherent difficulties of his task, and the utter impossibility of surmounting them, saving with a relative measure of success. That degree of credibility attaching to authorities or writers, treating about our great Virgin Saint, should pre-occupy the reader's mind, at the very start of our enquiry. Impartial opinions and exact methods of examination are required, when following the intricate process of inductive biographical research, where statements are often liable to mislead. In accordance with the general scope and design of this life, its authorities must first be given, after an unpretending and a simple arrangement. A brief account of the probable periods when her biographers wrote, with their respective opportunities for acquiring information, may prove desirable; even though conjecture must be substituted for more reliable knowledge, in regard to several subjects of special importance and enquiry.

We shall endeavour to enumerate the several ancient writers, who are stated to have commemorated St. Brigid's Acts and virtues, so far as known to us, while observing that exact chronological order, in which each compiler seems to have flourished, or written, or died. It may be premised, that nearly all of these writers are Irishmen, and that several are classed among our native saints. Among the earliest we must regard St. Fiech,² who flourished in or about the year 520, the disciple of St. Patrick and first chief bishop of Leinster. He is thought possibly to have composed a hymn in praise of St. Brigid.³ One attributed to him, however, seems to indicate, that this holy virgin had departed from life, before it had been composed.⁴ St. Fiech was her contemporary; yet, it is strange, we find no allusion to him in her Acts. Fiech does not seem to have lived, beyond the year 530.⁵

² See his Life at the 12th of October.

³ It is said to commence with these words: "Audite Virginis laudes."

⁴ In the "Leabhur Iomaun," or "Book of Hymns"—now preserved in the Franciscan Library, Dublin—an old scholiast prefixed the following *proemium* or argument to this hymn, and which may thus be translated into English. "St. Nennid Lamhoidhain, that is, of the Clean Hand, composed this hymn in praise of St. Brigid, or St. Fiegg of Sletty; 'Audite Virginis laudes' is its beginning: or, St. Ultan of Arlbrecain composed it, in honour of St. Brigid. It comprises St. Brigid's miracles in one book: an alphabetical order is there preserved, and it is written in imitation of Noscarian metre. There are four chapters in it, and four lines in each chapter, with sixteen syllables in each line." Three points must here be noted, Colgan remarks. *First*, in the hymn he published, the number of sixteen syllables in each line is not pre-

served. This he says may be instanced, in the fourth and fifth lines. Yet, the Latin reader must find, on investigation, that there are sixteen syllables in these lines mentioned, as in most of the other stanzas. There are, however, five lines which either fall short, or exceed that number of syllables. *Secondly*, as published by Colgan, the hymn consists of five instead of four strophes. *Thirdly*, if what the scholiast states be true, that the words, "Audite Virginis laudes," commenced the hymn, and that there were four divisions or parts in it, two of the last must be wanting, and three other strophes, which are placed before these lines, must have been intended as a preface. Or, if we can be sure, that absolutely speaking, there were only four verses in it, the fifth which is not found in the St. Magnus' manuscript, must be an addition to the original number. See "Trias Thaumaturga." *Tertia Vita S. Brigidæ*, n. 80, p. 445.

⁵ This Colgan endeavours to show, in his

Nearly contemporaneous in point of antiquity, we may regard St. Ninnidius,⁶ surnamed Laimhiobhain.⁷ He is said to have treated on the virtues and miracles of St. Brigid. This is the statement of some writers.⁸ As her chaplain and most intimate friend, he must have had special advantages for acquiring information on this subject; and therefore, a life of the saint, composed by him, should be regarded as one of inestimable value and authenticity. Yet, Colgan thinks, although Fiech and Nennidius, in all likelihood, wrote something concerning St. Brigid, the hymn in question should rather be attributed to St. Ultan, on account of certain reasons adduced.⁹ St. Nennidius, called also Nenius,¹⁰ administered Holy Viaticum to the illustrious virgin, when she died, about A.D. 523, and consequently he flourished early in the sixth century. St. Brendan, Bishop of Clonfert, is said to have written about the virtues and miracles of St. Brigid.¹¹ He flourished, likewise, after her time, and he died on the 16th of May,¹² A.D. 576.¹³ St. Brogan Cloen,¹⁴ of Rostuirk in Ossory, and who probably flourished in the seventh century, composed an Irish hymn¹⁵ in praise of St. Brigid.¹⁶ Of this various manuscript copies remain.¹⁷ Besides these authors, Cogitosus,¹⁸ who flourished probably after the sixth and before the ninth century, wrote a celebrated treatise on the life and virtues of St. Brigid. Several manuscript copies of this tract are yet to be found.¹⁹ Again, the illustrious St. Columkille,²⁰ Apostle of the Picts and Scots, is thought to have written a hymn on the life, and in praise, of St. Brigid.²¹ He is reputed to have composed it,²² about A.D. 563, on his passage to Britain. St. Columkille is generally thought to have departed this life, in the year 596.²³

Fourth Appendix to St. Patrick's Acts, and in that Catalogue of authors, who wrote biographies of our national Apostle.

⁶ See his Life at the 2nd of April.

⁷ Believing him to have been Abbot of Inis-Muighe-Samh, an island on Lough Erne, Colgan published his Acts in the "Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ," xviii. Januarii, pp. 111 to 115.

⁸ See Sir James Ware, "De Scriptoribus Hiberniæ," lib. i., cap. i., p. 3.

⁹ In his notes to St. Brigid's Third Life.

¹⁰ According to the Third, Fourth and Fifth Lives of St. Brigid, as published by Colgan.

¹¹ The Scholiast on an Irish hymn, composed in praise of St. Brigid, and which begins with the words, "Brigid be bhith-maith," doubts as to whether the hymn, in question, should be assigned to St. Brendan or to St. Columba. But, Colgan supposed, it should rather be attributed to St. Columba's pen, as well because of a statement contained in an Irish Life of St. Brigid, as on account of a cause alleged by the aforesaid Scholiast for composing this hymn, and more nearly indicating such a conclusion.

¹² Colgan promised to say more regarding him, at that day, when his Life will be found in this collection.

¹³ See Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., pp. 208, 209.

¹⁴ See his Life at the 17th of September.

¹⁵ That published by Colgan has 53 stanzas, while one, attributed to this same Brogan Cloen, among the Trinity College

Manuscripts, Dublin, and classed E. 4, 2, has only 34 stanzas.

¹⁶ In the vol. xviii., belonging to the Betham Collection of Manuscripts of the Royal Irish Academy, and written by Michael O'Longan, about the year 1760, there is a "Hymnus de Virtutibus et miraculis Sanctæ Brigide Kildariensis abbatissæ et patronæ," a Sancto Brigano, p. 82. It appears to have been copied from Colgan.

¹⁷ There are seven quatrains of a poem on St. Brigid attributed to St. Brogan, and these are followed by St. Brogan's hymn to St. Brigid, published by Colgan, in vol. xli., a small 4to paper of the Betham Manuscript Collection of the Royal Irish Academy, at p. 143 and p. 144. These are written by Mr. Owen Connelan.

¹⁸ This writer is thought to be the St. Cogitosus, surnamed the Wise, whose life occurs at the 18th of April.

¹⁹ At Eichstaett in Germany, there is a copy of the Life of St. Brigid, by Cogitosus.

²⁰ See his Life at the 9th of June.

²¹ Colgan supposed he had not seen any of Columba's compositions on this subject, except what had already been given through a Latin version in his second appendix to St. Brigid's Acts (cap. xxiv.), and which, in the original, begins with these words "Brigid be bhith-maith."

²² The Scholiast on this hymn, and an Irish life of St. Brigid, attribute its composition to St. Columba.

²³ On the 9th day of June. This is shown in the fourth appendix to his Acts. See

St. Ultan,²⁴ Bishop of Ardbraccan, in Meath, it is believed, wrote a book on the Life of St. Brigid.²⁵ He also, it is said, composed a hymn, in her praise.²⁶ Colgan has assigned both of these tracts to the third place among his various published acts of our saint.²⁷ This author flourished about A.D. 580, and he is reputed to have died, at a very old age, on the 4th of September, A.D. 656.²⁸ St. Aleran, or Aileran, sometimes called Eleran,²⁹ and surnamed the Wise, was a president or chief-director over Clonard School, in Meath. He wrote St. Brigid's Life.³⁰ This is testified by St. Coelan, who himself composed metrical acts of St. Brigid.³¹ St. Aileran's feast has been assigned incorrectly to the 11th of August,³² and his death is set down at 664. This year of mortality, however, seems rather referable to St. Aileran the Wise,³³ whose feast is held on the 29th of December. Kilian or Coelanus, of Inis-Keltra,³⁴ composed St. Brigid's Life in verse.³⁵ This forms the sixth and last of her acts, as published by Colgan.³⁶ In his notes, postfixed to this metrical life,³⁷ the editor attempts to prove that Coelan flourished about the end of the seventh or beginning of the eighth century.³⁸ Animosus, who appears to have acquired the name Anmchiudh or Anmire, among the Irish, is said to have written many books of St. Brigid's acts.³⁹ This author, as has been thought, flourished about the year 950.⁴⁰ At a period subsequent to the time of writers already named, many others, who flourished after the commencement of the twelfth century, wrote her life. Among these authors may be enumerated, Laurence of Durham,⁴¹ who is

Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," esp. iv., v., vi., pp. 483 to 486.

²⁴ See his Life at the 4th of September.

²⁵ In Harris' Ware, we read, "*Ultan Macconchúir* [i.e. O'Connor] Bishop of Ardbraccan, collected the *Miracles of St. Brigid* into one volume in alphabetical order, from whence an anonymous author, who writ the life of that virgin in verse hath taken occasion to preface his Poem with these lines:—

"*Scripturunt multi virtutis virginis almae,
Ultanus Doctus, atque Eleranus evans,
Dixit multi et Animosus nomine libros,
De virtutibus virginis ac meritis.*"

"The Virgin's virtues many writers paint,
Ultan the Sage and Eleran the Saint;
And Amchaid in immortal works display'd
The life and merits of the spotless maid."

—Vol. ii. "Writers of Ireland," book i., chap. iv., p. 30.

²⁶ Stated to have commenced with the words: "Audite Virginis laudes." To it, allusion has been already made.

²⁷ See "Trias Thaumaturga," pp. 527 to 545.

²⁸ See Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., pp. 268, 269 and n. (d), *ibid.* In the "Chronicum Scotorum," edited by William M. Hennessy, his death is placed at A.D. 653, which is the year 657, according to O'Flaherty. See pp. 94, 95, and n. 7, by the editor.

²⁹ See his Life at the 29th of December.

³⁰ See Sir James Ware, "De Scriptoribus Hibernicis," lib. i., cap. iii., p. 27.

³¹ See Usher, "De Primordiis Britannicarum Ecclesiarum," p. 1007.

³² See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Sexta Vita S. Brigide, n. 6, p. 598, and Appendix Tertia ad Acta S. Brigide, pp. 609, 610. This seems to confound him with St. Aileran or Eleran of Tyfarnham in Westmeath.

³³ See Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., pp. 276, 277.

³⁴ See his Life at the 29th of July.

³⁵ This has been edited by Father John Boland, in "Acta Sanctorum Februarii," tomus i. Vita iii. S. Brigide, virg., pp. 141 to 155.

³⁶ See "Trias Thaumaturga." Sexta Vita S. Brigide, pp. 582 to 590.

³⁷ A manuscript copy of this metrical life, kindly presented by William Eassie, Esq., High Orchard House, Gloucester, England, is in the writer's possession.

³⁸ See *ibid.*, nn. 1, 2, 3, pp. 596 to 598.

³⁹ In a prologue, prefixed to St. Coelan's metrical life, and published by Colgan, allusion is made to the three last named writers of St. Brigid's Acts. See "Trias Thaumaturga." Sexta Vita S. Brigide, p. 582.

⁴⁰ See *ibid.* Vita Quarta S. Brigide, n. 1, p. 593.

⁴¹ An English Benedictine. He died about 1149. Besides St. Brigid's life, he wrote a Scriptural history, in Nine Books and in Latin elegiac verses. It bore the title of "Hypognosticon." He also com-

said to have composed St. Brigid's biography, about the year 1150, and in a superior style of Latinity, not commonly attempted during that age in which he lived.⁴²

The most complete series of St. Brigid's ancient Acts has been already published by our national hagiographer, Father John Colgan.⁴³ These Acts he has admirably arranged and annotated. With certain modifications of opinion and comment, we shall briefly review them in his order.⁴⁴

The first of Colgan's Brigidine Lives is that Irish poem, ascribed to St. Brogan⁴⁵ of Rosstuir, in Ossory.⁴⁶ This, according to one inference, had been written about the beginning of the sixth century,⁴⁷ soon after St. Brigid's death, if we credit the scholiast's statement.⁴⁸ However, if St. Ultan⁴⁹ of Ardraccan advised Brogan to compose it—as the same authority states—its production is thought to be more properly referable to the seventh century.⁵⁰ The second is her life, by Cogitosus.⁵¹ who is incorrectly considered to have been a nephew and contemporary of the holy Virgin.⁵² It would appear, even from a passage in the Prologue to this Life,⁵³ how that Prelate of Kildare, at the time its author wrote, was Archbishop over the Leinster province,⁵⁴ while many bishops had preceded him in rule, since this See of Kildare had been first ruled by Conlaeth.⁵⁵ That this work had been written, before the removal took place of St. Brigid's relics to Down,⁵⁶ and

posed "Consolatio pro morte Amici," in Latin verse, with some other poetical pieces. See S. Austin Allibone's "Critical Dictionary of English Literature," &c., vol. ii., p. 1064.

⁴² Colgan has published it, as the fifth among his acts of St. Brigid. In an appended note, the editor states, this author died about A.D. 1160. See "Trias Thaumaturga," p. 639.

⁴³ No less than six different Lives of St. Brigid has he comprised in the "Trias Thaumaturga," extending from p. 513 to p. 598. Then follow five elaborate Appendices, and an Epilogue, specially referring to this Virgin's Acts, pp. 599 to 640. A Summary of her Acts is likewise given, pp. 654 to 658, besides other allusions to her, in the general Indices.

⁴⁴ It will be understood, that when subsequently alluding to the numerical order of St. Brigid's Lives, we are referring solely to Colgan's arrangement.

⁴⁵ Most likely, it is said, this Poem of his had been written as an Elegy, immediately on receipt of intelligence, regarding St. Brigid's death.

⁴⁶ Near Slieve Bloom Mountains.

⁴⁷ He is said to have composed it in the time of Oilill, or Ailild, son of Dulaing, King of Leinster, and whose death is recorded in Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," at A.D. 526. Vol. i., pp. 174, 175.

⁴⁸ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Vita Prima S. Brigide. Prefacio Veteris Anonymi, p. 515. Her death is usually placed between the years 518 and 525, by the greater number of those, who have written her Acts.

⁴⁹ According to Ussher, he died A.D. 657. See "Britannicarum Ecclesiarum Antiquitates." Index Chronologicus, p. 539.

⁵⁰ Ultan is placed in that age, by Sir James Ware. See "De Scriptoribus Hiberniæ." Lib. i. cap. iii., pp. 22, 23.

⁵¹ Canisius had previously published a version of it in "Antiquæ Lectiones." Tomus v.

⁵² By Messingham, who has given this Life a place in "Florilegium Insule Sanctorum."

⁵³ The version of St. Brigid's Life, by Cogitosus, which Colgan has published, was prepared especially from a Manuscript belonging to the Monastery of St. Hubert, and from a Codex belonging to the Monastery of St. Amand—both houses probably were situated in Belgium or Northern France. The version, issued by Canisius and Messingham, Colgan found to be very full of errors, and therefore he corrected several, especially using the St. Amand copy, although he did not quite restore the text to his perfect satisfaction. He also subdivided the Life into a more convenient number of chapters, than he had previously found existing.

⁵⁴ From the following passage in a Prologue to this Life, we read: "Quam semper Archiepiscopus Hiberniensium Episcoporum, et Abbatissa, quam omnes Abbatissæ Scotorum venerantur, felici successione, et ritu perpetuo dominantur."—Cogitosus' or "Secunda Vita S. Brigide," p. 516.

⁵⁵ His Festival occurs at the 3rd of May.

⁵⁶ This transfer happened, in Colgan's opinion, before or about the middle of the ninth century. See "Trias Thaumaturga," n. 14, pp. 565, 566.

before those ravages,⁵⁷ caused by the Danes—or even by Irish princes⁵⁸—in Kildare, cannot be disputed.⁵⁹ Various manuscript copies of Cogitosus' work⁶⁰ have been preserved in different libraries.⁶¹ Not the least allusion occurs in it to Kildare's having been ever destroyed, or to the spoliation of St. Brigid's and St. Conlaeth's shrines, which he represents as being very splendid and very rich. From his statement, likewise, that the city of Kildare and its suburbs were places of safety and refuge, in which there could not be the least apprehension of any hostile attack,⁶² the canons of historic criticism seem to place the authorship of this tract, at some time before the commencement of the ninth century.

The Third Life of St. Brigid, as published by Colgan, is attributed to St. Ultan of Ardbraccan by the editor; although such a supposition has been contravened by other judicious critics. On the authority of some false genealogies, it is thought St. Brigid was sister to St. Ultan of Ard Breccain. It was this Ultan, who, according to another statement, collected the virtues and miracles of Bright together, and who commanded his disciple Brogan to put them into poetry.⁶³ This is said to be evident from the Book of Hymns, *i.e.* "The victorious⁶⁴ Bright did not love," &c. While comparing the Third with the First, Second, Fourth and Fifth Lives of St. Brigid,⁶⁵ it will be found, that many particulars there related concerning her are not contained in those last-mentioned tracts.⁶⁶ Again, the number of divisions it

⁵⁷ The e are not known to have commenced, before the ninth century, and the first record of the foreigners having plundered and burned Kildare is referred to A.D. 835 in Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., pp. 452, 453.

⁵⁸ In 831, Kildare was plundered by Ceallach, son of Bran, and again in 835 by Feilthlith. See Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., pp. 446, 447, 452, 453.

⁵⁹ In his notes to the foregoing passage, Colgan remarks, it is not to be understood, the bishop of Kildare was Archbishop over all Ireland, but that he only presided over the Leinster province. Nor did Kildare always claim the dignity of being a Metropolitan See. For, St. Fiech, bishop of Sletty, St. Patrick's disciple, at a previous period, was styled Archbishop of Leinster. This Colgan intended to show, in his Acts, which were to have been published, at the 12th of October. After his time, the metropolitan seat is said to have been translated from Sletty to Kildare. This seems to be manifest from the foregoing passage. From Kildare it passed to Ferns, as asserted in notes to the Life of St. Maldo, at the 31st of January, and as promised to be shown, in those, to be attached to St. Moling's Life, at the 17th of June, as also to St. Molua's Acts, at the 4th of August. Thence it afterwards returned to Kildare. See Ussher's "Britannicarum Ecclesiarum Antiquitates," cap. xvii., p. 449.

⁶⁰ From MSS. Cameracen. Wibling. Treverens., it has been printed in the Bollandists' "Acta Sanctorum," toms i., Februarii i., Vita ii. S. Brigidæ, pp. 135 to 141. It was

edited from a MS., belonging to Preudhome, a Canon of Arras, collated also with MSS. belonging to "Monasterium S. Maximini, Treveris; Wiblingensis in Suevia, Bolicensis in Westphalia, cumque ceteris Camisile MS. Aisthanæ, et Joanni Colgan ex MSS. S. Huberti et S. Amandi."

⁶¹ Among these may be noticed: Vita S. Brigidæ, MS. Bodl. Fell. 3 ff. 168 116 b. vell. fol. xi. cent. Also MS. Bodl. Valli-cellan. ap. Romani, Tom. xxi., ff. 203-207, fol. vell. xi. cent.

⁶² Thus he writes "nullus carnalis adversarius, nec concursus timetur hostium." See Secula Vita S. Brigidæ, cap. xxxv., p. 524, Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga."

⁶³ Could we only trust implicitly this statement of the O'Clery's Calendar, St. Ultan or St. Brogan's Life of St. Brigid must be the most authentic and valuable of all her biographies.

⁶⁴ In a note by Dr. Todd, he says, at this passage, "This is the first line of the metrical life of St. Brigid, published from the Book of Hymns, by Colgan; *Trias Thaum.*, p. 515."

⁶⁵ In Colgan's work, where such differences may be noticed.

⁶⁶ Dr. Lanigan writes in his "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. viii., § iii., n. 38, p. 388. "This Life was, I suspect, patched up in the diocese of Ardagh, and very probably in an island of Lough Rie called the *Island of All Saints*, in which Augustin Magraiden lived, who, having compiled Lives of Irish Saints, died A.D. 1405 (Ware's Writers). Colgan got one of his copies of it from the monastery of that place."

comprises exceed those in the Fourth Life, by about twenty-three chapters.⁶⁷ Its excess seems established in point of matter, if not in regard to substantial accuracy. Colgan was indebted to Father Stephen White⁶⁸ for the reception of that MS.—published afterwards as the Third Life⁶⁹—with other erudite communications. White thought, that the author of this Third life must have been either St. Virgil,⁷⁰ or St. Erard,⁷¹ who were Irishmen.⁷² This Ratisbonne MS., we are told, had been written in Irish characters, and as supposed, in the tenth or eleventh century.⁷³ A fifth MS. copy of the Third Life was extant.⁷⁴ The editor of St. Brigid's Third Life, however, could not agree with Stephen White, that its authorship was attributable to either of the Saints named by him.⁷⁵ The Bollandists⁷⁶ have published the Life of our Saint attributed to St. Ultan, from a manuscript codex, belonging to the Church of St. Omer. Some manuscript copies of it are yet preserved at Oxford.⁷⁷ That St. Ultan wrote the Acts of St. Brigid, is asserted by Colgan, on authority of Ussher,⁷⁸ Ware,⁷⁹ an author of her life in Irish, and a certain Scholiast.⁸⁰ The editor also maintains, that the life written was identical with that published by him,⁸¹ owing to the probability of some metrical lines appended being composed by the same author.⁸² In the St.

⁶⁷ This is Colgan's statement. Yet, it must refer, not to the relative numerical divisions of chapters, but to additional matter in the Third Life.

⁶⁸ This learned Irish Jesuit was well versed in the Antiquities of his native country.

⁶⁹ The original manuscript was an old codex, belonging to the monastery of St. Magnus, at Ratisbonn, in Bavaria. This tract Colgan accompanied with various marginal annotations and readings. These were partly taken from a MS., belonging to the monastery of St. Aulbert, at Cambray, and partly from a MS., preserved at the Island of all Saints, in Ireland. The Cambray MS. had been furnished by D. Georgeus Colvenerius, who was distinguished for his research and love of antiquities; and besides the All Saints' MS., received from Longford County in Ireland, Colgan obtained another MS. from the Carthusian collection at Cologne.

⁷⁰ His Festival occurs on the 27th of November.

⁷¹ His Feast is assigned to the 5th of January.

⁷² These flourished in Bavaria, during the eighth century.

⁷³ The Trinity College Manuscript classed E. 4, 10 contains, "Vita et Legenda S. Brigidæ Virginis." Ussher supposes this to have been the Life of St. Brigid, written by St. Ultan of Ardbraccan. It includes, also, various readings on the margins, copied from a more copious old MS., belonging to the monastery of St. Magnus, tenanted by the Canons regular of St. Augustine, at Ratisbon in Bavaria.

⁷⁴ This belonged to Dunensis monastery in Flanders. Colgan adds, that we may fairly infer the author must have lived at a

very remote period, when most of the copies known had been traced more than five hundred years before his own time, while some were more than seven hundred years old.

⁷⁵ Colgan's reason is chiefly a negative one, *viz.*, because no writer or author had heretofore stated his having compiled her biography.

⁷⁶ See "Acta Sanctorum," toms i., Februarii i., Vita Prima Brigidæ, pp. 118 to 135.

⁷⁷ Among these are: Vita S. Brigidæ, MS. Bodl. Rawl., B. 595, pp. 193-207, fol. vell. xiv. cent. A similar life in MS. Bodl. Rawl., B. 485, f. 134, vell. 4to. xiv. cent., is extant.

⁷⁸ See "De Primordiis Ecclesiarum Britannicarum," p. 1067.

⁷⁹ See "De Scriptoribus Hiberniæ," lib. i., cap. iii., pp. 22, 23.

⁸⁰ While it is admitted, by Dr. Lanigan, that Ultan of Ardbraccan wrote something concerning St. Brigid, this learned historian will not allow either him or any other writer of the seventh century, to have recorded the many strange fables, with which it is crammed. This work he designates as "a hodge-podge, made up at a late period, in which it is difficult to pick out any truth, from amidst a heap of rubbish." It also differs from the two former tracts, in some material points. See "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. viii., § 11, n. 18, p. 380.

⁸¹ This conclusion is supposed to be further warranted, by the usual clause, "Explicit Vita S. Brigidæ," postfixed to the life of a Saint coming after, and not before that Hymn, found in the St. Magnus MS., as written many ages before Colgan's time.

⁸² In the opinion of White, Colvenerius and Ware.

Autbert MS., the Life comes after a "carmen,"⁶³ which follows the Hymn. Although the author does not give us his name, he nevertheless reveals himself as being from the Island Hibernia, and of Irish origin.⁶⁴ After the last words, in a life of our sainted Virgin, the author first places her proper Latin Hymn,⁶⁵ and then having completed the Latin lines, he pours forth prayers to St. Brigid—thus piously invoking her intercession, in the Irish idiom and character. These circumstances are somewhat remarkable.⁶⁶ That St. Ultan was its author, and consequently composer of the Third Life, seems to be established,⁶⁷ from certain remarks of an old Scholiast,⁶⁸ on the same Hymn. Even although the Scholiast doubts, whether St. Nennidius, St. Fiech, or St. Ultan, be its author, his very words are thought conclusive, in showing this latter to be the writer, both of the Life and of the Hymn: since, he is said to have composed both one and the other, in praise of St.

This piece is headed "Carmen de eadem (Sci. S. Brigid) ex MSS. Autberti." Its lines are in Latin, of which we present the following English version:—

"Brigid's great name, with double lustre
 shines,
 Brigid's great name, our love with light
 entwines,
 A Virgin of the Lord, without, within,
 Pure was her soul, preserved from stains
 of sin,
 A Virgin of the Lord, dear brethren, she
 Dead to the world and pride, for Heaven
 was free,
 Despis'd she fleeting honours, wealth and
 pleasures,
 She sought eternal joys, exhaustless treas-
 ures,
 Then shield us from that future fate we
 dread,
 When the last Trumpet wakes the buried
 dead,
 O Virgin, loved by God, bless'd and be-
 nign,
 O hear thy clients' prayers, nor cease to
 offer thine."

See Colgan's "Tril. Thaumaturga," *Terilia Vita S. Brigidæ*, p. 542, and *ibid.* 82, 83, p. 545, *ibid.*

⁶⁴ This is indicated, in the first line. Colgan says, the Hymn which he published was found in that Irish MS., commonly called the *Leabhar Laman*, and in Latin, "Liber Hymnorum," by our national antiquaries. In this MS. were also contained many Hymns, composed by different Irish Saints. From it, Colgan obtained the last line, which was wanting in the St. Magna MS.

⁶⁵ It has been concluded, that as no authority states St. Nennidius or St. Fiech to have written St. Brigid's Acts in a book, and as it could be shown from written and from other sources, that St. Ultan wrote her Acts in one book, and also a Hymn in her praise; it would seem, this latter must have been the author of St. Brigid's Third Life,

published by Colgan, with the metrical lines postscript, and that he was composer, both of the piece of life and of the Hymn. See *ibid.*, n. 84, p. 545.

⁶⁶ This metrical composition is headed, "Hymnus de Brigidâ Virgine." The lines run in Latin; but we have ventured to render them into *bold* (big English) version:—

"Those Signs, whereby her wondrous
 pow'r was known
 To men, in our Hibernian Isle, were
 shown;
 Excelling through great virtues, beamed
 on earth
 The dawning promise of her heavenly
 birth,
 Not mighty Brigid's fame, this humble
 verse
 Can truly celebrate, nor half rehearse,
 Our Virgin, type of Mary, myriads found
 Eager to praise, and hear her triumphs
 sound,
 She girt around her, day and night, the
 zone
 Of chaste desires; she read and prayed
 alone;
 She vigil spent; as the bright sun on
 high
 Her radiance warm'd the earth, and fill'd
 the sky,
 Hear ye the Virgin's praise! her gifts
 proclaim!
 The victor's garland twines around that
 name,
 No veil her words and acts e'er left be-
 tween
 Whose vows to Christ were pledged and
 to Heaven's Queen.
 Be gracious then, O saint of Brigid, free
 From earthly ties, our prayers ascend to
 thee;
 Obtain for us, from God, of good the
 giver,
 The Angel's crown of rest and joy for-
 ever."

⁶⁷ In Colgan's opinion.

These comments are given in a note.

Brigid, and both were contained in one book.⁸⁹ Now, it is not rightly known, that St. Nennidius or St. Fiech wrote a life of St. Brigid, whether in one tract, or in more than one part. St. Ultan — surnamed likewise Mac Concubar — bishop of Ardraccan, in Meath, is reputed to have been St. Brigid's relative,⁹⁰ on her mother's side.⁹¹ Ware treats about him and his writings.⁹²

The Fourth Life of our saint, as published by Colgan,⁹³ and by this latter writer attributed to Animosus or Animchad,⁹⁴ is contained in two books.⁹⁵ The editor of this Treatise says, the Latinized form of Animosus' name is not easily recognisable as an Irish one, although its vernacular interpretation be common. This Latin form, however, can easily be resolved into the name Anmchadh or Anamchodh. This



Kildare Ruins.

⁸⁹ The Scholiast even cites a portion of one line, taken from this Hymn, and which agrees with what Colgan has published.

⁹⁰ Ussher writes, that he was descended from the Conchabar or O'Connor family, to whom belonged, also, Brodsechain, daughter to Dallbronaig, and the mother of St. Brigid. This is given on the authority of a certain Scholiast in an Irish hymn composed in praise of Brigid. Some, however, attribute this to St. Columkille, who lived in the time of King Aed, son to Ainnirech : while others ascribe it to Ultan, Bishop of Ardbrechan, who flourished in the time of the two sons of Aed Slane. See "De Primordiis Britannicarum Ecclesiarum." p. 965.

⁹¹ Hence, we do not find this relationship shown in the Pedigrees of St. Brigid, on the father's side, as given by Dr. Todd in "St.

Patrick, Apostle of Ireland," appendix A, pp. 247 to 255.

⁹² See "De Scriptoribus Hiberniæ," lib. i., cap. iii., pp. 22, 23.

⁹³ See "Trias Thaumaturga." Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ, pp. 546 to 563. Appended notes, pp. 563 to 566.

⁹⁴ St. Coelan, or his prologuist, enumerates Animosus, among various writers of St. Brigid's Acts. This is asserted in the following verses :

"Descriptis multis Animosus nomine libros
De vita, et studiis Virginis, ac meritis,"
&c.

See *ibid.*, p. 563. Also, "Sexta Vita S. Brigidæ," p. 582.

⁹⁵ These comprise, with a Prologue, in the First Book 52, in the Second Book 100 — in all 152 chapters. As published in the

has been applied to various Irish saints of the olden time. To pass over others, there was a venerable and pious man, who died in the year 980.⁹⁶ He is called Annchadh, Bishop of Kildare. This prelate is said to have departed at an advanced age, after the course of his virtuous life in this world had been completed.⁹⁷ It has been maintained,⁹⁸ that until some other fairer objections be advanced, these following reasons should lead us to conclude, this Annchadh or Animosus was author of our saint's Fourth Life. In the first place, circumstances of name and locality favour such a conclusion, as no one could more appropriately or justly manifest his reverence and devotion towards St. Bridget, than a native of Kildare, especially when he was either a prelate or a monk. As it is related, an Animosus wrote St. Brigid's Acts, and as a certain prelate of Kildare bore that name, to what other Animosus than he can we more probably assign the performance of such a task? Again, it must be added, the author of this Fourth Life often insinuates, that he was a monk or prelate of Kildare, and in a Prologue to it, he addresses certain brethren.⁹⁹ It has been concluded,¹⁰⁰ therefore, that he must have been a monk or an abbot, before he became bishop of Kildare,¹⁰¹ in accordance with a usage, common to his age and country. In the next place, the author of St. Brigid's Fourth Life indicates, that he lived so late as the tenth century, at which period Annchadh of Kildare flourished.¹⁰² Yet, there are reasons, also, that can be advanced for a different opinion. The author of this Fourth Life appears to have written only two books of St. Brigid's Acts; whereas, Animosus is said to have written her Acts in several books. This

⁹⁶ "Trias Thaumaturga," however, 22 of these chapters are wanting in the First Book. See "Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ," lib. i. p. 547.

⁹⁷ See O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. ii., pp. 712, 713. The editor corrects the date 980 by the words, "[*n. de 981.*]" See also n. (vi.) *ibid.*

⁹⁸ Colgan's Copy of the Four Masters adds, that he died "in loco, que Kenntar appellatur." The latter clause seems to be omitted in Mr. O'Donovan's copy. "Omnes fere Hibernie prelati ex Monachis assumebantur." See Giraldus Cambrensis, Opera, vol. v. "Topographia Hibernica, Dist. iii., cap. xxix." Edition by James F. Dimock, M.A.

⁹⁹ By Colgan. The town of Kildare has yet many interesting vestiges of its former religious establishments. The accompanying engraving, which represents one of these ruins, has been executed by Mrs. Millard, from a photograph of Frederick W. Mares, Dublin.

¹⁰⁰ This Preface runs as follows: "My mind, brethren, is filled with three emotions, viz., of love, of shame, and of fear. Love urges me to write in documents a life of the illustrious Brigid, lest that great abundance of virtues, which God's grace conferred on her, or the many miracles accomplished through her, should be hidden and unheard. I feel prevented through shame, lest, as I suppose, my very plain discourse or poor judgment, may displease my educated readers or hearers. Yet, my fear is still greater, for my weakness of mind in the composition of

such a work presents a danger: since, I dread the taunts of critics and enemies tasting my very small intellectual viands. But, as the Lord ordered His poor to offer little gifts, when about to build His tabernacle, ought we not give ours to build up His church? What is she but a congregation of the just? How is a prudent life formed, unless through the examples and records of the prudent? Therefore shall I give a first place to love, I shall trample on shame, and I shall tolerate the carpers. I adjure you, O wise reader and intelligent hearer, that you overlook the text arrangement; and consider only the miracles of God and of His blessed handmaid. Indeed, every husbandman should be fed on the fruits drawn from the furrows of his own field."

¹⁰¹ By Colgan.

¹⁰² The "Vita S. Brigidæ," by an anonymous author, and from a Manuscript belonging to Hugh Ward, has been printed by Father John Boland in the "Acta Sanctorum," tomus i, Februarii i. Vita iv., I partita S. Brigidæ, pp. 155 to 172. Usher often cites it as the anonymous or unedited Life in two books. The author lived before 1152. See Sir Thomas Duffus Hardy's "Descriptive Catalogue of Materials relating to the History of Great Britain and Ireland," vol. i., part i., pp. 108, 109. The writer is supposed to be Animosus, by Colgan.

¹⁰³ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ, n. i., pp. 563. Also, Harris' Ware, vol. ii., "Writers of Ireland," Book i., chap. iv., p. 37.

occurred, before the time in which St. Coelan, or at least the author of that prologue to his metrical acts of our saint, wrote. Now, Colgan thinks St. Coelan wrote St. Brigid's Acts previous to A.D. 800¹⁰³ In such hypothesis, it is supposed, that Animosus, who wrote St. Brigid's Acts, must be distinguished from Animosus or Animchadh, who died A.D. 980. Again, the Irish word, Annmire, seems to have an identical meaning with Animosus. At least four Annmires are enumerated among the saints of Ireland: 1. Annmire of Alech,¹⁰⁴ 2. Annmire of Cluanfoda,¹⁰⁵ 3. Annmire of Ros-hua Chonna,¹⁰⁶ 4. Annmire of Rath-nuadha,¹⁰⁷ It may be argued, that some one of the foregoing, or another person, bearing the same name, different from the Animchod, who died in 980, had been the author of St. Brigid's Acts. The matter remains, not yet fully determined. But the author of St. Brigid's Fourth Life, whoever he may be, is deemed trustworthy.¹⁰⁸ Although he flourished at a comparatively late period, and wrote in a rude style, his Acts relate, in a more copious and comprehensive manner, than any other writer's, almost all St. Brigid's transactions. Also, he gives many particulars, concerning the antiquities of Ireland, which, for the most part, are either omitted or obscurely related, by other biographers.¹⁰⁹ The Fifth of St. Brigid's Lives, as published by Colgan, was taken from a Manuscript belonging to the Irish College at Salamanca¹¹⁰ Although containing fewer Acts and miracles of St. Brigid, than most of her other Lives; yet, this biography, making allowance for many fables,¹¹¹ surpasses most of them in elegance and correctness of style, as also in its more systematic and complete arrangement.¹¹² For these reasons, it seems more suited for reading in the refectories of religious communities. It came into Colgan's hands, in an imperfect state;¹¹³ yet, he thought, that not more than the first, and a part of its second chapter, had been wanting.¹¹⁴ The editor endeavoured to supply such missing portions in that distinctive character, known as the *Italic*; while special titles are prefixed by him to the several chapters, and placed in the margin. He thinks there can be no question about the author being Laurence of Durham.¹¹⁵ This, it is supposed, can be shown, from the elegant style, nationality of authorship, and the period, in which it had been written; for, in the second chapter, its author indicates his being an Englishman, and that he composed this life, after the Normans came to England. He likewise wrote it before the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland. Now, as he flourished after the year 1065—¹¹⁶ about which date the Norman conquest of England commenced—

¹⁰³ This he endeavours to show, in his notes to "Sexta Vita S. Brigide," nn. 1, 2, 3, pp. 596 to 598, "Trias Thaumaturga."

¹⁰⁴ His feast is celebrated on the 10th of June.

¹⁰⁵ This saint is commemorated on the 15th of September.

¹⁰⁶ His festival occurs on the 25th of September.

¹⁰⁷ This saint's feast is held on the 20th of November.

¹⁰⁸ Such is Colgan's expressed opinion.

¹⁰⁹ So far as came under Colgan's observation.

¹¹⁰ Therefore it is called by him the Salamanca Manuscript.

¹¹¹ See Dr. Lanigan's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. viii., sec. ii., n. 18., p. 381.

¹¹² This Life has been printed in the Bollandists' "Acta Sanctorum," toms i., Februarii i., Vita v., S. Brigide Virg. pp. 172

to 185.

¹¹³ As this Manuscript was acephalous, its author's name had not been found prefixed.

¹¹⁴ The following MSS. copies of this life are extant: Vita S. Brigide, auctore Laurentio Dunelmensi, MS. Salmanticensis, published by Colgan and Bollandus. Deficiencies in this may be supplied from the following copies in Latin: Vita S. Brigittæ Virginis a Laurentio Dunelmensi. MS. Bodl. Laud. Mis. 668 (1052) 106. vell. 4to XII. cent. Again, S. Brigide Vita per Laurentium Dunelmensem, prævia Epistola ad Ethelredum Dispensatorem. MS. Coll. Balliol. ccxxvi. f. 86-94. vell. fol. dble. col. XIII. cent. Tanner refers to both of these copies in his "Bibliotheca," p. 472.

¹¹⁵ This writer is known to have flourished about the year 1140, and he wrote a singularly learned and eloquent Life of St. Brigid complete, in one book.

¹¹⁶ Dr. Lingard assigns the battle of Hast-

and prior to the 1171.¹¹⁷ when the English invasion of Ireland began; it appears probable enough, that the author of St. Brigid's Fifth Life must have been the aforesaid Laurence of Durham. The Sixth Life of St. Brigid,¹¹⁸ is a long poem, written in Latin Hex meter verse. The editor supposes St. Cholan or Coelan, a monk of Inis-Keltra monastery, on the Shannon, to have been its author.¹¹⁹ It was published from an old Manuscript, belonging to the library of Monte Cassino, and it had been collated, with a copy taken from the Vatican library, as also with various other Manuscript exemplars. In the first note, prefixed to our Saint's Sixth Life, we are told, that over three months before, when Colgan had begun passing St. Brigid's Acts through the press, he received from the Rev. Father Bernard Egan,¹²⁰ a certain fragment of this biography.¹²¹ A prologue is prefixed, commencing with "Finibus o clidis," &c. This latter is supposed to have been a composition of St. Donatus, Bishop of Fesule, in Tuscany,¹²² and who flourished in the ninth century. But, the life itself was marked, as having been written by a monk of Iniskeltra, in Lough Derg, and who was named Chilien. This writer Colgan conjectures to have been the same as Coelan of Iniskeltra, who was known in the eighth century.¹²³ But, with much apparent truth,¹²⁴ this fragment has been referred to a later period, in which it is suspected its author lived. Dr. Lanigan believes, that if Chilien lived in the eighth century, it must have been in the latter part; although this historian does not think it worth while, to enter upon a long discussion regarding him.¹²⁵

Having received this Sixth Life, from the Cassinian MS., and through the zealous Father already mentioned, three other counterpart copies of these same Acts were procured. One copy came from the Vatican Library, one from the Library of His Eminence Anthony Barberini, and a third was sent by the celebrated Franciscan Father, Luke Wadding. All these copies

¹¹⁷ *Originals of the Lives of the Saints of Ireland*, p. 100.
¹¹⁸ *History of England*, vol. i., chap. vi., p. 300.

¹¹⁹ Henry H. Hall, *Life of Ware*, vol. i., p. 18th of October, A.D. 1171. See Rev. John O'Hanlon, "Cavaliers of Irish History," *Lectures*, vol. ii., p. 110.

¹²⁰ *Annals of the Life of Colgan*.

¹²¹ In Henry Ware, *Colgan or Coelan*, a monk of the Abbey of Inis-Keltra, the abbot of Kesh, and who wrote the Life of St. Brigid in verse, is said to have been a contemporary with Eugenius M. Tiqueti, who died 745. The festival of this Chilien is assigned to the 29th of July in our *Calendar of Martyrdoms*.

¹²² He was a Benedictine Abbot and an Irishman.

¹²³ It commences with these verses:

"Qua iam forte die sanctus Patricius almus
 Gemma sacerdotum synalli carmine
 edit," &c.

From a hurried reading, it was then supposed, that the poem in question began with the *o* lines, and Colgan stated as much in the common preface to St. Brigid's Acts. But he afterwards discovered his mistake, when this holy virgin's five first lives had been printed.

¹²⁴ See his Life at the 22nd of October.

¹²⁵ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," *Quinta Appendix ad Acta S. Patricii*, cap. xx., p. 255.

¹²⁶ The Editor thinks, that the Chilian, slave of Chilien calling the mother of St. Brigid a countess seems to indicate a comparatively late period for this composition.

¹²⁷ Speaking about Donat, Bishop of Fesule, who flourished in the ninth century, Harris observes: "He seems also to have been the author of a Description of Ireland, in Hexameter and Pentameter verse; or rather the Life of St. Brigid, containing a Description of Ireland, of which Colgan has given as a fragment, which is prefixed also as a prologue to the Life of St. Brigid, supposed to be written by St. Chaelan." See Harris' Ware, "Writers of Ireland," vol. ii., chap. iv., p. 47, and chap. vi., p. 57.

¹²⁸ This Chilien, whether author or not of both the prologue and Life—as stated in his "Trias Thaumaturga," *Sexta Vita S. Brigidæ*, nn. 1, 2, 3, p. 507—was, in Colgan's opinion, the same as Coelan of Inis-Keltra, who seems to have flourished in the eighth century. See "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. viii., sec. ii., n. 18, p. 381. But, Bollandus thought him to be a different person. See "Acta Sanctorum," Februarii, tomus i. *Vita S. Brigidæ*, *Commentaria Prævia*, sec. 2.

¹²⁹ See "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. viii., sec. ii., n. 18, p. 381.

were diligently collated by the editor, who found them severally mutilated, worn, abounding in false emendations of librarians, or commentators, deformed with verbal transpositions and changes, to such a degree, that the sense of some verses could not be discovered, while the proper number of feet and the requisite syllabic measure were wanting, in many lines.¹²⁸ Yet, through the collector's great industry, who observed closely the discrepancy in his copies, we are indebted for the publication of this old Tract. The editor endeavoured to follow authorities he considered most authentic, in his several copies; for he observed, that in many instances, the just number and measure of the verse could be found in some particular Manuscripts, while in others they were expressed, sometimes by abbreviations, again by a transposition of words, and often by some closing or arbitrary notation. The lines were frequently found so greatly mutilated, that they bore a prosaic rather than a metrical appearance. So many omissions and licences on the part of copyists were detected, that the editor felt obliged to affix various marginal annotations to this poem.¹²⁹ Not alone through the incautionsness of copyists—a fruitful source of error in old documents—many transpositions of words had been introduced, and certain synonymous terms were substituted for others; but, besides, many abbreviations of doubtful meaning were found, while these left the sense imperfect.¹³⁰ Even unaccountable caprice and mutilations caused some of the chapters to be acephalous or truncated, while some were altogether omitted, as might be seen in the still imperfect and published Sixth Life.¹³¹ There certain lines are subjoined from the Barberini Manuscript, and which were wanting in that of Monte Cassino, while breaks are discoverable in the narrative and structural course of the poem.¹³² Although many particulars relating to St. Brigid are found in the Five first Lives, as published by Colgan, and which are missing in the Sixth;¹³³ yet, the editor supposes this attributable to no other cause, than to the deplorable liberties taken by scribes or librarians. Here and there have been detected many elisions and erasures. It can scarcely be doubted, that these manipulators altogether pretermitted other matters. As this old and careful writer relates, many of St. Brigid's Acts were left out by others, and as it is indicated in the Prologue, that he read her Lives written by St. Ultan, Eleran and Animosus;

¹²⁸ But for such defects, it must have been extremely valuable.

¹²⁹ He did not alter the poem in the slightest tittle, except in those instances, where noted and obvious omissions of copyists had left discrepancies between certain parts and lines, or had so crudely amended them, that it could readily be conjectured these emendations did not represent the original writer's words.

¹³⁰ It was not possible for the industry or research of either collator or editor, to repair so many mistakes, or restore so many omissions. Wherefore, Colgan only endeavoured to place in due order, those words which seemed transposed, in certain passages, and cautiously to substitute others in place of certain contracted words, doubtful in the reading, or which through the error of the copyists were put for terms having a supposed affinity.

¹³¹ Here and there, certain elegant and glowing phrases were found, especially in descriptive and metaphorical passages; then

immediately afterwards, verses were maimed in prosodial number and quantity, while they were disfigured with blots. Colgan tells us he published the poem, as he found it, changing nothing therein, with only the foregoing exceptional emendations.

¹³² This is noticed by the editor in a great variety of instances.

¹³³ Colgan's divisions of the six lives are as follow, *viz.*: *First.* The Metrical life, 53 stanzas of four lines each, Irish with Latin translation. *Secondly.* The Second Prose life has 36 chapters, with a prologue. *Thirdly.* The Third Prose life has 131 chapters, with supplementary metrical lines. *Fourthly.* The Fourth Prose life is divided into two books—the first book containing 52 chapters, and the last 100. It is prefaced by a prologue. *Fifthly.* The Fifth Prose life comprises 58 chapters. *Sixthly.* The Sixth Metrical life contains 68 sections—more or less imperfect—with prefatory and supplementary lines.

hence, it cannot be supposed, he would have passed over so many accounts, faithfully related by various other writers, or that he would not have included several accounts, not given by them.¹⁴⁴

The Lives of St. Brigid, published by Colgan, are not the only authorities available for her Acts. In the Book of Lismore, which had been written¹⁴⁵ for Mac Carthy Reagh, or Finghen Mac Diarmata, and which is now the Duke of Devonshire's property, there is an Irish sermon on the Life of St. Brigid.¹⁴⁶ This has been translated into English,¹⁴⁷ transcribed, and collated with a similar copy, but having varied readings, in the *Leabhar Breac*.¹⁴⁸ Besides these, there were many lives of St. Brigid, written in the Irish tongue. Four only of these, however, came into Colgan's hands.¹⁴⁹ There is scarcely any considerable library in which the Acts of St. Brigid will not be found. Her memory likewise has been commemorated by a Divine Office, not only throughout the whole of Ireland, but even in many Dioceses of England, Scotland, Belgium, France and Germany.¹⁴⁹

A Life of St. Brigid has been inserted in the collection of John Capgrave.¹⁴¹ This is taken apparently from the work of Cogitosus.¹⁴² A certain anonymous writer edited a Life of St. Brigid, in German, and this was printed at Augusta, in 1478.¹⁴³ Another biography of the Saint had been printed¹⁴⁴ at Argentan.¹⁴⁵ Valentinus Leuctus, in his work, "*De Sanctis*," has special reference to St. Brigid. In addition to those tracts already mentioned, Vincentius Bellocensis¹⁴⁶ wrote a summary of St. Brigid's Acts in his book.¹⁴⁷ St. Antoninus¹⁴⁸ has also treated about this illustrious Virgin.¹⁴⁹ Guido de Castri,¹⁵⁰ Petrus de Natalibus,¹⁵¹ John of Tinnmouth,¹⁵² Surius,¹⁵³ in two different acts,¹⁵⁴ Hareus, Messingham,¹⁵⁵ Cornelius Grasius,¹⁵⁶

¹⁴⁴ Such is Colgan's expressed opinion. He supposes such omissions are attributable rather to incompetent commentators than to the original author.

¹⁴⁵ By Aonghus O'Callaghan.

¹⁴⁶ At folio 53, col. 2, of this MS., there is a Gaelic entry given in J. T. Gilbert's "*History of the Viceroy's of Ireland*," notes to chap. xi., p. 603. The following is an English translation: "Let every one who shall read this Life of [Saint] Brigid give a blessing on the souls of the couple for whom it was written."

¹⁴⁷ By Professor Bryan O'Looney of the Catholic University, who has obligingly lent his Irish transcript, with his English translation, to the writer.

¹⁴⁸ Belonging to the Royal Irish Academy.

¹⁴⁹ As they contained, for the most part, only particulars, which were to be found in various Acts published by him, Colgan thought it quite unnecessary to present more than an Irish Hymn, composed by St. Brogan, with its Latin version.

¹⁵⁰ See, "*Trias Thaumaturga*," *Tertia Vita S. Brigide*, n. 7, p. 543. *Quarta Vita S. Brigide*, nn. 15, 16, p. 504, *ibid.* *Quinta Vita S. Brigide*, cap. viii., p. 569, and nn. 9, 11, p. 640, *ibid.*

¹⁵¹ In his "*Nova Legenda Angliæ*" we find "*Vita S. Brigide Virginis*," fol. xlix., l., li., *Kalendas Februarii*. See notices of this work and of the writer in S. Austin Allibone's "*Critical Dictionary of English Literature*," &c., vol. i., p. 336.

¹⁵² Agreeing with it is the MS. Cott. Tib. vi. E. i., ff. 32-34.

¹⁵³ This was probably Triers, in Germany, although many towns bear a similar Latin name.

¹⁵⁴ A.D. 1506.

¹⁵⁵ Probably this was Argentan, in Lower Normandy, or Argenton, of the Orleannois, in France.

¹⁵⁶ Or Vincent De Beauvais, a French Dominican savant, who lived from about 1190 to 1264. See Laurence E. Phillips' "*Dictionary of Biographical Reference*," p. 937.

¹⁵⁷ See "*Speculum Historiæ*," lib. xxii., cap. 20.

¹⁵⁸ He died the 2nd of May, A.D. 1459. His feast is kept on the 10th of May.

¹⁵⁹ In "*Cronicon*," pars. ii., tit. xii., cap. 6.

¹⁶⁰ Abbot of St. Denis, who wrote, "*De Vitis Sanctorum*."

¹⁶¹ Lib. iii., cap. 69.

¹⁶² In "*De Sanctis Britannia*."

¹⁶³ See "*De Probatis Sanctorum Historiis*," &c., tomus i., pp. 806 to 809. Cologne Edition, A.D. 1570. In the other edition 1 Februarii, pp. 19 to 25.

¹⁶⁴ The first of these is comprised in fifteen paragraphs, and the second in thirty-two paragraphs.

¹⁶⁵ See "*Florilegium Insulæ Sanctorum*," pp. 189 to 207.

¹⁶⁶ At the 1st of February.

&c. have all made their respective commemorations of her. Robert of Gloucester¹⁵⁷ wrote a Biography of this venerable Virgin, and some manuscript copies of it are preserved.¹⁵⁸ The Right Rev. David Rothe, bishop of Ossory, published a beautiful dissertation, intitled, "De Brigida Thaumaturga."¹⁵⁹

Likewise, in the "Hystorie Sanctorum," published at Louvain,¹⁶⁰ we have a short biography of this most pious virgin. In Lippeloo's Collections¹⁶¹ the Acts of St. Brigid are to be met with.¹⁶² Also, in the "Breviary of Aberdeen,"¹⁶³ the Life and Miracles of this holy virgin are recorded in six Lessons.¹⁶⁴ In a Latin translation,¹⁶⁵ with additions to that celebrated work of the Spanish Jesuit, Father Ribadeneira,¹⁶⁶ the editor has placed this lily of virgins in his Flower-Garden of the Saints.¹⁶⁷ Canon Giacomo Certani¹⁶⁸ has written her Acts in Italian.¹⁶⁹ Lives of St. Brigid were published by Henry Adrian and Herbert Rosweyde,¹⁷⁰ in Flemish. A Father Robert Rochfort, formerly Rector of the Franciscan College at Louvain, wrote in English, a Life of this illustrious virgin. The Bollandists¹⁷¹ have published various acts of this holy virgin. After having given a previous commentary in fourteen chapters and one hundred and fourteen paragraphs, with six lessons from an office, their First Life contains seventeen chapters and one hundred and fourteen sections; a Second Life contains eight chapters and 40 sections; a Third Life in metre has ten chapters and seventy-two sections; a Fourth Life is in two Books—the first Book containing 5 chapters and 55 sections—the second Book 12 chapters and 82 sections; while a Fifth Life of St. Brigid is comprised in 15 chapters and 93 sections.¹⁷²

¹⁵⁷ He died about 1290. See Laurence E. Phillips' "Dictionary of Biographical Reference," p. 800.

¹⁵⁸ Among these are written in old English a MS. C.C.C. Cant. 145, vell. sm. fol., xiv. cent., apparently by Robert of Gloucester. It commences with the words:—"Sain Bride that holi maide of Irlonde was," &c. Another copy, with some differences of reading, is a MS. Ashmole 43, ff. 15-18, b. vell. Svo, circa A.D. 1300. Again, there is another old English Life of S. Bride, with an illumination of the saint very fairly executed. It is classed MS. Bodl. Tanner. 17, f. 12, vell. fol., xv. cent. Also, a MS. Bodl. Laud. Misc. 463 (1596), ff. 6-9, vel. fol., xiv. cent. Another Life of S. Brigid (old English) MS. Bodl. 779 (2567), ff. 127, b.—128 b. paper folio, xv. cent. The foregoing seem to be different copies of Robert of Gloucester's Life of St. Brigid, with some differences in the text.

¹⁵⁹ Nearly all of these tracts were issued in the Latin language.

¹⁶⁰ There occurs, Brigida Virgo, at fol. xx., xxi.

¹⁶¹ See "Vitæ Sanctorum," vol. i.

¹⁶² At the 1st of February, pp. 553, 558.

¹⁶³ This was first printed in 1509. The Bollandists have reprinted from it the six Lessons of St. Brigid's Office in "Acta Sanctorum," tomus i., Februarii i., Commentarius prævius, § xv., p. 118.

¹⁶⁴ The Breviary of Aberdeen has been reprinted, under the Editorship of the Rev.

William Blew, in two vols., 4to, double cols.

¹⁶⁵ Published at Cologne, A.D. 1630, "apud Joannem Kinkium sub Monocerote." This translation purports to give useful notes and the festivals of recent saints. It contains a double Index of Saints, and of subjects for preachers.

¹⁶⁶ In the second part of the Latin version of Ribadeneira's "Flos Sanctorum," &c., we have a Life of St. Bridget, at the 1st of February, pp. 82, 83. See his biography in Rees' "Cyclopædia," vol. xxx., *sub voce* "Ribadeneira."

¹⁶⁷ In the Dublin edition of an English translation of Ribadeneira, the Life of St. Brigid is not found.

¹⁶⁸ He lived about 1670. See Phillips' "Dictionary of Biographical Reference," p. 241.

¹⁶⁹ His work, in a 4to volume, is intitled, "La Santita Prodigiousa, Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese."

¹⁷⁰ This celebrated Dutch hagiographer lived from 1569 to 1629. See Phillips' "Dictionary of Biographical Reference," p. 811.

¹⁷¹ See Rees' "Cyclopædia," vol. iv., *sub voce*, "Bollandists."

¹⁷² See "Acta Sanctorum," tomus i., i. Februarii, Vita S. Brigide, pp. 99 to 185. In the Addenda to this Tome are to be found two paragraphs referring to St. Brigid, pp. 941, 942.

Adrien Baillet has written her Life, in the French Language,¹⁷³ and included it in his hagiographical work.¹⁷⁴ Bishop Challoner¹⁷⁵ has inserted a Life of St. Brigide or Bride, Virgin and Abbess, at the 1st of February.¹⁷⁶ The Rev. Alban Butler has some brief notices of the Saint in his work.¹⁷⁷ Also, among the Irish Cistercian Monk's extracts from the same, an account has been reproduced.¹⁷⁸ A very elegantly written biography of the Virgin Abbess Bridget has been composed by the Rev. S. Baring-Gould.¹⁷⁹ Bishop Forbes has likewise inserted her Act.¹⁸⁰

Hardly any important collection of Manuscripts can be met with, in which we do not find some Acts or memorials of the great St. Brigid.¹⁸¹ Several Lives and Hymns relating to this holy Virgin, and in the native language, are to be found among those Tracts,¹⁸² contained in the Royal Irish Academy's Library. Among the Messrs. Hodges' and Smith's Collection of Irish Manuscripts belonging to this noble national institution, there is an Irish Life of St. Brigid.¹⁸³ Another small quarto paper Manuscript contains an Irish Life of this holy Virgin.¹⁸⁴ Besides these, we find a third Irish Life of St. Brigid,¹⁸⁵ in this collection alone. Again we meet with two paper Manuscripts—one small,¹⁸⁶ the other a folio¹⁸⁷—belonging to the Royal Irish Academy, and containing a Life of St. Brigid in Irish. The Library of Trinity College,¹⁸⁸ Dublin, has another interesting collection of documents, which serves to illustrate her Acts.¹⁸⁹ The Irish Catholic University Library has some modern Manuscripts, relating to the Life of this Virgin Saint. Archbishop Marsh's Library furnishes an old Manuscript Life of St. Brigid.¹⁹⁰ English Collections,¹⁹¹ as among those of Oxford, Cam-

¹⁷³ At the 1st of February, in Feller's "Le Vies des Saints," &c., is an account of St. Brigid, Virgin, Abbess of Kildare, and Patroness of Ireland. Tome ii., pp. 24 to 26.

¹⁷⁴ It seems strange that an account of this is omitted, when treating at length the author's other works in the "New and General Biographical Dictionary," &c., vol. ii., pp. 24 to 27. London, 1708.

¹⁷⁵ His Life, written in French by his Vice-General, James Beccles, appeared at London, A.D. 1784, in 8vo. See Feller's "Dictionnaire Historique," tome iv., p. 296. Paris edition, 1827, &c., 8vo.

¹⁷⁶ See "Britannia Sancta," part i., pp. 91 to 95.

¹⁷⁷ In Butler's "Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs and other Principal Saints," vol. ii., at the 1st of February, is entered St. Bridget, or Bride, V. Abbess, and Patron of Ireland.

¹⁷⁸ See "Lives of the Irish Saints," &c., pp. 9, 10.

¹⁷⁹ See "Lives of the Saints," vol. ii., February 1, pp. 14 to 22.

¹⁸⁰ See "Kalendars of Scottish Saints," pp. 287 to 291.

¹⁸¹ The large folio vellum MS., in the R. I. A. copy of "Leabhar Breac," contains a Life of St. Bridget. No. 40, 6.

¹⁸² Some compositions in Latin regarding her are also preserved. The XVIII. vol. of O'Longan MSS. in the R. I. A. contains, Hymnus de virtutibus et miraculis sancte Brigidæ Kildariensis abbatissæ et Patronæ a Sancto Brigano, p. 82. Vol. XII. of

O'Longan MSS. in the R. I. A. contains a copy of St. Brigid's short poem on St. John, 1, seven quatrains, p. 143. The XII. vol. of O'Longan MSS. in the R. I. A. contains St. Brigid's Hymn to St. Brigid, published by Colgan, p. 144. The LIV. vol. of O'Longan MSS. in the R. I. A. contains a poem on St. Brigid, improperly ascribed to St. Suibne, the son of Colman, p. 176.

¹⁸³ This is numbered 12.

¹⁸⁴ This is numbered 105.

¹⁸⁵ This is numbered 168.

¹⁸⁶ This is classed No. 49, 4.

¹⁸⁷ This is classed No. 39, 6.

¹⁸⁸ Here are tracts:—De S. Brigida. MS. Trin. Coll. Dublin. 290. Miracula B. Brigidæ, MS. Trin. Coll. Dublin. 647. Vita S. Brigidæ, MS. Trin. Coll. Dublin. 647. This is a transcript from the Cottonian MS. Nero, E. i., No. 316. Also Vita S. Brigidæ, MS. Trin. Coll. Dublin. This is a transcript from a Ratisbon Manuscript, with emendations by Ussher. See Sir Thomas Duffus Hardy's "Descriptive Catalogue of Materials Relating to the History of Great Britain and Ireland," vol. i., part i., p. 114.

¹⁸⁹ The Trinity College MS., classed II. 1. 11, contains 1. A Life of St. Brigid, according to the accounts of learned antiquarians and handed down by tradition. It begins, *Ṗeac̃t̃ur̃ vo vub̃t̃ac̃.*

¹⁹⁰ It is classed, "Vita S. Brigidæ," Virg. vol. 3, 4, 23. MSS.

¹⁹¹ The following are among these:—Vita S. Brigidæ, Scotiæ-Mutila MS. Insul.

bridge, the British Museum¹⁹² and Lambeth, as also Scotch and European¹⁹³ Libraries, are stored with different Acts of this illustrious Saint. There is an Irish Life of St. Brigid, transcribed by Michael O'Clery, and kept among the MS. records of the Burgundian Library, at Bruxelles.¹⁹⁴ If all these public collections could be examined and compared, there can hardly be a doubt, but much valuable matter might be evolved, to place her history in a truer light than has yet been obtained. Those documents prove, likewise, that her fame was by no means confined to Ireland.¹⁹⁵ Indeed, it may be said, hardly any Saint in the universal Church was more renowned during the Middle Ages, than Ireland's great Patroness; and the prodigies recorded concerning her sufficiently manifest that special devotion entertained for her memory by numberless clients and admirers. Her memorials also have been succinctly related in various Breviaries: viz. in the old Roman one, published at Venice in 1522; in that printed at Genoa, Italy; in a Breviary issued at Cornouaille, in British Armorica; in that produced at Mons, by the Canons Regular; in that published at Paris, A.D. 1622, and intended for Kildare diocese; as also in others published at Wurtzburgh, at Triers, and at other places in Germany.¹⁹⁶ Besides these the Breviary of Kilmoon Church, in Ireland, contained an Office for St. Brigid.¹⁹⁷ It appears to have consisted of Nine Lessons, with Responses, Antiphons and musical Notation, but it is very much mutilated and defaced.

anud Claudium: Doresmieu. See "Bibliotheca Belgica Manuscripta," p. 266. *Legenda in Festo S. Brigittæ* MS. Arundel 198, f. 19 b. This is a short lection and of no great value. *Vita S. Brigidæ* MS. Lambeth. 94, 18, f. 155. *Vita S. Brigidæ* MS. Bodl. Laud. Misc. 108 (1486) ff. 93 b. 94 b. vell. fol. xiv. cent. This is written in old English. *Vita S. Brigidæ* MS. Harl. 2800, 28, ff. 74 b. 83 b. *Vita S. Brigidæ* MS. Bodl. Tanner. 15 f. 86. *Vita S. Brigidæ Virginis*. MS. Cott. Nero. E. i. 29, ff. 134 b. 140. *Life of Brigid*. MS. Phillips, 10294, 8vo paper, xix. cent. Copy of a MS. belonging to the Duke of Devonshire. *Vita S. Brigidæ*. MS. Eccl. Lincoln, folio. See Haenel "Catalogus Librorum Manuscriptorum," p. 799. *Vita S. Brigidæ*, auctore Hugbaldo monacho Elnonensi MS. Cænob. Elnonensis, 251. *Vita S. Brigidæ*. MS. Clarendon, 65, f. 4. See Sir Thomas Duffus Hardy's "Descriptive Catalogue of Materials relating to the History of Great Britain and Ireland," vol. i., part i., pp. 111 to 114.

¹⁹² Among the Clarendon Manuscripts, formerly the property of Sir James Ware, are Excerpts from "*Vita S. Brigidæ*," and a "*Vita S. Brigidæ*."

¹⁹³ In the various European Libraries we have been enabled to trace the following copies:—*Vita S. Brigidæ* MS. Regensburg. *Vita S. Brigittæ fragmentum*. We find appended, "*Hujus vitæ auctor est, ni fallor, Hugbaldus Elnonensis, Monachus*. MS. Bibl. du Roi. 2999, 3. olim Le Tellier vell. xi. cent. *Vita S. Brigidæ Virginis*. MS. Bibl. du Roi. 3788, 42. olim Colbert. vell. xii. cent. *Vita S. Brigidæ*, Virginis. MS.

Bibl. du Roi. 3800, a. 7. olim de Bethune. vell. xiii. cent. *Vita Sanctæ Brigidæ*, MS. Bibl. du Roi. 5269, 21. olim Faurian. vell. xiv. cent. *Vita S. Brigidæ Virginis*. MS. Bibl. du Roi. 5278, 23. olim Colbert. vell. xiii. & xiv. cent. *Vita S. Brigidæ, Virginis*. MS. Bibl. du Roi. 5292, 48. olim Colbert. vell. xiii. cent. *Vita S. Brigidæ, Virginis*. MS. Bibl. du Roi. 5318, 60. olim Bigot. vell. xiii. cent. *Vita S. Brigidæ, Virginis*. MS. Bibl. du Roi. 5352, 1. olim Colbert. vell. xiv. cent. *Vita Brigidæ*, MS. Petavii in Vaticana, 507. *Vita S. Brigidæ*, MS. Bibl. Monast. S. Audoeni Rothomagi, 104. *Vita Brigidæ* MS. Monast. de Becco, 128. *Vita S. Brigidæ*. MS. Vatican, 4872. MS. Vatican, 6074. MS. Vatican, 6075. *Vita S. Brigittæ*. MS. Vallicellan. ap. Rom. H. 12, f. 195. MS. Vallicellan. ap. Rom. II. 25, f. 43. MS. Vallicellan. ap. Rom. H. 28, f. 105. *Vita S. Brigittæ*. MS. Palatin, 863. *Vita S. Brigidæ*. MS. Laureatiana Mediceæ in bibl. Florentina iv. 323. Cod. xx. *Vita S. Brigidæ*. MS. Monast. S. Gisleini in Cella. See Sir Thomas Duffus Hardy's "Descriptive Catalogue of Materials relating to the History of Great Britain and Ireland," vol. i., part i., pp. 114 to 116.

¹⁹⁴ Vol. xi., fol. i.

¹⁹⁵ Among the Bruxelles MSS., in the Burgundian Library, there is a tract "*S. Brigidæ Vita*," vol. iv., part i., p. 24.

¹⁹⁶ See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," *Vita S. Brigidæ*. Appendix Tertia, cap. i., pp. 609, 610.

¹⁹⁷ See Trinity College MS., classed B. 1, 5, at fol. 114 b.

The less remote genealogies of Ireland's kings, chiefs, and saints are found to harmonize in a remarkable manner with each other. Nor can we regard more ancient pedigrees and traditions as mere fabrications.¹⁹⁸ According to Cogitosus and Animosus, St. Brigid was descended from Feidlimidh Rechtmar or the Law-giver,¹⁹⁹ through the line of Ethach,²⁰⁰ or Eochaidh-²⁰¹Finn Fothart, his son, who was brother to the celebrated Conn of the Hundred Battles, King of Ireland.²⁰² The family to which our saint belonged was formerly very celebrated, and a powerful one, belonging to the Province of Leinster. In Irish song and story, bards and senachies had proclaimed their renown. The genealogists of Ireland have been careful to record St. Brigid's descent, which in the direct line from her paternal progenitor, Eochaidh Finn Fothart, was illustrated by holy persons, as well as by heroes.²⁰³ The various Irish pedigrees and kalendars enumerate not less than fourteen—Colgan²⁰⁴ only enters thirteen—saints,²⁰⁵ who had been descended from Eochaidh Finn. Two of these named in the list are supposed, however, to have been of a different family. St. Gall, Patron of Switzerland,²⁰⁶ and his brother Deicolus, Abbot of Lure,²⁰⁷ have been conjecturally added to the foregoing number. The following is the order of paternal descent, traced for St. Brigid. To Eochaidh Finn was born a son, named Aongus Meann. He had a son Cormac, whose son Cairpre Niadh was father to Art Corb, whose son was Conleach or Conla. To the latter was born a son, Den, the father of Bresal, who was the father of Demri.²⁰⁸

¹⁹⁸ See Rev. Dr. Toland's "St. Patrick, Apostle of Ireland." Appendix to Introduction, A, p. 247.

¹⁹⁹ King of Ireland, from A.D. 104 to 174, according to O'Flaherty's chronology. See "Ogygia," pars. iii., cap. lvi., pp. 300 to 308. In Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," however, his reign is placed much earlier, viz., from A.D. 110 to 119. See vol. i., pp. 100 to 103. Having enacted a law of retaliation for the repression of various crimes, this king died a natural death, after a reign of nine years. Cathaer Mor, or the Great, succeeded, according to Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters." After a reign of three years, we are informed, that he was slain in the battle of Magh-h-Agha, by Conn of the Hundred Fights and by the Fian or militia of Luaghine, A.D. 122. See *ibid.*, pp. 102, 103.

²⁰⁰ See "Trias Thaumaturga." Secunda Vita S. Brigide, cap. i., p. 519.

²⁰¹ See *ibid.* Quarta Vita S. Brigide, cap. i., p. 546.

²⁰² From A.D. 177 to 211, according to O'Flaherty's "Ogygia," pars. iii., cap. lx., lxi., pp. 313 to 318. Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters" has it from A.D. 123 to 157. See vol. i., pp. 103 to 105.

²⁰³ Among the St. Gall manuscripts likewise there is a "Genealogia S. Brigide."

²⁰⁴ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigide, cap. ii., p. 613.

²⁰⁵ He remarks, that the Natales for most of those saints are found entered in the Martyrologies of Tallagh, of Marianus

O'Gorman, of Cathald Maguire, and of Donegal.

²⁰⁶ The following is a list of the saints and their places, with presumed days for their festivities. 1. St. Ailán, venerated on the 27th of August, or on the 4th of September, at a place called Chuain Tarbh, or Clontarf. 2. St. Berenan also called Mòbi Clarenach, venerated on the 12th of October, at Glasnevin. 3. St. Barrindus, of Achadh-Caillín, at the 8th of November. 4. St. Colman, of Aurthur Femhin. 5. St. Declan, of Ardmore, venerated on the 24th of July. But, from the life of this latter saint, which Colgan intended to publish at that day, it would seem, Declan and his brother Colman are not derived from the race of Eochad, as the author of the "Sanctilogic Genealogy" writes, but rather from the posterity of his brother Fiach Sugdhe. 6. St. Díman, bishop, who was venerated on the 9th, or on the 22nd, of March. 7. St. Enan, of Drum Rath, venerated on the 19th of August. 8. St. Fechin, of Fore, venerated on the 20th of January. 9. St. Finbarr or Fionubhar, Abbot of Inis Doimhle, venerated on the 4th of July. 10. St. Fintan, Abbot of Clonenagh, venerated on the 17th of February. 11. St. Fínan, venerated on the 13th of February, or on the 4th of October. 12. St. Mochuan. 13. St. Sarnata, who was venerated on the 16th of April. See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigide, cap. iii., p. 613.

²⁰⁷ See his Life at the 16th of October.

²⁰⁸ See his Life at the 18th of January.

²⁰⁹ This accords with the Irish Life of St.

The son of this latter was Dubtach, the father of St. Brigid.²¹⁰ Thus was the illustrious virgin eleventh in lineal descent, from the renowned Feidlimidh Reachtmar,²¹¹ or the Lawgiver,²¹² King of Ireland, in the second century of our Christian era.²¹³ It would seem, that on our saint's maternal side, Brigid was descended from the O'Connor family.²¹⁴ The mother of this holy virgin is incorrectly called Brocca, Broca,²¹⁵ or Brocessa, by Cogitosus, and by some foreign writers. But, by most of our native authorities, she is more correctly named Brotseach,²¹⁶ or Brocseach.²¹⁷ The sister of this Brotseach appears to have been Fanchea, the mother of three holy sons.²¹⁸ The Calendar of the O'Clerys states, that Broicseach,²¹⁹ daughter of Dallbronach, son to Aedh Meamhair,²²⁰ was the mother of this most renowned virgin. Such a respectable pedigree is alone sufficient to disprove an assertion of certain writers recording our saint's acts, that her mother was of servile condition. Both her parents are called Christians, and they are reputed to have been of noble birth.²²¹ It seems probable enough, they may have been among St. Patrick's converts, when he spent some time in Louth, before returning to the North from his southern missionary travels. Besides the

Brigid, in the "Book of Lismore" and in the "Leabhar Breac" according to Professor O'Looney's copy, pp. 3, 4.

²¹⁰ Such is her line as traced in the "Sanctilogie Genealogies," chapter xv. Cormac Mac Cuillenan, in his treatise on "Genealogies of the Saints," contained in the "Psalter of Cashel," assigns the same descent on the father's side, for St. Brigid. In this particular, Dr. Geoffrey Keating agrees with the foregoing authorities. See Dermot O'Connor's Keating's "General History of Ireland," part ii., p. 389.

²¹¹ In the Fourth Life of St. Brigid, it is said, he was thus named, because he effected great law reforms in his kingdom of Ireland, while "Reacht" of the Scotie dialect in Latin is identical with "lex." In English it means "law."

²¹² Colgan agrees, that the cognomen *Reachtmar* is Latinized by the words "legifer" or "legislator." Such an epithet had been bestowed on him because of his being a great lover of justice. He also says that the origin of this word "*Reachtmar*" is in accordance with our historic traditions, and the common use of the epithet. See "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Quarta S. Brigide, lib. i., cap. i., p. 546, and n. 3, p. 563.

²¹³ The O'Clery's Calendar agrees, likewise, that St. Brigid descended from the race of Eochaidh Finnfuathairt, son to Feidhlimidh Reachtmar, son to Tuathal Teachtmhar, Monarch of Erin.

²¹⁴ According to Professor O'Looney's Irish Life, St. Brigid's mother was Broicseach, the daughter of Dallbronach, of the Dail Conchobhar in South Bregia.

²¹⁵ In the Third Office of St. Brigid, published by Colgan, "patre Diptoco, et matre Broca," are held to have been her parents. Her offices and other accounts make our saint a native of Leinster. This was anciently a Province of Ireland, bounded eastwards by the Irish Sea, having Munster

on its south and west, with Meath towards the north. Like other great districts of Ireland, it had its own kings: subject, however, to the chief monarch of the island. Naas was the capital city during St. Brigid's period. Its metropolis for many ages past has been Dublin, which formerly had many suffragan sees within its present archiepiscopal limits. For some time past, it has only the suffragan sees of Kildare and Leighlin, Ossory and Ferns.

²¹⁶ Colgan remarks, that she should be called Brotseach, as the generality of authors—especially in old Latin codices—style her. See "Trias Thaumaturga." Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigide, cap. ii., p. 613.

²¹⁷ Irish writers more generally, as also more correctly, write her name Brocseach, and hence Colgan prefers to adopt their orthography. See *ibid.* Quarta Vita S. Brigide, n. 8, p. 563.

²¹⁸ St. Angus the Culdee, in his tract, "Mothers of the Irish Saints," relates, that Fanchea, daughter of Dalbronach, was mother of Saints Connall, Eugene, and Carbre, three sons of Neman.

²¹⁹ In the table to this martyrology, after the holy virgin's name, we find the following comment introduced, within brackets:—" [Daughter of Broicseach; her mother was Brocsecha.] " See "Martyrology of Donegal." Edited by Drs. Todd and Reeves.

²²⁰ He is said to have been of Daleconchabhair, in the southern part of Bregia, according to an Irish Life of St. Brigid. St. Ultan also belonged to that family. A scholiast, in his preface to a hymn, said to have been composed by St. Ultan, writes, that he composed this hymn in praise of St. Brigid: and that he was of the Daleconchabhair, to which belonged St. Brigid's [mother, Brotseach, daughter of Dallbronach.

²²¹ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Cogitosus' or Secunda Vita S. Brigide, cap. i., p. 519.

testimony of Cogitosus, referable to the Christian parentage of St. Brigid, in that metrical prologue to her sixth life,²² Dubtach is represented as a noble, pious man, and still more noble, through his own proper spouse²³ and their holy offspring.²⁴ Nor does there appear to be any qualification to this eulogy, in regard to any particular portion of his life. Whether the birth of their illustrious daughter took place before or after their conversion to Christianity is not established on any reliable authority.

Our most judicious historians, Protestant and Catholic,²⁵ pass over in silence, or with reproof, those very incredible legends, which contradict the foregoing accounts.²⁶ Indeed, an exact critical analysis will only serve to render the least remarkable circumstances, attending St. Brigid's birth, more probable; while the romantic narratives can be traced to no better sources than popular traditions, so liable to be obscured by fables. No doubt, certain old Acts of the saint—we cannot be sure, however, these are the most ancient and authentic—contain the entry of such preposterous statements. Later writers, during the middle ages,²⁷ adopted those vain fantasies, without sufficient examination, and these again have been repeated by more modern writers²⁸ unreflectingly or in complete ignorance of the historic value, applicable to their sources for information. The genealogy of St. Brigid's mother—apparently drawn from remote pedigrees—shows that she was not of servile condition,²⁹ but through family origin, in every respect, fitted to be the lawful and respected spouse of the noble Dubtach.

The best refutation of certain strange accounts, relating to St. Brigid's birth, will probably be found in a brief statement of the legend.³⁰ The paternal ancestor of our illustrious virgin, and who is named Eochaidh Finn, went among the Lagenians, whose king bestowed many tracts of land on him, at different places. In that province the prince's posterity dwelt at a time

²² "Dubtachus ejus erat genitor cognomine dictus ;

Clarus homo meritis, clarus et a preavis ;

Nobilis atque humilis, mitis pietate repletus ;

Nobilior j propria conjuge, prole pia."

—Sexta Vita S. Brigidæ. Prologus. Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," p. 582.

²³ She is understood to have been Broccessa or Brotscaich, the mother of St. Brigid.

²⁴ In those well-known acts of St. Brigid, written by Cogitosus, she is said to have been predestined for accomplishment of the Almighty's decrees, by special graces received from heaven.

²⁵ Such as Ussher, Ware, Lanigan, &c. The latter writer observes, that "no attention is due to what we find in two or three of the so-called Lives of St. Brigid concerning her mother having been a concubine, whom, when pregnant, the wife of Dubtach obliged him to dismiss, and of her having been purchased by a pagan poet or a magus, and how, in consequence of his taking her to Ulster, she was then delivered of the saint. This romance-like narrative cannot agree with the circumstance, that the parents of the saint were Christians. I mean such strict Christians as were then in Ireland, nor with the rank of her mother's family and her

being everywhere else spoken of as the wife of Dubtach."

That the illustrious St. Brigid was born in Scotia of noble and Christian parents is stated in the "Chronica Generalis Mundi," by Petrus de Natalibus, lib. iii., cap. 69, as, also, in St. Brigid's Second, Third, and Fourth Offices, published by Colgan. She is said to have been "de bona prosapia" in the First Office.

²⁷ See the succinct account of John Capgrave in his "Nova Legenda Angliæ," fol. xlix.

²⁸ Such as Harris in his edition of Sir James Ware's works, vol. ii., "Writers of Ireland," I took it, chap. iii., pp. 11, 12.

²⁹ That she was a captive is intimated in Colgan's first published metrical acts of the saint, attributed to St. Brogan Cloen. See "Trias Thaumaturga." Hymnus, seu Vita Prima S. Brigidæ, strophe i., p. 515.

On this subject, Dr. Lanigan remarks: "These stories are given in the third and fourth lives, which in very great part are mere transcripts of each other, agreeing, word for word, in many passages. The former bears every appearance of being an abridgment of the latter. Be this as it may, they form but one authority. And as to the life called the fifth, whatever it has on these subjects was evidently taken from one or other of them. Amidst other nonsense

when the author of St. Brigid's Fourth Life wrote.²³¹ From his race, as we are told, a celebrated and powerful chieftain, named Dubtach, was derived, who bought a female servant, named Broschach. She was very beautiful and distinguished by her great propriety of manner.²³² Immediately after follows a romantic and an incredible account, seemingly irreconcilable with this latter statement. On learning that Broschach had conceived, the proper wife of Dubtach, it is said, became very much grieved, and advised her husband to sell his slave.²³³ Fear was expressed, at the same time, that Broschach's children should domineer over the family of his wife. But, the chieftain Dubtach would not hearken to the counsels of his consort, on account of a great love he entertained for Broschach.²³⁴

About this time, it is said, that two holy bishops²³⁵ came from Britain,²³⁶ and entered the house of Dubtach. One of these was called Mel or Maol, and the other Melchu or Maolchu.²³⁷ These were disciples, we are told, of St. Patrick, the archbishop, who then preached God's word in Ireland.²³⁸ Maol said to Dubtach's wife, "Why are you sorrowful? The offspring of thy servant, shall be exalted above you and your progeny;²³⁹ however, love that servant equally with your own sons, because her infant shall procure blessings for your children." But, the jealousy of Dubtach's wife was not appeased, and her brothers, who were powerful and brave men, earnestly urged Dubtach to sell his servant, in a distant part of the country. By a special inspiration, a poet, belonging to the Hy-Niall family,²⁴⁰ came from the northern part of

contained in these tracts a magus is introduced foretelling the future sanctity of the child, while she was still in her mother's womb."—"Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. viii., sec. ii., n. 22, pp. 381, 382.

²³¹ Colgan remarks, that this account furnishes no slight indication showing how the author of this life lived at a very early period, and that he flourished at least previously to the tenth century, as for many ages back, the family of St. Brigid did not live, in those places to which allusion had been made. See "Trias Thaumaturga." Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ, n. 7, p. 563. It may be asked, however, on what *data* Colgan grounds his assertion, even if the author specified those exact places? This he has not done.

²³² In the Third Life, this latter account of Broschach's good morals—as contained in the Fourth Life—is coincidentally given. See "Tertia Vita S. Brigidæ, cap. i., p. 527. Both statements appear to have been implicitly followed, in the Fifth or accephalous Life of our saint, which Colgan supplies in his own words, and in elegant Latin, apparently written to imitate Laurence of Durham's style. This narrative is paraphrased from more succinct accounts of previous writers. To supply what is wanting in his author, Colgan draws somewhat on his own imagination—a rather exceptional case with him.

²³³ In the Irish Life of St. Brigid, contained in the "Leabhar Breac" and the "Book of Lismore," the account is somewhat similar.

²³⁴ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga."

Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. i., cap. i., p. 546. In closing this account of Broschach, as she is generally called throughout the Fourth Life, the author adds regarding her, "in omnibus enim moribus, illa fœmina erat perfecta."

²³⁵ They were disciples and nephews of St. Patrick, the children of his sister Darerca. Colgan gives their acts, at the 6th of February, the day of their feast, in his "Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ," vi. Februarii, pp. 259 to 264.

²³⁶ In Professor O'Looney's "Life of St. Brigid," Irish and English MS., while calling them bishops of the Britons, they are said to have come from the Alps to foretell of her, pp. 5, 6.

²³⁷ In the "Tertia Vita S. Brigidæ" they are called Mel and Melchu, as also in many other works. In the "Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ" they are more correctly named, Maol and Maolchu, or by change of the diphthong, Mael and Maelchu; for *uo*, *ai*, and *æ* were indifferently used by the Irish and other ancient people.

²³⁸ Such is the account given, in the Fourth Life of St. Brigid.

²³⁹ In an Irish life (chap. ii.) this wife of the chieftain is called Brectan. She is said to have borne seven sons to Dubtach, the seventh or last having been born after the birth of St. Brigid. See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ, n. 10, p. 564.

²⁴⁰ "Id est, de terra nepotum Neill, seu Media." The poet, in question, or the *magus*, as he is called in the St. Aubert MS., came from the territory of Himaccuail

Ireland,²⁴¹ and bought this female slave from Dubtach, who consented to sell her, because he feared the anger of his wife,²⁴² and of her brothers, belonging to a noble family.²⁴³ Yet, he would not consent to sell the child, which she then bore, because wonderful things had been predicted regarding the unborn infant.²⁴⁴ In his account of these transactions, Laurence of Durham remarks, that the English, Irish, and Scotch were accustomed to deal in slaves, more than in any other kind of merchandise; and that they even considered it an honourable kind of traffic, although so much opposed to the spirit of Christianity. He says, that the mother had been known to sell her daughter, the

in Meath, and from the particular spot called Tochar-maine, as stated in St. Brigid's Irish Life (cap. v.) Although, in the Fourth Life, it is said, he was "*poeta de aquilone Hiberniae*," there is nothing contradictory to be found; because relatively to Leinster, Meath lay to the north, and because a certain *magus*, or poet, belonging to the region of Conall Marthemne, in Ulster, bought the mother of St. Brigid, not immediately from Dubtach, but from the afore-said Meathian poet. This is expressly stated, in the Irish Life. See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*." *Tertia Vita S. Brigidæ*, n. 4, p. 542.

²⁴¹ In Professor O'Loney's MS. the poet is said to have been of the *Ui Mae Uais*, and to have been from Tochar Maine, 1 p. 5, 6.

²⁴² Laurence of Durham's fragmentary life starts with an announcement, that the wife of Dubtach, bitterly reproaching her husband with his infidelities, declared that henceforth he must make up his mind, either to sell his female slave, or be prepared for her own separation from him. Her persistently expressed resolution, it is said, overcame her husband's previous intention. Dubtach then placed his servant in the chariot, which enabled him to journey after the fashion of his country, to reach a place where he could find a market.

²⁴³ By the later writers of our saint's acts, we are told, that one day the holy maiden's father and mother passed by the house of a certain magus, in a chariot. In St. Brigid's Irish Life he is called Maithginn, from whom Ross-Maithginn is denominated. He ordered the servants to inform him who were seated in it, for by the noise of this vehicle, Maithginn supposed it conveyed a king. The servants reported to their master, that the chariot contained *filii thac*. The magus desired him to be called. On being hailed, the magician asked if the woman, called *ancilla*, who sat behind him in the chariot, was with child. On receiving an answer in the affirmative from Dubtach, the magician asked her the name of this unborn child's father. She replied, that Dubtach was its parent. Then the magus addressed these words to him, "Be thou a careful guardian of this woman, for the child she bears shall become illustrious." Dubtach then told the magus that his wife, who feared this child's birth,

had urged him to sell his fellow-traveller, who is represented as being a slave. The magus then prophesied, that the children of Dubtach's wife should serve the family of her servant for ever. The magician also said to the servant: "Be of good cheer, for no person shall be able to injure you; the graces bestowed on your infant shall prove your protection, for to you shall be born an illustrious daughter, who will shine in this world with the brightness of the noon-day sun." Dubtach replied, "I give thanks to God, that hitherto I have had no daughter, although having sons." After these words of the magus, Dubtach regarded his female servant with greater affection; although his wife, with her brothers, urged her husband to sell his slave, in a far distant country. See "*Trias Thaumaturga*." *Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ*, cap. ii., p. 527. *Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ*, lib. i., cap. ii., p. 546, *ibid*. In the Fifth Life of our saint, a similar story is told substantially, but in a more improved Latin phraseology and style; a greater imaginative liberty having been taken apparently with special circumstances given in previous accounts. See *Vita Quinta S. Brigidæ*, cap. iii., p. 567, *ibid*. In the metrical acts of St. Brigid, the matter is thus briefly recorded:—

"Quadam namque die genetrix dum forte
sedebat,
In curru prægnans, nec tunc enixa puellam,
Dumque frementis equi spumantia colla
tenebat,
Pulverulenta quidem vestigia longa sonabat.
Audierat sonitum vates stridere rotarum
Dixerat; ecce venit. Rex est, qui præsidet axi.
Sed committissa tamen carpentum sola regabat.

—Sexta Vita S. Brigidæ, sec. i., pp. 582, 583, *ibid*.

²⁴⁴ In the Office of St. Brigid, printed at Paris in 1622, and in her other printed or manuscripts offices, various portents referring to her conception and early childhood are noticed, in the antiphons, hymns and responses. Also, many virtues and miracles, which afterwards distinguished her, are related.

son his father, and a husband his wife, forgetting every sentiment of nature and grace.²⁴⁵ After the Normans took possession of England, slavery of this sort was happily abolished; and the English owed this happy change, rather to invaders, than to their own countrymen. This writer adds, that the Irish and Scots, having lords of their own nation, never wholly abandoned serfdom, nor yet allowed it to exist, as formerly they did.²⁴⁶ However this may be, we are obliged to resume the incredible and contradictory romance, which consigns St. Brigid's mother to a state of bondage. With his newly-purchased slave, the poet afterwards returned to his own country.²⁴⁷ A certain holy man paid a visit, on that night of arrival at his house. This pious guest prayed to God, the whole night. Frequently during that time, he saw a globe of fire, resting over the spot, where the bond-woman and mother of St. Brigid slept. Respecting such circumstances, the poet host was apprized in the morning.²⁴⁸ Several incidents, connected with St. Brigid's birth, as related by some of her biographers, are puerile in the extreme, and unworthy the slightest degree of credit.²⁴⁹ It is said, a certain infant, whose

²⁴⁵ Colgan remarks, that except in the writings of this author, he could never discover elsewhere, authority for the statement of a custom prevailing in former times among the Irish, whereby a brother would sell his brother, a daughter her mother, a father his son, or any other relative his kinsman. If the sale of slaves and captives prevailed in pagan times, the mild spirit of Christianity and of religious feeling has long ago abolished all vile customs of the slave mart, in our island. We read, however, that the English and Britons, even long after their reception of the Christian religion, allowed this abominable trade in human creatures to continue. We learn, also, that to this infamous traffic in men and women, could be traced, in great part, their loss of liberty and subjection to a foreign yoke. These were regarded as just punishments and visitations of God, for permitting such abuses. See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*." *Quinta Vita S. Brigidæ*, cap. i., ii., p. 567 and n. 5, p. 639, *ibid*.

²⁴⁶ Giraldus Cambrensis writes as follows on this subject, in reference to Ireland, that soon after the Anglo-Norman invasion, a council was convened at Armagh, in which it was decreed, that the English, then held as bondsmen, in various parts of Hibernia, should be set at liberty. The clergy and laity were unanimously agreed on this subject. Previously to that period, the Saxons were accustomed to sell their own children and relations as slaves to the Irish, even although not pressed to it by any necessity. Merchants and pirates were alike engaged in this nefarious commerce. The Irish, becoming purchasers of those slaves, were justly deemed as partners in such traffic, and therefore was it thought they had incurred Divine displeasure, which had been manifested by permitting their subjection, in turn, to the Anglo-Norman invaders. See "*Expugnatio Hibernica*," lib. i., cap. xviii., p.

258. Giraldus Cambrensis, *Opera*, vol. v., Dimock's edition.

²⁴⁷ According to Professor O'Looney's Irish Life in MS. a Druid from the territory of Connail repurchased the bondwoman from the poet; and brought her to his own part of the country, pp. 5, 6.

²⁴⁸ See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*." *Tertia Vita S. Brigidæ*, cap. iii., p. 527. *Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ*, lib. i., cap. iii., iv., p. 546. In the Fifth Life, the foregoing accounts are greatly extended, by the introduction of imaginary discourses and circumstances. See *Quinta Vita S. Brigidæ*, cap. iii., iv., pp. 567, 568, *ibid*.

²⁴⁹ After the account already given, the Third Life inserts a ridiculous narrative, relative to an occurrence at the infant's birth. This same narrative is given in the Fourth Life, where it is added, that the infant St. Brigid was distinguished by extraordinary beauty of features. "*Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ*," lib. i., cap. v., pp. 546, 547, *ibid*. As usual, Laurence of Durham greatly enlarges on the foregoing accounts. *Vita Quinta S. Brigidæ*, cap. v., p. 568, *ibid*. We are assured, by Colgan, that a king alluded to, and then with his queen a guest with the *magus*, was dynast of Conall Murthemne, a region mentioned, in an Irish Life of St. Brigid. In a part of this territory, designated Fochart, St. Brigid was born, according to the same authority, and to Henry of Marlborough, A.D. 468. Conchobarius in "*Vita S. Monennæ*," and other biographers are of accord. These are followed by Ussher, "*De Primordiis Ecclesiarum Britannicarum*," pp. 627, 884. But, the magian here mentioned is not identical with the Meathian, who purchased St. Brigid's mother in the first instance. He was the second purchaser and he belonged to the territory of the aforesaid Conall, as mentioned in an Irish Life. The student may refer to "*Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ*," n. 5, p. 543.

birth had preceded St. Brigid's by a single day;²⁵⁰ died suddenly on that of our saint's nativity.²⁵¹ By some chance, Brigid, being brought near the lifeless body of this infant, touched it.²⁵² The child was immediately restored to life. When this miracle took place, all who were present declared, Brigid was that renowned saint, promised by the prophets.²⁵³

After our saint's birth, the magus is said to have brought her mother with him to Connaught, where he dwelt; and, it is also stated, that the mother of this magus had been a native of that province, while his father was born in Munster.²⁵⁴ One day, when the mother of St. Brigid went some distance to milk cows,²⁵⁵ she left her infant sleeping alone in the house. Suddenly, it appeared to be in flames, and all who saw ran to extinguish them.²⁵⁶ On approaching the dwelling, however, these flames went out; and on entering, the people found St. Brigid sweetly smiling, with infantile innocence and beauty, her cheeks being flushed with a roseate hue.²⁵⁷ All proclaimed aloud, that the child was replenished with graces of the Holy Spirit.²⁵⁸

Before we proceed further, it may be well to mention, that St. Brigid's biographers seem generally to agree in naming Fochard²⁵⁹ as her birthplace. Such is the account left us in her Fourth Life. There, as we are told, the village in which she was born bore the name, Fochart Muirthenne,²⁶⁰ being in the region called Conaille Muirthenhne, formerly within the Ulster province.²⁶¹ The tradition, on which such a statement prevails, is referable to a remote time.²⁶² At present, Faughart²⁶³ is a small country village, in

²⁵⁰ This infant is said to have been a son of the King and Queen of Conaille, who were then on a visit with a magus, the second purchaser, according to Professor O'Looney's Irish Life, pp. 5 to 8.

²⁵¹ Professor O'Looney's Irish Life states, St. Brigid was born at the rising of the sun, pp. 7, 8.

²⁵² In Professor O'Looney Irish Life, it is stated, that St. Brigid's breath brought the king's son to life, pp. 7, 8.

²⁵³ This account is contained in the Fourth Life. We are told by Colgan, that it is to be found, also, in the Irish Life, where it is stated, the infant brought to life was a son to the King of Conall, and this child was born on that night, previous to St. Brigid's birth, according to the legend. See "Trias Thaumaturga," Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ, lib. i., cap. vi., p. 547, and n. 12, p. 504. *Ibid.*

²⁵⁴ This is accordant with a statement in Professor O'Looney's Irish Life of St. Brigid, pp. 7, 8.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ "Sæpe etiam rutilis tectorum subdere flammis

Cernebant fabricam, parvæ et cunabula Brigidæ."—Vita Sexta S. Brigidæ, sec. ii., p. 583. Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga."

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.* "Tertia Vita S. Brigidæ," cap. v., p. 527. "Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ," lib. i., cap. viii., ix., p. 547. In the latter life, we are informed about the reason why the magician visited the province of Connaught. This he did to exercise his magic arts; for which purpose, he travelled through that district, and through other provinces, where he was received with great respect.

²⁵⁸ In the Fifth Life of our saint, with its

usual amplifications, we are told, St. Brigid spoke, before that natural period arrived, when infants usually articulate. Such account, however, is not contained in her other lives. Colgan refers to notes, appended to St. Fursey's Life at the 10th of January, and to other particulars, which serve to accompany that of St. Barr, at the 25th of September, for parallel instances of children, who spoke soon after their birth, and even in their mother's womb.

²⁵⁹ In Wright's "Louthiana," part i., p. 9, there is a very interesting description of certain ancient remains in this locality. Dr. Lanigan, who rejects the romantic narrative of St. Brigid's birth, agrees that she was born in Fochard. He further observes: "Whether her coming into the world in that place was owing to her parents having had a residence there, or to their being on a visit at some friend's house, it is immaterial to enquire."—"Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. viii., sec. 11, p. 378, and n. 24, p. 382, *ibid.*

²⁶⁰ St. Brigid was patron of that place, and in her honour a monastery of Canons had been established there, at a time when the Fourth Life had been written. See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ, lib. i., cap. vi., p. 547.

²⁶¹ Foughart is a parish in the diocese of Armagh.

²⁶² St. Bernard in his "Vita S. Malachiae" writes: "Venerunt tres Episcopi in villam Fochart, quem dicunt locum nativitatis Brigidæ virginis," &c., cap. xxv., sec. 56.

²⁶³ See the "Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland," vol. ii., pp. 197, 198, for an interesting account of this parish.

the Barony of Upper Dundalk, County of Louth, and Province of Leinster. There, too, not only a church and a cemetery, dedicated to St. Brigid, were to be seen at a time when her Fourth Life had been written; but, according to local tradition, they were situated even on the very site of that house, in which she had been born.²⁶⁴ This latter statement, with a slight emendation, is probably correct. It has been remarked, that the allusion to a monastery of Canons being at Foughart shows a remote antiquity when the author of her Fourth Life flourished; for, many ages back, there had been no institute of the kind discoverable, nor any monastic house, specially dedicated to St. Brigid, at least from the period of the eleventh century.²⁶⁵ The old church site of Fochard is situated between the town of Dundalk and the church of Kilslieve,²⁶⁶ being about two miles distant from either place. A holy woman, known as Monenna,²⁶⁷ built a church here, at a very early period.²⁶⁸ The exact situation of Fochard has been misplaced in some records.²⁶⁹ In the seventeenth century, this little village was called by the Irish-speaking people Fochart Brighde, or "Fochart of Brigid."²⁷⁰

In the three previous lives of our Saint²⁷¹ no mention is made concerning the place of her birth; which is also the case, in the two latter lives, viz.: the Fifth and Sixth. Admitting, however, the usually assigned place, where the illustrious virgin is said to have been born, it seems likely enough, that old circular, cone-shaped Dun,²⁷² which rises high²⁷³ over the adjoining fields on the very summit of Foughart Hill, about three miles north-west of Dundalk, supported and protected the house of Dubtach.²⁷⁴ A circular level on the top was 40 feet in diameter, and around the circumference appears to have extended a wide breast-work of masonry, laid with mortar.²⁷⁵ At the southern sides, when broken, the foundations were clearly traceable. A deep

²⁶⁴ At the rear of this church, the local habitants pointed out that identical stone, on which, it was traditionally said, St. Brigid first reposed after having come into the world. The relic was held in especial veneration by inhabitants of the adjacent country, and through its instrumentality many miracles were reported to have been accomplished.

²⁶⁵ Nothing save the parish church at Fochart was known in Colgan's time to have been placed under her special invocation. See "*Trias Thaumaturga*," *Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ*, lib. i., cap. vi., p. 547, and nn. 13, 14, p. 864, *ibid.*

²⁶⁶ Some ruins of a church are still remaining at Kilsieve, but these are devoid of all architectural beauty. See "*The History of Dundalk and its Environs*," by John D'Alton and J. R. O'Flanagan, p. 279.

²⁶⁷ See her Life at the 6th of July.

²⁶⁸ Conchobranus, in "*Vita S. Monennæ*," says, that this holy woman first built a church at Fochart, where the nativity of St. Brigid took place.

²⁶⁹ The English Martyrology, at the 1st of February, and other authorities, state, that our Saint was born in the County of Kildare, and at a place called Fochart. But Fochart is not within the limits of that county. However, if it be allowed, St. Brigid had been conceived in that, or in any

other Leinster county, it seems certain, she first saw light, in a certain village called Fochart, in Louth county, in Armagh diocese, and within the bounds of Ulster's ancient province. See Ussher "*De Primordiis Ecclesiarum Britannicarum*," pp. 627, 705, 706. Also, David Roth, in his Dissertation on St. Brigid, p. 151, and an Irish Life of St. Brigid, cap. iii.

²⁷⁰ They also called that district, in which it was situated, Machaire Airgiell. See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," Appendix *Quarta ad Acta S. Brigidæ*, cap. v., p. 617.

²⁷¹ As published by Colgan.

²⁷² Thomas Wright, in his day, correctly describes it as "in the form of a frustum of a cone."—"Louthiana," book i., p. 9. There was formerly some sort of octagonal building upon the top, but whether it had been a tower or parapet breast high, there was not wall enough left to determine, a little after the middle of the last century.

²⁷³ About 60 feet, according to Wright, but it is certainly of a lesser altitude.

²⁷⁴ Two curious copper-plate illustrations of this Dun, with the shape of the upper fort-like works, are contained on Plate xiv. of book i. in "*Louthiana*."

²⁷⁵ In May, 1874, the writer visited this spot, and found it nearly in a perfect state, except towards the south, where a portion of its sides had been removed for manure.

circular fosse surrounded the lower ascent of this high Dun,²⁷⁶ from the top of which a magnificent view of the bay and town of Dundalk, with the sublime crags of the Carlingford mountains, extending far into the sea, towards the north and east, can be obtained.²⁷⁷ Near this Dun, in the townland and parish of Faughart, on the very summit of a rising hill, are the ruins of St. Brigid's old church.²⁷⁸ The entire length was 24 yards, and the



Church Ruins at Foughart, Co. Louth.

breadth 7 yards interiorly, in 1836; an inside gable stood at a distance of about 10 yards from the east gable.²⁷⁹ This latter was demolished to within three feet of the ground, in the middle part, the sides being lower. Only a small part of the south side-wall, towards the east gable, stands.²⁸⁰ The remainder, to the middle gable, was levelled with the ground. The north side-

²⁷⁶ Thomas Wright states, "in all probability, it may originally have been a Funeral Monument, and in latter days formed into a Beacon or Fort, either as an out Guard to defend the said Frontier," (*i.e.*, of the old English Pale), "or signify the Approach of an Enemy."—"Louthiana," book i., p. 9.

²⁷⁷ Mr. John Craig, who rented an adjoining farm, told the writer, that in the field next this Dun, while ploughing, the hoofs of a horse sunk through some flag stones. On examination of the spot, a remarkable zig-zag-shaped earth-cave was discovered. After removing some of the covering stones, he descended into it, and found it regularly walled on the sides. Barely stooping, he was enabled to pass through it for several yards, covering flags being over his head. He saw several specimens of "crockery

ware," within the cave, through which his further progress was checked by its being choked by earth and stones, in one particular place. The extent of these remarkable caves, he pointed out to the writer, on the surface of the ground above, and he expressed the greatest desire that they should be carefully explored by gentlemen competent to describe them.

²⁷⁸ The people in 1836 called it *Tea' pull áirio*, "the high church," and it was also designated *Tea' pull bríge na h-áiríoe moine*, "Brigid's Church of the great height."

²⁷⁹ This inner gable has since fallen.

²⁸⁰ The accompanying engraving by William Oldham, 8 Gloucester-street, Dublin, is from a sketch by the author, and taken on the spot, in May, 1874.

wall was reduced to about 7 feet in height, east of the middle gable.²⁸¹ The western length to the middle gable was about 14 yards; the side-walls' height, in this part, is about 14 feet. On the south side-wall was a breach near the middle gable.²⁸³ The west gable had been reduced in height to the level of the side-walls; while there is a breach on it, reaching from top to bottom, about 3 yards wide. On the north side-wall, about 7 feet from the ground, there was an opening, reaching to the top. Another opening next the middle gable, was to be seen, and about the same height.²⁸⁴ This ruinous pile of masonry, at present, is in a very dilapidated condition.

The people of Foughart neighbourhood²⁸⁵ preserved a tradition, that this church had been built by St. Brigid—especially the eastern part—although they knew not that here²⁸⁶ was her birthplace.²⁸⁷ The graveyard of Foughart is still much used for interments. The base of an old cross yet rises over the graves. This last resting-place of the dead is intimately associated with the invasion of Ireland by King Robert Bruce²⁸⁸ of Scotland,²⁸⁹ and by his brother Edward Bruce,²⁹⁰ who prosecuted it to a disastrous issue.²⁹¹

²⁸¹ About a yard in length retained the original height of 14 feet towards the middle; it was lower towards the east gable.

²⁸³ In 1836, seven feet from the ground was an opening reaching to the top.

²⁸⁴ The foregoing is the substance of Messrs. P. O'Keefe's and T. O'Connor's description in a letter dated Dundalk, February 15th, 1836, taken from "Louth Letters, containing information relative to the Antiquities of the County, collected during the Progress of the Ordnance Survey in 1835-1836," vol. i., pp. 285, 286.

²⁸⁵ In 1836.

²⁸⁶ None of the inhabitants were able then to assign a signification for the word *ῥαῖαρε*.

²⁸⁷ A few, who read St. Brigid's Life, said that she was born within 2½ miles of Dundalk, on a green near the old road, leading from the latter town to Newry. Then tradition had it, that she founded Foughart Church, where she remained 2½ years, before she went to the nunnery at Kildare. *Ibid*, pp. 286, 287.

²⁸⁸ In A.D. 1306, this heroic chieftain was forced to take refuge in the small Island of Rachlinn, off the northern coast of Antrim. In the spring of 1306, with a fleet of thirty-three galleys and about 300 men, he sailed for the Scottish coast, "and proceeded on that course of chivalrous conquest which led to the establishment of his country's independence and his own deathless renown." About 700 of the northern Irish accompanied him on this expedition, and these were led by his brothers, Thomas and Alexander. See Moore's "History of Ireland," vol. iii., chap. xxxvi., p. 52.

²⁸⁹ The reader will recollect the allusion to his taking refuge in Ireland, as poetically recorded in Sir Walter Scott's "Lord of the Isles," canto iii., sec. xi.

"The scheme," said Bruce, "contents me well ;

Meantime 'twere best that Isabel
For safety, with my bark and crew,
Again to friendly Erin drew.
There Edward, too, shall with her wend,
In need to cheer her and defend,
And muster up each scattered friend."

²⁹⁰ The old Scots-English poem, "The Bruce; or the Metrical History of Robert I. King of Scots," by Master John Barbour, Archdeacon of Aberdeen, contains the most detailed account of Edward Bruce's career in Ireland, in Buke Tend, Buke Eleventh, Buke Twelt, vol. i., pp. 277 to 368. This is published from a Manuscript dated M.CCCC.LXXXIX. See "The Bruce; and Wallace;" edited by John Jamieson, D.D., with notes, biographical sketches, and a glossary. In Two Volumes. Edinburgh, A.D. 1820, 4to.

²⁹¹ That brilliant and decisive victory, achieved by the Scots over the English, at Bannockburn, in 1314, and to which allusion has been already made in the Life of St. Foilan, at the 9th of January, had awakened for a kindred people warm sympathies, while it aroused ambition among the northern Irish chieftains, to originate some effective means for obtaining national independence. Proposing to Robert Bruce the propriety of making his brother, Edward, king of Ireland, they agreed to rally round the latter, immediately on his arriving in their country. As Edward had already demanded a share in the sovereignty of Scotland, King Robert eagerly inclined to the expressed wishes of these Irish chiefs, and made every preparation to organize a military and naval expedition, destined for the coasts of Ireland. Accordingly, on the 26th of May, 1315, Edward Bruce landed on the shores of Antrim, with a fleet of 300 sail and an army of Scots, estimated at 6,000 men. Immediately on his arrival, the Irish of Ulster hastened in great numbers to fight under his standard. With united forces,

A hollow space between Faughart hill and Carrickbroad²² is pointed out as the spot where Bruce was killed,²³ in that last desperate

the Scots and Irish overran the whole province of Ulster, within an incredibly short period. Dundalk, Ardee, with some other places in Louth, were taken and demolished by the invading forces and their allies. To oppose them, De Bargo, earl of Ulster, raised a large army, chiefly in Connaught. He formed a junction with Sir Edmund Butler, the lord justice. The Scots and Irish crossed the river Bann, when they gave battle to the Earl of Ulster, at Connor. Here the Anglo-Irish leader was defeated, and afterwards he was forced to fly for protection towards the western province. Edward Bruce, who had already caused himself to be proclaimed king of Ireland, next besieged the castle of Carrickfergus, where some of the defeated English had taken refuge. Bruce spent some time endeavouring to reduce the stronghold of Carrickfergus; yet, at last he raised the siege to proceed southwards, through the midland counties of Leinster. His advance caused the rising of various native septs; but the prevalence of famine at this time obliged the Scottish leader to retire upon Ulster. At the town of Kells, he gave battle to 15,000 English, under the command of Sir Roger Mortimer, who suffered an ignominious defeat. In 1316, King Robert Bruce landed in Ireland with a great army to assist his brother Edward, and with united forces the garrison of Carrickfergus, after a brave and protracted defence, was compelled to surrender. Robert Bruce, accompanied by a large army of Scots and Irish, advanced to Dublin, where he arrived about the close of February, 1317. The Anglo-Irish denizens were in a state of consternation, but lost no time in making energetic preparations for defence. The English and Irish appear to have been almost equally demoralized and disorganized, during the progress of these transactions. The suburbs of Dublin were burnt down by the citizens, to prevent their invaders from finding there a shelter on approaching. Richard, Earl of Ulster, now advanced in years, was arrested on suspicion of having favoured the cause of Bruce, whilst DeLacy joined his forces with the Scots and Irish. King Robert Bruce, however, on finding the metropolis so strongly fortified and so resolutely defended by its Anglo-Irish garrison, deemed it a useless waste of time and valour to attempt its reduction by the slow process of a siege. Conducting his army southwards through Kildare, Kilkenny, Tipperary and Limerick, he burned and plundered the English foundations, civil and ecclesiastical, wherever he passed. Famine, pressing sorely on this desolated country, disconcerted his plans. Although the English mustered a force of

30,000 men to surprise and harass the King of Scotland, they did not, however, venture to risk a decisive engagement with him. About the commencement of May, Robert Bruce was obliged to retreat upon Ulster. He soon afterwards set sail for Scotland, leaving his brother Edward to sustain the cause, in which his fortunes were embarked. This retreat of the Scots and Irish, into the northern province, allowed the English an opportunity for making many successful diversions around the borders of their own settlements. In the year 1318, Edward Bruce raised a small army, with which he advanced to Foughart, near Dundalk. Here he was opposed and defeated by John Birmingham, at the head of an English force, which had marched from Dublin. See the Author's "Catechism of Irish History," lesson xvi., pp. 153 to 158.

²² Some written accounts state, that Edward Bruce's body had been divided into quarters, and had been sent for exhibition all over the country. See Moore's "History of Ireland," vol. iii., chap. xxxvi., p. 71. This, however, does not appear to be confirmed on any good authority, and the local tradition is probably correct, that the headless body had been buried in Foughart graveyard. Near this cemetery, the inhabitants point out a spot, where Bruce's horse was buried, and it is said, the bones of this animal were even discovered, on digging for them.

²³ The Rev. Dr. Drummond's Poem, — of no special merit, however, — and intitled, "Bruce's Invasion of Ireland," describes the progress of the Scottish leader, and his final defeat. An idea of its measure and style may be gleaned from the following lines, relating to the mustering of Irish chiefs and tribes to his standard: —

"Blood-royal O'Connor his infantry guides
From regions beyond where the broad
Shannon glides;
Great monarch of streams, that from up-
land and dell,
And a thousand steep mountains, his wide
current swell;
By cities, lakes, forests, and fields rich
with grain,
Sweeping on with his sail-covered tides
to the main."

"With these comes O'Malley, well-versed
in sea-wiles,
The lord of Craig-Uile, a prince of the
isles;
Of th' Arrans, where health-wasting gales
ever blow,
And Bovin, with fat lowing herds, white
as snow,

battle, which he fought on the 14th of October, A.D. 1318,²⁹⁴ at Foughart.²⁹⁵ Many of his chieftains and soldiers, Irish and Scots, fell in this short but decisive conflict.²⁹⁶ Although during the course of three years,²⁹⁷ pending which he waged war in Ireland, Edward Bruce had encountered the English armies in eighteen successive and victorious battles,²⁹⁸ their great numerical superiority at the battle of Foughart caused victory to favour the arms of England from the very first onset.²⁹⁹ From the south-west corner of the church, and removed about four yards, the grave of Edward Bruce is shown.³⁰⁰ The authentication, however, is only sustained by a popular tradition. About the middle of the last century, St. Brigid's Stone, having a raised work about it in the form of a horse-shoe, was to be seen at Foughart.³⁰¹ In the middle was a rough rocky flint, on which with bared knees penitents were accustomed to kneel. Raised upon two circular and concentric steps was elevated St. Brigid's pillar.³⁰² Only the circular stones are now noticeable within the graveyard.³⁰³ These are singularly suggestive of having been the base of a round tower. The burial-ground is well enclosed with a fine fence and a quick-set hedge of grown hawthorns. It rises high over the adjacent fields. North-west of the old church, and within the graveyard enclosure, is shown "St. Brigid's Well."³⁰⁴ It was dried up,³⁰⁵ when visited

And a thousand green islets, with foam
girdled bright,
Like gems chased in silver, and glistening
in light."

"As birds to the prey that come rushing
from far,
They speed to enjoy the grand pastime of
war;
Proud Flaiths on whose helmets gemmed
coronets shine;
Proud Tanists with baldrics enriched by
the mine."

This Poem was issued in a small 12mo volume, at Dublin, in 1826.

²⁹⁴ According to John Fordun's "Scotichronicon," vol. ii., lib. xii., cap. xxxvii., p. 271, Walter Goodall's Edition.

²⁹⁵ Authors differ greatly in their account both of the numbers engaged, and of those who fell. Barbour, whose object it was to pay all possible honour to the valour of his countrymen, says that Bruce's army contained about 2,000 men, not including his Irish auxiliaries; and that they were opposed by the overwhelming multitude of 40,000. Bruce, at his landing, had 6,000 men, and he afterwards received reinforcements from Scotland. Now, though he sustained some loss from the sword, famine, and other casualties of war, it is scarcely credible that his forces were reduced to one-third. The Irish annals compute his numbers at 3,000; but Ware says that 8,274 fell in the field, and that they were opposed by only 1,324 men-at-arms. Walsingham states the number of the slain to be 5,800, besides 29 barons and knights. The Anglo-Irish army is not said to have sustained any loss beside that of Maupus. See "Bruce's Invasion of Ireland," note viii., pp. 113, 114.

²⁹⁶ Relative to the issue of this battle, we are told in "The Brus," writ be Master Johne Barbour:—

"And tha that at the fighting wer
Socht Schir Eduard to get his hed
Emang the folk that thar was ded."

—Sec. cxxxii., ll. 200 to 202. The Spalding Club Edition, edited by C. Innes, p. 423. Aberdeen, 1856, 4to.

²⁹⁷ An interesting account of this Irish expedition of the Bruces is given in Sir David Dalrymple's (Lord Hailes') "Annals of Scotland," vol. ii., pp. 60 to 82. Edinburgh, A.D. 1776, 1779, 4to.

²⁹⁸ See Barbour's "Bruce," book xii.

²⁹⁹ See Thomas Moore's "History of Ireland," vol. iii., chap. xxxvi., p. 70.

³⁰⁰ In 1836, his tomb was pointed out on the west end of the grave; the remainder being concealed in the ground. Then it lay nearly horizontal, but sinking slightly to the east side. It was said to have been covered by notches, one of which was then visible.

³⁰¹ This object seems to have disappeared.

³⁰² Thomas Wright informs us, that the nuns of the convent used to go upon their knees on particular occasions; sometimes around the lesser and sometimes around the larger circles, as their penitence required. See "Louthiana," book iii., p. 19.

³⁰³ Views of all the foregoing curious objects are preserved for us in Plate xx., book iii., of Wright's "Louthiana," while in addition there is a ground plan of St. Brigid's quadrangular church in the graveyard.

³⁰⁴ In Irish *Tobar Bhríge*.

³⁰⁵ This, we were told, was the result of some previous desecration.

by the writer,³⁰⁶ but a pyramidal structure of stone and mortar, over a square aperture, remained.³⁰⁷ It is on a sloping part of the burial-ground, and surrounded by thickly-matted thorn bushes.

In the Parish of Foughart, there are five remarkable Moats. Three³⁰⁸ of these are on the townland of Upper Faughart; another Moat is in Lower Faughart,³⁰⁹ while one is on Roskeagh townland.³¹⁰

All writers are agreed, that St. Brigid's birth cannot be very distantly removed from the middle of the fifth century. But authorities differ as to the exact date. Some writers—as for instance the Bollandists³¹¹—place it so early as the year 436 or 437.³¹² The "Annals of Dublin" and the "Annals of Ross,"³¹³ with Friar John Clynne³¹⁴ and Dr. Mere-



St. Brigid's Well, Faughart.

³⁰⁶ In May, 1874.

³⁰⁷ The accompanying illustration was drawn on the spot by V. George Du Noyer, and transferred to wood from his sketches in the R. I. A. by Gregor Grey, of Dublin, who also engraved it.

³⁰⁸ One is called *móta p̄s̄eap̄*; another is denominated *móta an t-pean uinne*; while the other has no distinguishing name.

³⁰⁹ This is called *Râc p̄aleac̄*.

³¹⁰ This is styled *móta râc p̄seac̄*. See "Louth Letters, containing Information relative to the Antiquities of the County, collected during the Progress of the Ordnance Survey in 1835-1836," vol. i., p. 294.

³¹¹ Tillemont properly remarks, they had no sufficient grounds for their statements or conjectures. These they were obliged to adopt, because they supposed St. Brigid had interviews with St. Patrick, and that he had requested her to weave a shroud for him.

³¹² This circumstance of St. Brigid weaving St. Patrick's shroud is assigned by

Henschenius and Papebrochius, to A.D. 458, to make it accord with their hypothesis regarding St. Patrick's death occurring, as they suppose, in 460. Their predecessor Bollandus, who admitted the circumstance, relating to friendship existing between St. Patrick and St. Brigid ("Acta Sanctorum, Februarii," tom. i., i. Februarii), was not obliged to antedate St. Brigid's birth. For, with Ussher, he supposed the former to have lived until the year 493. "Now the successors of Bollandus, when they rejected this date, should have rejected also what has been said about the shroud, &c., and thus would not have been reduced to assign, in opposition to the best authorities, her birth to the time above mentioned, and her death to 506 or 517." See Dr. Lanigan's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. viii., sec. ii., p. 378, and n. 25, pp. 382, 383, *ibid*.

³¹³ See Ussher's "Britannicarum Ecclesiarum Antiquitates," cap. xvii., p. 459.

³¹⁴ See this Tract of his published by the

dith Hanmer,³¹⁵ have 439. Another calculation should make her first see the light in 443.³¹⁶ The "Annals of Roscrea" note this event at A.D. 449.³¹⁷ A judicious Irish historian considers, that including A.D. 451 and 458, St. Brigid's birth must have occurred at some time within such era. Following Ussher's computation, affixing her birth to A.D. 453,³¹⁸ Dr. Lanigan appears to concur. The "Annals of Cambria"³¹⁹ date it at A.D. 454. The "Annals of Inisfallen" give A.D. 456 in the opinion of some writers.³²⁰ In the "Annals of Senat Mac Magnus," said to have been compiled by Charles Maguire, authors are cited for assigning the holy Virgin's birth to A.D. 457.³²¹ Henry of Marlborough brings this event to so late a period as 468.³²²

According to his computation, St. Brigid was only twelve years of age, when St. Patrick died, if we adopt Dr. Lanigan's opinion; and the same writer supposes, our Saint might have been known to the Apostle of Ireland, at a very early age, in consequence of her singular sanctity having become conspicuous, and as she was derived from an illustrious family. But, it is thought, she could not have become a professed nun at that time, nor have already founded any religious house.³²³ During St. Patrick's lifetime, according to the most consistent and authentic acts of both Saints, the same historian remarks, that Brigid is not represented as having been a consecrated Virgin. However minute, in all matters relating to St. Patrick, his Tripartite Life only mentions St. Brigid on one occasion.³²⁴ There it is related, that, when listening, together with a vast number of people, to a sermon of his, she fell asleep and had a vision relative to the then state of the Irish Church and to its future vicissitudes, as expounded by St. Patrick. He, knowing that she had a vision, desired her, after she awoke, to tell what she saw. The Saint replied, that at first she beheld a herd of white oxen amidst white crops, then spotted ones of various colours, after which appeared black and dark-coloured oxen. These were succeeded by sheep and swine, wolves and dogs jarring with each other.³²⁵ There appears to be no good reason

Irish Archaeological Society. "Quadragesimo 39. Nascitur beata virgo Brigida."—"Annales Hiberniæ," p. 4.

³¹⁵ In his "Chronicle of Ireland," p. 89. Other writers assume the same date, as in "Vetusto libro Chromellia," quoted by Ussher. See "Britannicarum Ecclesiarum Antiquitates," cap. xvii., p. 459.

³¹⁶ Colgan remarks, that according to an opinion, not improbable, St. Brigid lived to be eighty years. Hence, as it is very generally supposed, she died on February 1st, A.D. 523, her birth must naturally be referred to A.D. 443. See "Trias Thaumaturga," Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigidæ, cap. ix., p. 620.

³¹⁷ See *ibid.*

³¹⁸ See "Index Chronologicus," at A.D. CCCCLIII., p. 520.

³¹⁹ The "Annales Cambriæ," supposed by the editor, Rev. John Williams ab Ithel, to be perhaps the oldest chronicle of Welsh affairs extant, places her birth at A.D. 454. See Preface, p. ix. and p. 3.

³²⁰ See "Annales Inisfalenses," p. 3, tomus ii. Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores."

³²¹ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigidæ, cap. ix., p. 620.

³²² So states Ussher in "Britannicarum Ecclesiarum Antiquitates," cap. xvii., p. 459. However, in Henry Marleborough's "Chronicle of Ireland," as published by the Hibernia Press Company, 4to, in 1809, we find no such notice, and there his Chronicle commences with A.D. 1285, ending with A.D. 1421.

³²³ "The lowest age, which I find to have been allowed in those times in any part of the Church for taking the veil, was that of 16 or 17 years. (St. Basil, *Ep. Canonica*, can. 18.) The African Canons fixed it at 25; and this regulation became very general in the Western Church. Yet even in the countries where it was received, it might have been dispensed with in certain cases. (See Gilbert, *Corp. J. Can.*, tom. ii., p. 410)."—Dr. Lanigan's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. viii., sec. 11, n. 27, p. 383.

³²⁴ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Septima Vita S. Patricii, lib. iii., cap. iv., pp. 149, 150.

³²⁵ See also Jocelyn's, or Sexta Vita S. Patricii, cap. xciv., xcvi., Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," pp. 86, 87. Dr. Lanigan adds:—"In this narrative there is nothing repugnant to the ways of the Almighty, who has been often pleased to impart to

for admitting, that during the illustrious Apostle's life-time, St. Brigid had been abbess of a monastery, nor concerning her having woven that shroud, in which St. Patrick's body was enveloped after death, and at his own particular request.³²⁶ Still more, it must be observed, that neither Cogitosus, nor the author of the first or of the fifth Life, has a single word about it. What is very remarkable, moreover, these never once mention St. Patrick, notwithstanding the care, with which they collected whatever could redound to the honour of St. Brigid. Had she enjoyed those frequent interviews, or kept up a correspondence with St. Patrick, or attended him at his death, it is scarcely possible, that those writers, who are evidently her most ancient biographers, should have been quite silent on such material points.

From her very childhood, we are told, she had been accustomed to an excellent course of instruction; and, as she grew up, this holy maiden presented each day some fresh proof of religious decorum and modesty. In all things, she conformed to the inspirations of Divine Grace. Her very name seemed pre-ordained to indicate her future spiritual state.³²⁷ The story is told of her, that when she was a mere child, playing at holy things, she got a smooth slab of stone which she tried to set up as a little altar; then a beautiful angel joined in her play, and made wooden legs to the altar, and bored four holes in the stone, into which the legs might be driven, so as to make it stand.³²⁸ Such legends as these—although inexactly preserved—usually attest a life of virtue, from the cradle to the grave.

CHAPTER II.

THE SCOTCH CLAIM TO ST. BRIGID'S BIRTH EXAMINED—PROBABLE ORIGIN OF THIS ERROR—REPUTATION—EARLY AND SUPERNATURAL INDICATIONS OF BRIGID'S SANCTITY—HER SPIRIT OF PROPHECY MANIFESTED—HER INFANTILE VIRTUES—HER PROBABLE ACQUAINTANCE WITH ST. PATRICK DURING CHILDHOOD—HER RESOLUTION TO LIVE A VIRGIN—HER CHARACTERISTICS AND COMPARISON TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY BY THE IRISH.

It must appear strange, at the present day, to understand, that some of the mediæval Scotch chroniclers and historians reputed St. Brigid to have been a native of modern Scotland. This idea probably arose from the fact, that ancient writers of her Acts stated her having been born, her having lived, and

little ones secrets and gifts, which He withheld from the learned and wise of this world. It was thus that while the chief priests and scribes remained in their infidelity, the children cried out, *Hosanna to the Son of David*, through a Divine impulse, as appears from our Saviour's answer to those wisacres; '*And they said to him: hearest thou what these say? Jesus replied; Yes: have you never read, that out of the mouth of infants and sucking babes thou hast perfected praise?*' *Matt. xxi. 16.* St. Brigid might have been at that time ten or eleven years old, an age fully sufficient to render her in the hands of God, an instrument fit for displaying the wonderful effects of His grace and His knowledge of all things. If in what is called the order of nature we find so many children of extraordinary precocity in learning, so many

Enfans celebres, what may we not expect from the omnipotence of God in the order of grace?"—"*Ecclesiastical History of Ireland*," vol. i., chap. viii., n. 28, pp. 383, 384.

³²⁶ This circumstance is mentioned, in the *Tertia Vita S. Brigide*, cap. lx., p. 534; in the *Quarta Vita S. Brigide*, lib. ii., cap. xxx., p. 554; and in the *Sexta Vita S. Brigide*, sec. xlvi., p. 592.

³²⁷ So Laurence of Durham appears to think; while Colgan remarks, that Brigh, meaning "virtue," is likely to have been the original Irish source for the name Brigida or Brigid. See "*Trias Thaumaturga*," *Quinta Vita S. Brigide*, cap. viii., and n. 10, pp. 569, 640.

³²⁸ See Rev. S. Baring-Gould's "*Lives of the Saints*," vol. ii., February I, p. 17.



her having died in Scotia. Yet by such term, those do not refer to any other country, except our own island. Among Scottish authors, who claim our illustrious patroness as their countrywoman, may be specially mentioned John Major¹ and Hector Boece.² Both Camerarius³ and Dempster⁴ assert, that she was born, and that she died, in Albania or British Scotia. It has been generally advanced by old writers, that she was of Scottish race. Thus, George Garnfeld,⁵ or Garnefelt, Antonio Possevino,⁶ Raphael Volaterranus,⁷ Sigebert Gemblacensis⁸ and Marianus⁹ write, That St. Brigid was born in Scotia is an opinion formed by Antonius Sabellicus,¹⁰ by Petrus de Natalibus,¹¹ and by a writer of the general Chronicles of the World. Sigebert tells us, she died in the same country at the year 578, and the Chronicle, entitled, "Rudimentum Novitiorum," has her death at A.D. 520. Her Natalis, indeed, has been observed in Scotia, on the 1st of February. This may be found among nearly all Hagiologists and Martyrologists. It is noted in the Roman Martyrology, and in the Martyrologies of Bede, Usuard, Ado, Viennen., Rodulphus Rivius, and the Carthusian Martyrology. Galesinus and many other writers, both Irish and foreign, allow, that our saint was a native of Scotia. Yet, although this be admitted, it will not follow, however, that St. Brigid was born in British Scotia, or that her ancestors were natives of that country. On the contrary, evidence is afforded, that the island known as Hibernia, had been called Scotia, by ancient writers of every condition, age, and nation.¹² We are told, that previous to the eleventh century, no one thought of calling that part of Britain, now known as Scotland, by the name of Scotia. Writers usually called it Albania. All who mentioned Scotia to the period designated understood Scotia as applicable to an island,¹³ situated between Britain and Spain.¹⁴ If all other arguments were wanting in support of such a position, various passages, found in the old acts of St. Brigid, should be sufficient to establish it. For by birth and descent, this holy virgin was evidently a native of Ireland; she died there; and she was particularly venerated in our island.

CHAP. II.—¹ See "Historia Majoris Britanniae, tam Angliae, quam Scotiae," lib. ii., cap. xiv., p. 85. Edinburgh edition, A.D. 1740, 4to.

² See "Scotorum Historiae, a prima gentis origine," &c., lib. ix., fol. clxiii. Prelum Ascensianum, fol.

³ See "De Statu Hominis, Veteris simul ac novae Ecclesiae, et Infidelium Conversione," lib. i., cap. iii., sec. ii. Camerarius cites many authorities, yet these only prove she was a "Virgo Scota." Among such authorities are quoted, Rodulphus de Breda, Tungrensis Diaconus "In Calendario Generali," Massaeus, "In Chronico," lib. xii. Franciscus Rosier "Stemmatum Lotharingiae," tomus iii. Gualterius, "In Chronologio," Genebrardus "In Chronico," Ribadeneira "In Vitis Sanctorum," Delrio, "Disquis. Magic," tomus ii., lib. iv. Jacobus Gretserus in his preface to "Commentar. Exegetici in Serenissimum Jacobum Magnae Britanniae Regem." Theuetus "Cosmog," lib. xvi., in his description of Scotia. See pp. 140, 141.

⁴ See "Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Scotorum," tomus i., lib. ii., p. 82. Edinburgh edition, 1829, 4to. Camerarius supposes

Dempster to have, "in mendicabilis repressis Hibernorum," vindicated our St. Brigid's fame for Scotland.

⁵ See "De Vita Eremitica," p. 223.

⁶ See "Apparatus Sacer," p. 252.

⁷ Commentariorum. Ad annum 521, lib. xxi., p. 635.

⁸ See "Chronicon," ad annum 518. See "Monumenta Germaniae Historica," tomus vi., p. 314.

⁹ In his "Chronicle" at A.D. 521, *ibid.*, tomus v.

¹⁰ See "Aeneid," viii., lib. ii.

¹¹ See "Catalogus Sanctorum," lib. iii., cap. lix.

¹² Almost the sole exception is Dempster. With his follower Camerarius, that unaccountable chronographer and chorographer maintains an opposite opinion with a fantasy peculiar to himself.

¹³ This Colgan promised to prove from ancient and modern writers, belonging to every age and nation, in a volume where he intended to illustrate solely the ecclesiastical antiquities of Ireland. This work, however, he did not live to publish.

¹⁴ In accord with a prevailing geographical notion of the early and middle ages.

Hence, as a consequence, when ancient writers mention her country as Scotia, it is certain they must have meant Ireland.

Dempster most strangely asserts, that St. Brigid was born in Laudonia, a province of Albanian Scotia.¹⁵ Now, by St. Columkille, Apostle of Albanian Scotia, and patron of Scotia Major or Hibernia, she is called our Saint of Lagenia. It may be objected, with Dempster, that when writers treat about St. Brigid and her parents, the word Lagenia or Lageniensis are everywhere incorrectly used for Laudonia, Ladenensis or Laudianensis.¹⁶ But this is clearly a foolish and blind subterfuge. Can he find in this Laudonia, Kildare, Campus Leiffe, Campus Gessille, Campus Bregb, with many other Irish names and places, which as the author of her Third Life¹⁷ relates are in St. Brigid's country, and which are well known to be situated within the Irish province of Leinster? Can he find, in his Scotia, the town Macha or Armagh, the ecclesiastical metropolis of Ireland, or the great river Sinann,¹⁸ which turns its course from Albanian Scotia, and which from near Clanawley district, runs through the middle of Ireland, into the ocean? Both are placed by this same author in the Scotia of St. Brigid's birth.¹⁹ Dempster falsely assigns to his Scotia these places, and others mentioned by him, such as Campus Femhin, Campus Cliach, Arx Lethglass. Moreover, very few writers, at the present day, even if ignorant regarding the situation and obscure nomenclature of the places just mentioned, will be foolish enough to claim for Scotland, all the other Irish provinces, viz. :—Media,²⁰ Connacia,²¹ Lagenia,²² Utonia,²³ Mummonia,²⁴ So long as these are left us, we can still lay claim to Hibernia, Brigid and Scotia.²⁵ Again, all the circumstances related, regarding her parentage,²⁶ birth,²⁷ receiving the

¹⁵ St. Cogitosus, in the first chapter of her life, says, that St. Brigid was born in Scotia, and descended from the good and honourable family of Ethech, her father being named Dubtach, and her mother Brocessa. By the Scotia here mentioned, it is evident, Scotia Major, or Ireland, must be intended; as well because no author who flourished before the time of Cogitosus, nor any writer who lived 400 years after him, understood that any other country save Ireland had received this name of Scotia, as also, because Ethech's family flourished in Hibernia, and not in Scotia Minor or Albania. Again, the same author mentions a celebrated church of St. Brigid at Kildare, which he greatly extols in his prologue, and most accurately describes in the 35th chapter of her life. In this church, he tells us, St. Brigid was interred. He also names a most extensive plain of Bregb, in the 27th chapter. Other bishops of Ireland are alluded to in this same life, as likewise in its prologue, when the words, Scotia and Hibernia, Scoti and Hibernienses are used as synonymous terms.

¹⁶ See "Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Scottorum," tomus i., lib. ii., pp. 82, 84.

¹⁷ Attributed by Colgan to St. Ultan. See "Trias Thaumaturga." Tertia Vita S. Brigidæ, cap. xlvii., li., lii., liv., lxii., lxiy. Many other references might be made.

¹⁸ Now the Shannon.

¹⁹ See *ibid.*, cap. lxii., xcvii.

²⁰ Now Meath.

²¹ Now Connaught.

²² Now Leinster.

²³ Now Ulster.

²⁴ Now Munster.

²⁵ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigidæ, cap. iv., pp. 614, 615.

²⁶ In his Life of our saint, and in the first chapter, when speaking of her father, St. Ultan tells us, that he was a certain Dubtach, *gener. Lagenien i.*, &c. He states, that St. Brigid's mother had been sold to a certain Magus belonging to the family of Neill and to the territory of Meath, at a time when she bore our saint in her womb (cap. 3). Animosus, or the author of St. Brigid's Fourth Life, informs us, that there was a glorious king in Ireland named Fedhlimid Reachtmair, see lib. i., cap. i., how Eochad Fionn, brother to this same king, had migrated to Leinster, and that there Dubtach, St. Brigid's father, descended from him. See *ibid.*

²⁷ The author of the Fourth Life of St. Brigid tells us, how a certain poet from the northern part of Ireland bought Brosaech the mother of St. Brigid, during a time when she was pregnant (cap. 4); and when treating about the place of our saint's birth, he assures us, that it was a town named Fochart Murthemne, of Conaille Muirthem-

veil, personal connexions,²⁸ the places she visited,²⁹ the houses she founded, and where she died,³⁰ can only have reference to Ireland.³¹ Besides all this, the unanimous opinions and traditions of the Irish and of every other foreign nation tend to establish most conclusively, that the illustrious and super-eminent virgin,³² called even "the Mary of Ireland,"³³ had been ever continuously and specially regarded as a native and great patron saint in our country.

At the present day, it would prove quite superfluous to enter upon any enquiry as to the country of St. Brigid's birth; a weight of historical authority and universal popular tradition fully vindicating the claims of Ireland to this honour. Yet, it appears, Colgan thought it necessary, in his time, to devote a rather lengthened dissertation to establish a position controverted by certain writers.³⁴ In order to expose Dempster's misstatements, and those of other Brito-Scottish writers, he addresses many arguments, although dubious, if it would not seem diminishing the force of manifest truth by proving a self-evident proposition. In the first place, that she was of Irish descent and born in Ireland, had been established by authorities numerously cited. Foreign as well as domestic writers bear abundant testimony to the fact that St. Brigid was a native of our island. Thus Raban,³⁵ Notkar,³⁶ St.

hne district, in the province of Ulster (cap. 6). See Ussher, "*De Primordiis Ecclesiarum Britanniae*," cap. xvi., p. 706.

²⁸ It can be shown, by referring to their descent, festivals, places, and days of veneration, that many saints, allied to St. Brigid, were Irish.

²⁹ The author of St. Brigid's Third Life—thought by Colgan to be St. Ultan—states, that St. Brigid was born in the country and house of a Magus (cap. 4); that this identical Magus went with the infant to Connaught, so soon as she was born (cap. 5); and, in the following chapter, he relates, how the child had been brought up in Connaught, until she had become a grown maiden. He tells us, how she returned to Lagenia, where her father lived (cap. 11); how she was called another Mary, at a certain synod, assembled in the plain of the Liffey, in which Kildare is situated (cap. 14); how, in company with her father, she left the house of this latter to visit the King of Leinster, in the Liffey's great plain (cap. 90). He relates, how she had received the veil in that land, belonging to the Niall family (cap. 18), and which is identical with Meath, as afterwards indicated (cap. 21). He also records, in the following chapters, what she achieved in different countries and provinces of Ireland, as for instance, in Theba (cap. 29); how she accompanied St. Patrick to the northern part of Ireland, called Ulster, and what she did at the Castle of Lethglass and in the town of Macha (cap. 57, 60, 61); how she went with Bishop Erc, of Munster descent, into the southern province of Ireland (cap. 71); how returning to the extreme bounds of Leinster, she entered the Labrathi country (cap. 81), and how in fine, returning to her father's house, she saved him from impending death (cap. 87). We have already seen, that in a hymn subjoined

to St. Ultan's Life of our saint, she is said to have been distinguished in that island, "*quæ vocatur Hibernia*," &c. If St. Brigid had been born in Britain, is it not strange, that St. Ultan, in no place, speaks of her birth, education, religious profession, &c., as having occurred there, while these incidents, and special localities already mentioned, are referable alone to Ireland? Nor does he even indicate, in one single instance, that she had ever left our island.

³⁰ In his Life of our saint, when describing the church of Kildare in Leinster, Cogitosus tells us, that St. Brigid was buried in it (cap. xxxv.). And, towards the end of her Acts, Animosus says, that she died, and was buried in Ireland (lib. ii., cap. xcix.). Blessed Marianus Scotus, in his Chronicle, at the year 521, writes, "*S. Brigida Scota Virgo in Hibernia diem clausit extremum*."

³¹ These reliable writers, St. Cogitosus, St. Cormac, archbishop, Animosus, Keating, and others, exhibit this fact sufficiently, when introducing her paternal and maternal genealogies.

³² St. Áengus calls her a "bright Virgin and chief of holy Irishwomen," in his Festi-logy, at the 1st of February. In like manner, Marianus O'Gorman, at the same date, styles her "Chief-Virgin or Chief of the Virgins of Ireland."

³³ Among Irish authorities may be enumerated, St. Ibar, an Irish Apostle, who calls St. Brigid, "Mary of the Irish," when she came from the house of her father Dubtach to that synod, assembled at Kildare, in Leinster.

³⁴ Such as Dempster and Camerarius.

³⁵ In his Martyrology, at the 1st of February, Raban says, "*In Hibernia nativitas S. Brigidæ*."

³⁶ In his Martyrology, St. Notkar enters at the same day: "*In Hibernia nativitas*

Bernard,³⁷ Florence of Worcester,³⁸ John Capgrave,³⁹ Francis Hare,⁴⁰ Zacharias Lippeloo,⁴¹ Cornelius Grassius,⁴² the English Martyrology,⁴³ Baronius,⁴⁴ Herebert Rosweyde,⁴⁵ Legends of the Brabantine Saints,⁴⁶ and a great number of other highly respectable authorities, may be cited. Various Breviaries and offices might be added.⁴⁷ Nor even do Scotch authors of respectability⁴⁸ deny this origin for the Scotian virgin, in ages now past; while none of them at present claim Scotland to have been the country of her birth, although she is there greatly venerated.

It may easily be supposed, however, that John Major⁴⁹ and Hector

S. Brigide, Virginis," &c.

³⁷ In "Vita S. Malachie," he speaks of Fochart, as being the birth-place of St. Brigid, while alluding to St. Malachy's acts and travels in Ireland, cap. xxiv.

³⁸ Florence of Worcester records, "S. Brigida Scotsa Virgo in Hibernia obiit," A.D. 521.

³⁹ John Capgrave, in his "Legenda Sanctorum Anglie," says, "Vir quidam in Hibernia nomine Dubthacus, genere Lageniensis," &c.

⁴⁰ "Vite Sanctorum," at the 1st of February.

⁴¹ "Vite sive Res Geste Sanctorum," at the 1st of February.

⁴² At the 1st of February.

⁴³ The English Martyrology, at the 1st of February, says, "In Hibernia depositio S. Brigide, virginis, que in Comitatu Killdariensi in loco Fochart appellato nata est."

⁴⁴ At this same year, 521 Baronius says, "Hoc insuper anno S. Brigida, Scotsa Virgo in Hibernia diem clausit extremum. Hoc in Chronico gentilis ipsius Marianus Scotus, cui potius assentiendum putamus, quam, iis qui ante biennium defunctam ponunt."—"Annales Ecclesiastici," tomus vii.

⁴⁵ In his "Chronicle," at the year 521: "Eodem anno S. Virgo Brigida, cujus preclara vita hodie extat, in Hibernia obiit."

⁴⁶ In the "Legenda Sanctorum Brabantie" we read: "S. Brigida venerabilis Virgo Hibernia fuit instar suaveolentis rosæ, que super spinas floret."

⁴⁷ That St. Brigid was an Irishwoman and a Lagenian, both by birth and descent, will be found in her office in the "Breviarium Giennensum," when we read: "Natale Brigide Virginis que a Christianis nobilibusque parentibus orta, patre Dubthaco et matre Broca, a pueritia bonarum artium studiis inolevit, adeo ut de omnibus provinciis Hiberniæ innumerabiles populi confluentes ad ejus monasterium," &c. (cap. 2). Again, in her office, printed at Paris, A.D. 1620, Resp. 1, "Felicem Hiberniam beata Lagenia declarat, Brigida gignans prosapiam, de qua lætitiæ sumat ecclesia;" and in the hymn, "Hæc est Laurus Hiberniæ, cujus viror non marcuit," &c.

⁴⁸ James Gordon, himself a Scotchman, in his "Chronicle," at the year 521: "S. Brigida Scotsa moritur in Hibernia," John

Bisciol in his "Epitome Annalium," A.D. 521, writes, "S. Brigida Scotsa Virgo in Hibernia diem clausit extremum." See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigide, cap. iv., pp. 615, 616.

⁴⁹ It is strange that Major—otherwise so learned—could have fallen into so many chronological and historic mistakes, as, when citing Bede for authority, he states, that St. Columba came into Britain, while Brudeus, a powerful king, reigned over the Picts; that Garnard, the son of Dompnach, succeeded to Brudeus, and built a collegiate church at Abernethy. Afterwards, it is added, the blessed Patrick brought St. Brigid into that place; when Garnard presented certain possessions to the holy Brigid and to nine virgins, who accompanied her. These possessions the Propositus and canons held in his time. See "Historia Majoris Britannia," &c., lib. ii., cap. xiv., p. 85. Bede testifies, indeed, that St. Columba came from Ireland to Albania in the year 565, while Brudeus or Bricilius, son of Meilochon, ruled over the Picts. See "Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum," lib. iii., cap. iv., pp. 168, 169. Garnard succeeded in the government. Now, according to Marianus Scotus and Sigebert, in their Chronicles, St. Patrick died A.D. 491, or according to other admitted accounts, in 493. Thus, he flourished many years before St. Columba and Brudeus were born, or before Garnard reigned. Wherefore, St. Patrick could not have introduced St. Brigid into Abernethy, during the time when lived any of those already named. In fine, how could St. Brigid be installed at Abernethy, about the time of Garnard, king over the Picts, if she died A.D. 521, or according to other accounts, in 523? or how could that king offer possessions to her, and to the nine virgins, accompanying her? If it be objected, Major meant that King Garnard, bestowed those possessions, not during St. Brigid's life-time but to express his great veneration for her, when she had departed from this world; why, it may be asked, does he observe, that the aforesaid church had been built by Garnard, that St. Brigid had been inducted there, and that certain endowments were made, unless St. Brigid and her virgins were living? We may remark, there is not

Boetius,⁵⁰ who advance these statements, did not voluntarily fall into error: they had even some apparent foundation whereon their opinions might have been based. The source of their mistake seems to have arisen from the indeterminate name of Brigid. Giraldus Cambrensis, too, has strangely confused her period.⁵¹ Many other holy women bear a similar name and belong to our country, as mentioned in native martyrologies. Nay more, in Scotland, the name of Brigid was highly extolled, and several females were named after her. Among others, there was a certain saint so called, who had been buried at Abernethy⁵² in *Britannic Scotia*.⁵³ Abernethy as a see was at one time superior to St. Andrew's.⁵⁴ It was even *primatial*,⁵⁵ but it was transferred to the latter place, in 850.⁵⁶ That Brigid, however, was quite a different person from the Patroness of Ireland.⁵⁷ As this latter, had been much more celebrated and exalted in popular estimation, she was probably considered to have been the person alluded to, by those writers mentioned; they not having known about any other Brigid, nor having weighed attentively those arguments, which might favour a contrary conclusion.⁵⁸ It is

a shadow — much less a probability — of truth, in the supposition, that St. Brigid, a Scot, and by profession a Christian, left her country and Christian friends, with a band of virgins, or betook herself to a Pagan and hostile nation, as also before its king and chiefs had been converted, establishing herself there in a royal city, where she dwelt to the time of her death. The Northern Picts, with their king, had been pagans, for more than forty years after St. Brigid's death, and until St. Columba came, from Ireland in 565, when he afterwards converted them to the faith. These facts are sufficiently clear, from the testimony of Venerable Bede. See "*Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*," lib. iii., cap. iv., pp. 168, 169, and lib. v., cap. x., pp. 400 to 403.

⁵⁰ See "*Scotorum Historie*, a prima Genit Originis," &c., lib. ix., fol. clxiii.

⁵¹ Thus he states, that St. Patrick, St. Brigid, and St. Columkille were contemporaries. See "*Topographia Hibernica*," Dist. iii., cap. xviii., in Giraldi Cambrensis "*Opera*," Edited by James F. Dimock, M.A., p. 163. Father Stephen White devotes nearly a chapter to an elaborate refutation of this misstatement, and to other errors in relation to them. See "*Apologia pro Hibernia*," cap. xii., pp. 123 to 131. Rev. Dr. Kelly's edition.

⁵² See an interesting account of this place in Fullarton's "*Imperial Gazetteer of Scotland*," vol. i., pp. 22 to 24.

⁵³ In Colgan's opinion, the St. Brigid, interred at Abernethy, should rather be considered a holy virgin, who was a disciple of St. Columba, Bishop of Dunkeld, in Scotland. She is mentioned in Capgrave's "*Acta S. Cuthberti*," and in Ussher's "*Primordia Ecclesiarum Britannicarum*," cap. xvi., p. 705, where we read, "*S. Columba primus Episcopus in Dunkeld Cuthbertum puerum suscepit; unaque cum puella quadam nomine Brigida ex Hibernia*

oriunda retinuit, et aliquamdiu educavit." It is supposed, if the circumstances of time do not warrant such an opinion, those of place are favourable to it, for this St. Brigid had been educated in *Britannic Scotia*.

⁵⁴ See Rev. Mackenzie E. C. Walcott's "*Scoti-Monasticon: The Ancient Church of Scotland*," p. 2.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 72. This work contains some beautiful illustrations of Scottish churches.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁵⁷ It is said, St. Cuthbert flourished in Britain, about A.D. 660, and at this period, Garnard lived according to Buchannan's "*Rerum Scotticarum Historia*," lib. v., p. 148. He died A.D. 640, the fifty-third king of the Picts. See Rev. Thomas Innes' "*Civil and Ecclesiastical History of Scotland*," Chronological Memoirs, p. 225.

⁵⁸ In his time, John Major remarks, that St. Brigid was venerated at Abernethy. See "*Historie Majoris Britannie*," lib. ii., cap. xiv., p. 85. But, if this be not the identical Brigid there venerated, she might have been a St. Brigid, daughter to Neman, son of Aid, son to Loarn, son to Ere, son to Eochad, surnamed Muinreamhuir, Prince of Dalaradia. She is thought to have been venerated in Magluinge, on the 9th of March. It is certain, this Brigid, with her three sisters Corba, Lassara, and Lemanis, had descended from the line of Dalriadan princes, who were formerly most powerful chiefs both in Scotia Major, or Ireland, and in Scotia Minor, or Scotland. From this line, the kings of Albanian Scotia issued. In the same Albanian Scotia we find a locality, termed Magluinge. This appears, where the plain of Lunge is said to have been "*in terra Ethica*," according to Adamnan's "*Vita S. Columbæ*," lib. ii., cap. 15. The country, called "*terra Ethica*," seems to have derived its denomination from Ethech or Echodius, prince of Dalaradia, or as he is called by the British Scots Ethod.

not difficult, moreover, to discover the origin of that error, into which Hector Boetius,⁵⁹ and other writers after him, had been betrayed, when they state, that St. Brigid of Kildare was veiled in the Isle of Man, and by Bishop Machille. In some of St. Brigid's Acts, we read, that she had received the veil from a Bishop Machille, or more correctly, from a Bishop Maccalleus.⁶⁰ In certain Acts of the Irish Apostle,⁶¹ it is stated, that Maccaldus, or more properly Macculleus, a disciple to our illustrious Irish Apostle, had been consecrated a bishop and placed over the Isle of Man.⁶² Hence, it had been incorrectly supposed St. Brigid received the veil in that island, while it is evident from her Acts by Cogitosus, that she had been invested with it, not in Mannia,⁶³ but in Media,⁶⁴ and that it had been given to her, not by Macculleus, Bishop of Man, but by another Maccalleus, quite a different person from the first-named prelate.⁶⁵

It will surprise the curious investigator of our glorious saint's biography, to learn on what grounds Scoto-British writers state her birth to have taken place in Laudonia, that she was veiled by Bishop Machille in Mona Island,⁶⁶ that she died and was buried at Abernethy,⁶⁷ in the Tiffa district of North Britain; especially, when we take into account, that among many writers of St. Brigid's Acts, no one of them has even stated, she was born out of Ireland, or has mentioned any other place or country in Britain having connection with her Life and labours. We can hardly take into account Dempster's ridiculous explanation, that Ladenia,⁶⁸ a province of Britain, should be substituted for Lagenia. In previous passages, it will be seen, that the most authentic accounts make St. Brigid, not only a native of Ireland, but they even assert she was conceived in Leinster, was born in Ulster, and had been educated in Connaught; they likewise state, that she assumed the veil in Meath, while her labours extended to Munster, as well as to those other provinces already mentioned. In fine, it is stated, she died at Kildare in Leinster, and afterwards she was honourably interred at Down in Ulster, having been deposited in the same tomb with St. Patrick and Columkille. Moreover, her paternal and maternal genealogy, derived through such a long line of ancestors, so many saints related to her, so many other holy Irish virgins bearing her name, and so many journeys taken by her, through Irish

⁵⁹ See "Scotorum Historiæ," &c., lib. ix., fol. clxiii.

⁶⁰ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Hymnus seu Prima Vita S. Brigide, sec. 8, p. 515. Secunda Vita S. Brigide, cap. iii., p. 519. Quinta Vita S. Brigide, cap. xxix., p. 574.

⁶¹ By Jocelyn.

⁶² See "Sexta Vita S. Patricii," cap. clii., p. 98. Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga."

⁶³ The Island of Man. See "Chronicon Mannie, or a Chronicle of the Kings of Man," supposed to have been written by the Monks of the Abbey of Russin, for an interesting account of the civil and ecclesiastical history of the island. This 12mo book, published in 1784, contains the Norwegian narrative of Olave, the Black King of Man, with other curious particulars.

⁶⁴ Or the territory of Meath. See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Secunda Vita S. Brigide, cap. iii., p. 519, and n. 11, p. 525, *ibid.*

⁶⁵ See "Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigide," cap. iv., pp. 614 to 617, *ibid.*

⁶⁶ A fine old Map of Mona, with Coats of Arms, coloured, was published in folio size about A.D. 1620. In 1835, was issued at Douglas, in 8vo shape, Arch. Cregeen's "Dictionary of the Manks Language, interspersed with many Gaelic Proverbs."

⁶⁷ There is an interesting account of Abernethy (Apurnethige) in Rev. Mackenzie E. S. Walcott's "Ancient Church of Scotland," pp. 316, 317.

⁶⁸ Colgan says, he could not find any province, territory or spot, called Ladenia or Landian. If perchance, Dempster wished to understand Laudonia, most certainly in St. Brigid's time, it did not belong to the Picts or Scots, but to the more southern Britons. In the century of Venerable Bede, it appertained to the Northumbrians and English. This is proved by Ussher, in his "Primordia Ecclesiarum Britannicarum," pp. 663, 667.

towns, plains and territories, from her birth to the time of her death, prove conclusively, that St. Brigid should be specially classed among our national saints. It is not a little surprising—to say the least of it—to find Dempster⁶⁹ has not only infelicitously, but even incautiously, jumbled irrelevant circumstances, with his assertions.⁷⁰ It is incredible to suppose, that so many reliable authors, as those already cited, could egregiously and perseveringly have corrupted the names of Lagenia and Laudenia, in the manner it has pleased Dempster alone to imagine, and that without any grounds.⁷¹ To assume that he meant Laudonia,⁷² if we allow, that before Bede's time, it belonged to Albania, it certainly was never under the Scottish dominion, but solely under that of the Picts, from whom Pictland is called. If therefore, St. Brigid had been born in Laudonia,⁷³ it must be conceded, she was not a Scot, but a Briton, or at least a Pict, by family and birth.

To resume what we consider the more legendary accounts of our saint's early infancy, it is said, that the Magus, the mother of St. Brigid, her nurse and others, who were sitting in a certain place without the house, saw a cloth take fire suddenly,⁷⁴ and it touched the head of this holy child, who was beside them. But, when their hands were immediately stretched forth to extinguish the flame, it disappeared at once, and the cloth was even found to have escaped the ravages of this fire. Such a portent was supposed to have been an indication, that the grace of the Holy Spirit inflamed God's servant.⁷⁵ On another occasion, while this same Magus was sleeping, he had a vision of two angels,⁷⁶ clothed in white, pouring oil on the girl's head, and seeming to perform a baptismal rite in the usual manner.⁷⁷ From such account, some persons have inferred our saint had been baptized by an angel. However, this should be a false conjecture, as the Magus is merely said to have seen this apparition during his sleep, and it only indicated the future performance of the rite, as also the name Brigid was destined to bear.⁷⁸

One of those angels said to the Magus: "Call this virgin Brigid, for

⁶⁹ This writer remarks, St. Brigid has been called a Lagenian, whereas, she ought to be considered a Ladenian; her father, it is pretended, having been from Ladenia, denominated Landian, in Dempster's time. "Ex Ladenia nunc Landian," &c. See "Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Scotorum," lib. ii., num. 144.

⁷⁰ These manifestly false statements obviously destroy all faith in accounts, the inaccuracy of which could not otherwise be so easily detected by a cursory reader of his works. Wilful negligence and perversion of facts are very clearly attributable to this self-constituted historian.

⁷¹ Yet, after all, if we should institute a careful examination of the entire map of British Scotland, we shall not be able to discover the Ladenia or Landian, imagined by Dempster, no more than we could expect to find Lagenia there. Having attentively read over all the names of Albanian Scotia's provinces, territories and other particular localities, and their very accurate descriptions, as given by Hector Boetius and George Buchanan, Colgan could find no such denomination.

⁷² A very interesting account of this province, Loudian, or Lothian, will be found in

Chalmers' "Caledonia," vol. i., book iii., chap. vi., pp. 367 to 373.

⁷³ As Dempster states.

⁷⁴ In Professor O'Looney's Irish Life of the Saint, this cloth is called the covering or cap, which was on the infant's head, pp. 7, 8.

⁷⁵ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Tertia Vita S. Brigidæ, cap. vi., pp. 527, 528. Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ, lib. i., cap. x., p. 547, *ibid.*

⁷⁶ The Irish Life has three angels, clothed in white garments, like clerics. Professor O'Looney's copy, pp. 7, 8.

⁷⁷ Colgan remarks, that the ministry of angels is often read, as having been employed in the administration of the sacraments to men. The Fifth Life expressly says; "aqua perfundentes totum ordinem baptismatis sicut Catholica consuevit ecclesia, super eam peregerunt." Colgan adds that a succeeding prophecy seems to have its truth confirmed from experience. See "Trias Thaumaturga." Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ, n. 16, p. 564. Quinta Vita S. Brigidæ, cap. viii., p. 569, and nn. 9, 11, p. 640.

⁷⁸ See Tertia Vita S. Brigidæ, n. 7, p. 543. Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ, n. 15, p. 564.

she shall be full of grace before God and man, and her name shall be celebrated throughout the entire world." Pronouncing such words, those angels disappeared. On a certain occasion, being awake, and studying the course of the heavenly bodies, according to a usual custom⁷⁷ during the whole night, that same Magus saw a column of fire ascending from the house, in which Brigid and her mother slept. He called another man to witness such phenomenon. In the morning, an account of this prodigy was given to many other persons.⁸⁰ We are told, that the child's stomach rejected the food of the Magus, and on endeavouring to discover a cause for such nausea, the magician was urged to cry out: "I am unclean, but this girl is filled with graces of the Holy Spirit, and that is the reason why she will not retain any sustenance which I supply to her." Whereupon, he procured a white cow,⁸¹ which was intended to give milk, while a certain religious and Christian woman was provided to take charge of the infant. That woman milked the cow, and the milk, afterwards given to the child, was found to agree with her. Yet, while the infant suffered from weakness, her personal beauty even improved.⁸² As the maid grew up, she served in menial offices about the house.⁸³ Whatever she touched or saw, in the shape of food, seemed to increase in a miraculous manner. It is remarked, that the Magus and his family were Pagans at the time of these occurrences. Afterwards, however, he became a Christian. A little before this latter event, the faith of Christ is said to have come into Ireland.⁸⁴ On a certain day, the infant's voice was heard praying to God, while extending her little hands towards heaven. A certain man saluted her, and to him she replied, "This will be mine; this will be mine." Hearing such words, he said; "This is truly a prophecy, for the infant says this place shall belong to her for ever." And her prediction was exactly fulfilled.⁸⁵ In course of time, a

⁷⁷ The Fourth Life has it, "suoque more astra cœli considerans," &c. It may be asked, if this passage throws any light on the supposed astronomical pursuit of the Druids?

⁸⁰ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," *Tertia Vita S. Brigidæ*, cap. vii., viii., p. 528. *Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ*, lib. i., cap. xi., p. 547, *ibid.* As usual, the foregoing circumstances are greatly amplified in the Fifth Life of our Saint, where it is added, that the Magus and his wife took care to provide a nurse for the infant. This nurse assisted the mother in attending to its wants. It is also said, the heads of the family were very indulgent to the mother, even although they held her as a slave. *Quinta Vita S. Brigidæ*, cap. viii., p. 569, *ibid.*

⁸¹ Professor O'Looney's Irish Life has a "white red-eared cow," pp. 9, 10.

⁸² The writer of St. Brigid's Fifth Life remarks, that this account should not excite the incredulity—even if it might the admiration—of his readers; for, in his own day, it was possible to see a certain virgin, that dwelt in the south of England, and that she lived for twenty years in her father's house, without taking any kind of food, except the Body of our Lord, which she received on all Sundays of the year. And as the passage through the throat was of narrow compass, she could scarcely swallow Holy Commu-

nion, being obliged to take a little water immediately afterwards, in order to facilitate such an effort. On each Thursday, also, she rather tasted than drank a little water. And during such a long lapse of time, she neither eat or drank anything, besides what has been already mentioned. Nor had she even an appetite for eating or drinking. Although she was reduced to a great degree of bodily prostration, and could not walk: yet, her mental powers were unimpaired, she had the faculty of speech, and retained a great appearance of personal comeliness. This wonderful example of abstinence, it is said, could be vouched for, by more witnesses than even the inhabitants of that village, in which the maiden lived. Hence, a less remarkable instance, in St. Brigid's case, cannot be reasonably doubted. The writer then adds, that what the Almighty had effected for the virgin then living was only known to the great Author and for an undefinable reason. See *Vita Quinta S. Brigidæ*, cap. x., xi., pp. 569, 570, *ibid.*

⁸³ Professor O'Looney's Irish Life states, that she used to train the sheep, supply the birds, and feed the poor, pp. 9, 10.

⁸⁴ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," *Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ*, cap. x., p. 528. *Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ*, lib. i., cap. vii., p. 547, *ibid.*

⁸⁵ In "The Life of St. Brigid, 'the Mary

large parish was formed in that part of the country, and it was dedicated to St. Brigid.⁸⁶ Learning those foregoing words, some local inhabitants went to the Magus and said to him: "Do you remain with us, but let the girl, who has prophesied that our lands will belong to her, retire." The Magus replied: "I shall not leave my female slave and her daughter, but I will rather quit your country." Then the Magus, with his family, is said to have directed his course towards Munster, his native province.⁸⁷ There, also, he inherited a paternal estate.⁸⁸

In St. Brigid's Third Life, we afterwards read of a desire entering the daughter's mind to return—in all probability—to her father's home. On learning this wish, the Magus sent messengers to Dubtach, who was informed, that his daughter could be received free. The father of our Saint was greatly rejoiced. On the reception of this message, he went to the magician's house, whence he returned,⁸⁹ accompanied by his daughter. The Christian nurse also followed her youthful charge.⁹⁰ This attendant was seized with some complaint. Our Saint, accompanied by another girl, was sent to the house of a certain man,⁹¹ that they might procure a draught of beer for the patient. In this expectation, it appears, the messengers were disappointed; but on their return homewards, St. Brigid turned out of her course towards a particular well.⁹² Here she filled the vessel borne with water, and instantly

of Erin,' and the special Patroness of the Dioceses of Kildare and Leighlin," by an Irish Priest, the late Rev. Mr. O'Donnell of Maynooth College, the expressions of the holy infant are referred, not to an earthly, but to a heavenly, inheritance. See chap. i., p. 9. Dublin, 1859, 18mo.

⁸⁶ Colgan maintains, that from the manner in which this account is conveyed in her Third Life, by the word "*parrochia*," the author means a district of ecclesiastical land, dedicated to St. Brigid, according to an old custom. In Colgan's time, there was a parish church consecrated to St. Brigid, in the diocese of Elphin, within the district of Soil-mured-haigh, and in the province of Connaught. Formerly a monastery was there endowed with ample possessions. The author, in Colgan's opinion, must have flourished at a distant date; for, he says, that district was large, that a considerable tract of land was attached, and that it was St. Brigid's patrimony. For many ages before Colgan's time, the tract there was of no large extent, nor did it belong to St. Brigid's order. See "*Trias Thaumaturga*," Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, n. 8, p. 543, *ibid.* However, it may still be questioned, if Colgan rightly identified the locality, to which allusion has been made.

⁸⁷ These circumstances are also briefly related in Professor O'Looney's Irish Life, pp. 7, 8.

⁸⁸ These circumstances are related in the Third and Fourth Lives of our Saint. See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. ix., p. 528. Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, cap. xii., p. 579. In the latter record, we find these following additional particulars related: "*Cum jam crevisset quidem corpore, sed plus fidespe et charitate,*

sancta puella fideliter ministrabat." Then twenty-one or twenty-two chapters of the latter life are said to be missing. In a note we find remarked, that these seem to have been omitted, owing to the fault of a scribe. But their tenor may be gleaned from the ninth to the thirty-second chapter of the preceding life. See *ibid.*, n. 17, p. 564.

⁸⁹ It is stated to be in *Uí Failge*, or *Offaly*, in Professor O'Looney's Irish Life, pp. 9, 10.

⁹⁰ Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. xi., p. 528. In the Fifth Life of our Saint, the same circumstances apparently are somewhat differently related. After describing the virtues, which characterized the holy maiden, when absent from her paternal roof, the writer then proceeds to relate how her father impulsively thanked God for having sent him such a daughter. While leaving her mother still a captive, Brigid and her nurse were brought to his house. There his daughter was received with the most affectionate care. See *Quinta Vita S. Brigidæ*, cap. xiii., p. 570, *ibid.* See also "*The Life of St. Brigid*," by an Irish Priest, chap. ii., pp. 14, 15.

⁹¹ In Professor O'Looney's Irish Life, he is named *Baethchu*, pp. 9, 10.

⁹² The account runs, that she was enabled to express these words, as versified in the Sixth Life:

"*Quærite cervisiam: mihi medo magna voluptas.*"

Then follow these lines:

"*Brigida (tunc fuerat juvenis et pulchra puella)
Mittitur ad vicos quærendo quippe liquorem,*

it became changed into an excellent description of beer.⁹³ When the nurse tasted it, she recovered from her infirmity.⁹⁴ This miracle is also alluded to in one of St. Brigid's offices.

Most of those foregoing accounts are altogether omitted, from narratives which are considered to have been the earliest and most authentic biographies of our Saint; and there is every reason to suppose them altogether legendary, and undeserving attention. Nor can we find any valid reason to question a supposition already adduced,⁹⁵ that our Saint's parents, besides being of noble family, were also Christians, and that St. Brigid herself was born in lawful wedlock. All her biographers seem agreed, however, that from her earliest youth, this illustrious maiden was remarkable for every noble and virtuous characteristic, foreshadowing the future Saint. To her Christian nurse is attributed much of that holy training, which during childhood made her a devout client of Jesus and Mary.⁹⁶ When this holy virgin grew to the years of discretion, and even from her most tender youth, she was distinguished for her extraordinary virtues;⁹⁷ especially, for that grave decorum and modesty, which bestowed dignity and propriety on her every word and action. Each day she acquired some new virtue, or increased in spiritual progress. She was early grounded in doctrines of the Christian's Faith; and she must have received, also, some secular education, corresponding with the rank of her parents. From earliest years she was distinguished for instances of extraordinary charity, especially towards the poor. An anecdote of her childhood is related.⁹⁸ The youthful virgin was bountiful and hospitable to such a degree, that she frequently distributed to the poor and to strangers large quantities of milk and butter, which her mother had committed to her charge. In consequence of this generous propensity, she found on a certain occasion, that her store was completely exhausted. Being accustomed each day to superintend the labours of her maids and of her daughter, in various departments of their industry, our Saint's mother was about to make her usual inquiries, when fearing reproof for the improvi-

Virgo Dei properans una comitante sorore.

Quidam cervisiam, quamvis velabat, habebat :

Virginibus sacris stultus donare negabat."

Further on this line occurs :

"Qui latices gelidos Lyei convertit in undas :"

to which Colgan appends this note, that in the MS. for *lyei*, or more correctly, *lyci*, was to be found *cælie*. But because the author seems to allude to the change by Christ of water into wine at Cana in Galilee, *lyei* appears to be the correct reading. See "Trias Thaumaturga," Vita Quinta S. Brigidæ, cap. xvi., p. 571; and Sexta Vita S. Brigidæ, sec. iii., p. 583, and n. 8, p. 598, *ibid*.

⁹³ The kind of beer alluded to was *mead*, as expressed in the metrical life. It appears to have been a favourite drink among the ancient Irish; and, most likely, it was little—if at all—impregnated with intoxicating properties.

⁹⁴ Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. xii., p. 528. Such

account, and all that follows in this biography, so far as the 35th chapter, are wanting in the Fourth Life. See *ibid*, n. 8, p. 543. The circumstances of this miracle are related, with certain modifications, in the Fifth and Sixth Lives. In the former, it is said, during her infirmity, the nurse suffered greatly from thirst, and that St. Brigid signed the water drawn from the well, with a sign of the cross, while those, who were present and witnessed the miraculous effect produced, admired and extolled our Saint's faith and miraculous powers. It is here said, likewise, that two girls accompanied the Saint, when she proceeded on her errand. In the Sixth Life, it is stated, that the nurse had been seized with a burning fever, so that she could scarcely articulate owing to thirst.

⁹⁵ Especially by Dr. Lanigan.

⁹⁶ See "The Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. i., pp. 10 to 13.

⁹⁷ See the various published Offices and accounts of our Saint, by different writers.

⁹⁸ By Cogitosus. In Professor O'Looney's Irish Life of St. Brigid, this account is amplified, and St. Brigid's prayer is rendered into three Irish stanzas, pp. 11 to 14.

dence admitted into household concerns, Brigid betook herself to prayer. The Almighty graciously heard her petitions, and miraculously increased the exhausted store of butter.⁹⁹ When this remarkable circumstance became known to the handmaids, these admired the girl's wonderful trust in Divine Providence, and then gave praise to God, who rewarded her Faith, Hope and Charity, by the performance of this miracle in her behalf.¹⁰⁰

At another time, it is related, while engaged in providing food for some noble guests,¹⁰¹ she was so much moved with the whining and eager gestures of a dog, that she gave him a great portion of the bacon she had been cooking, and, afterwards, she found more than a sufficiency remaining, for the entertainment of the strangers.¹⁰² These anecdotes serve to impress us most agreeably, with the natural kindness and generosity of her youthful disposition.

It appears quite probable, that in her youth, the pious maiden must have been known, to the great Irish Apostle Patrick. For, it is related, in the Tripartite Life of this latter Saint, that on a certain occasion, when preaching

⁹⁹ This account is also given in various Offices and other narratives, regarding our Saint. See likewise "The Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. ii., pp. 17, 18.

¹⁰⁰ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Secunda Vita S. Brigidæ, cap. ii., p. 519. Capgrave relates this miracle, as occurring at the house of the Magus. "Legenda Sanctorum Angliæ, Scotiæ et Hiberniæ," Vita S. Brigidæ, sec. 2. In the Third Life of St. Brigid, the account given regarding this miracle is substantially as follows. After stating some circumstances, that took place after our Saint had been sent back to her father, we are told, that she again returned to visit her mother, who remained with her master, the Magus; although she lived in a separate house, from that in which he dwelt. The Saint's mother had the charge of twelve cows; the butter produced from which, she was obliged to collect. But, when St. Brigid arrived on this visit to her mother, the virgin was accustomed to distribute butter each day to the poor and to the guests; in doing which, she divided it into twelve parts, in honour of the twelve Apostles. She made one portion greater than the remaining parts, in honour of our Saviour, while remarking, she saw the person of Christ in that of every guest. One day, the Magus and his wife brought a large measure to her, that it might be filled with butter. On seeing this vessel, the ready flush of her cheeks betrayed a certain disturbance of her mind; for she had only the butter of one day and a half day then collected. Visitors having entered the house, the virgin joyously began to exercise claims of hospitality towards them, and to prepare for their refecton. She then retired to a private part of this house, where she poured forth her prayers to God. Afterwards, she produced the small quantity of butter then in her possession. But, the wife of the

Magus, on seeing it, contemptuously taunted her on its smallness. The Saint replied, however, that there should be sufficient to fill a large vessel. Through the interposition of Divine Providence, her prediction was fulfilled. When the Magus witnessed this miracle, he told St. Brigid, that the vessel thus miraculously filled should belong to her, and likewise those twelve cows given in charge to her mother. Still the Saint declined receiving such gifts, asking instead of them her mother's freedom. The Magus then said; "Lo, I offer you your mother's liberty, as well as the gifts of this butter and those cows." We are told, that the Magus then believed and was baptized, and that St. Brigid, bestowing her gifts on the poor, returned with her mother towards her father's home. See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. xv., p. 528. Similar circumstances, for the most part, are mentioned in the Fifth Life of our Saint, with the usual amplifications. It is there reported, likewise, that she paid a visit to her mother, already alluded to, in company with her nurse and a brother. See "Quinta Vita S. Brigidæ," cap. xviii., xix., xx., xxi., pp. 571, 572, *ibid.*

¹⁰¹ These circumstances are alluded to in the First, Second and Third Lives of the saint. See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Vita Prima S. Brigidæ, sec. 14, p. 516. Vita Secunda S. Brigidæ, cap. iv., p. 519. Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. xiii., p. 528. In the Fifth Life nearly the same account is given, with the addition of some immaterial particulars. See Vita Quinta S. Brigidæ, cap. xvii., p. 571, *ibid.* All accounts agree, that these occurrences took place at her father's house.

¹⁰² In Professor O'Looney's Irish Life of St. Brigid, it is said the guests, who witnessed this miracle, would not eat the food thus increased, but it was distributed to the poor and destitute, pp. 9 to 12.

to a vast multitude of persons, Bridget formed one of the number. Then she is said to have been illustrious for her gifts of prophecy and miracles. The place, where St. Patrick is said to have preached on this occasion, we find called, the territory of Lemania. It was a rural district of Tyrone, in the diocese of Clogher, and commonly called Magh-lemna, otherwise Clossach. It is said, that St. Patrick stood on a hill, called Finn-abhuir. We are told, likewise, that the Irish Apostle preached here with great fervour for a duration of three days and three nights, while the people were so enraptured with his discourse, they did not think a single day had elapsed, pending this long interval.¹⁰³ While listening to him, she was transported into such an ecstasy, that the people thought she had fallen asleep. During this time, Brigid had a vision, regarding that present, and a future state of the Irish Church. Then on awaking, St. Patrick desired her to relate what she had seen. She told him, at first, that she had seen a herd of white oxen amid white crops; then, she beheld spotted animals of different colours; and after these appeared black and darkly-coloured cattle. Afterwards sheep and swine were seen; lastly dogs and wolves worrying each other.¹⁰⁴ Yet while Brigid seemed to sleep, St. Patrick would not allow the congregation to awaken her, until she came to a state of consciousness of her own accord. The Irish Apostle afterwards told the people, that her vision referred to that present and to a future state of the Church in Ireland.¹⁰⁵

In his Fourth¹⁰⁶ and Sixth¹⁰⁷ Lives, it is related, that St. Brigid wove a shroud to cover the remains of St. Patrick, after his death. Dr. Lanigan calculates, that the Irish Apostle did not live nearly so late as A.D. 493,¹⁰⁸ when St. Brigid's reputation was spread far and wide.¹⁰⁹ At the time of his decease, the holy virgin is thought to have been a mere child. Besides the earlier writers of St. Patrick's Acts have no mention of St. Brigid having woven the shroud. With special minuteness, Fiach's hymn, the Scholiast, Probus, the Tripartite, and the third Life give an account of the last days of St. Patrick, his death and obsequies. They specify the name of that bishop who attended him, although otherwise he was scarcely known. Strange, indeed, would be their omitting to mention so celebrated a saint as Brigid had she attended with the shroud at his exit. If those circumstances, reported by later writers concerning her transactions with St. Patrick, had really occurred, it is impossible they could have been overlooked by those authors, who lived nearer to their occurrence. Perhaps Brigid wove a pall or some sepulchral ornament to be spread over his grave, and hence might have arisen the idea, that she had done so during his lifetime.¹¹⁰ Such a circumstance might easily give origin to the rumour of her having assisted at St. Patrick's obsequies. People about Dundalk, however, have a tradition, that

¹⁰³ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Jocelyn's or Sexta Vita S. Patricii, cap. xciv., xcv., pp. 86, 87.

¹⁰⁴ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Septima Vita S. Patricii, lib. iii., cap. iv., pp. 149, 150, and n. 11, p. 184.

¹⁰⁵ See "The Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. iii., pp. 31 to 33.

¹⁰⁶ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Quarta Vita S. Patricii, xciii., p. 47.

¹⁰⁷ See *Ibid.* Sexta Vita S. Patricii, cap. clxxxviii., clxxxix., p. 107.

¹⁰⁸ In "The Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, the author seems inclined to adopt this date for St. Patrick's death. See

chap. iii., p. 31.

¹⁰⁹ In her exertions for forming congregations of holy virgins and establishments for them—which coincided so well with the views of our Apostle—she would and should have acted under his guidance, were he alive. Accordingly there must have been frequent communications between them, concerning which the ancient writers could not have been totally silent. See "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. viii., sec. ii., n. 29, pp. 384, 385.

¹¹⁰ See Dr. Lanigan's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., cap. viii., sec. ii., n. 29, p. 384.

St. Brigid lived in the year 432, when St. Patrick first preached in Ireland, and that she survived him thirty years.¹¹¹ As St. Brigid approached the years of puberty, her parents thought of procuring her a partner for life; and they wished to espouse her to a husband of their own selection. But, this holy virgin had long before resolved, on consecrating herself to the service of God, to whom she had already devoted herself, by those chaste dispositions of soul, and by those ardent inspirations of piety, which so much distinguished her childhood. To her declarations thus made, it would appear, that her parents interposed no serious objections. She was in the bloom of maidenhood, when she resolved on entering the religious state. An opinion has been advanced, that she was only fourteen years of age, at the time of making her vows;¹¹² but one better weighed may be more deserving our regard, that she was not a consecrated virgin, during the life-time of St. Patrick, and that she must at least have attained the sixteenth year of her age, to have been canonically eligible for this state.¹¹³

Before we arrive at this event in her life, there are other circumstances mentioned, regarding the holy virgin, in what are considered to be among the most questionable of her recorded acts. It may not be irrelevant, however, to introduce them. While at her father's house, and before she returned to see her captive mother, it is related, that a certain religious widow,¹¹⁴ who lived in an adjoining village, asked our Saint's father to allow her Brigid's companionship to a Synod,¹¹⁵ then held in the plain of the Liffy.¹¹⁶ To this request her father assented; and while both proceeded on their way, a certain holy man,¹¹⁷ who was present at the Synod,¹¹⁸ slept. He had a vision, at the same time. On awaking from sleep, he said; "I have beheld Mary, and a certain man standing with her, who said to me, 'This is holy Mary, who dwells amongst you.'"¹¹⁹ When the venerable man had mentioned this in the Synod, St. Brigid and her companion arrived. Then the same holy man cried out; "This is the Mary, whom I have seen, for I know with certainty her appearance." All, who were present, rendered their acknowledgment to St. Brigid,¹²⁰ beholding in her a type of the Blessed Virgin Mary.¹²¹

¹¹¹ See "Louth Letters containing Information relative to the Antiquities of the County, collected during the Progress of the Ordnance Survey in 1835-1836," vol. i., p. 287. Letter of Messrs. P. O'Keefe and T. O'Connor, dated Dundalk, February 15th, 1836.

¹¹² Such is Ussher's statement, founded on the questionable authority of Hector Boece.

¹¹³ This is Dr. Lanigan's conclusion. "The Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, states, that about her sixteenth or seventeenth year was that of her profession, the date being *ciriter* 469. See chap. iii., p. 28.

¹¹⁴ In an Irish Life of St. Brigid, this woman is called a Virgin. In Professor O'Looney's Irish Life she is simply designated "a religious woman," pp. 11, 12.

¹¹⁵ An Irish Life, quoted by Colgan, states, at cap. xii., that this Synod was held at the spot, afterwards known as Kildare.

¹¹⁶ Called Magh Liphe in Professor O'Looney's Irish Life, pp. 11, 12.

¹¹⁷ The Irish Life calls him Hibar or Ibar. In Professor O'Looney's Irish Life his name is written *ibair*, pp. 11, 12.

¹¹⁸ In an Irish Life, it is called a Synod of the Leinster Seniors.

¹¹⁹ See "The Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. ii., p. 16.

¹²⁰ This is somewhat differently related in an Irish Life of St. Brigid, cap. xii., as quoted by Colgan. See "Trias Thaumaturga." Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigidæ, cap. xii., p. 622.

¹²¹ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. xiv., p. 528. In n. 9, p. 543, *ibid.*, with the usual typographical errors of his works, we are referred by Colgan to the sixteenth chapter of St. Brigid's Irish Life, where the holy man alluded to is St. Iber, bishop; and for the eulogy pronounced on her, whereby she receives as a title "the other Mary of the Irish," we are to examine, not the Third, but the Twelfth chapter, in his Fourth Appendix to our Saint's Acts. There we have a different version of the story, related in the text, and regarding the consideration in which our Saint had been held by the ancient Irish. These called her another Mother of God, or another Mary.

Thenceforth, this holy virgin was called "the Mary of the Gaedhels."¹²² The learned Dr. Todd observes, commenting on this title: Here when it is said that Brigid was "in the type of Mary," the meaning, perhaps, may be, that she resembled in form and figure the person of the Blessed Virgin; not that she was actually the Blessed Virgin, reappearing upon earth, but that, from the close resemblance of her features to those of Mary, and from her having been seen in the vision as Mary, and called by the Angel as "Holy Mary, that dwells amongst you," she was saluted by the assembled Synod as Mary, and was thenceforth regarded as "the Mary of the Irish."¹²³ Other panegyrists call St. Brigid, the "Mother of Christ," "The Mother of my Lord," &c., thus bestowing upon her attributes, belonging especially to the Blessed Virgin Mary.¹²⁴ St. Columkille, it is stated, composed a certain Hymn in praise of St. Brigid.¹²⁵ This was a short metrical Irish composition, which has been rendered in a Latin version by Colgan,¹²⁶ and there St. Brigid is called "The Mother of Christ."¹²⁷ In the panegyric poem of St. Brogan Cloen,¹²⁸ which Colgan has printed, the same exalted praise is bestowed upon St. Brigid. Dr. Todd takes quotations from the original Irish, as Colgan's printed text is full of typographical errors. Omitting the Irish extracts, these following passages are submitted:¹²⁹

"Brigit, mother of my Lord,
Of heaven, a sovereign the best born."

On these passages, the learned commentator remarks, that Brigid is strangely spoken of, not as resembling the Virgin Mary in feature, or even in purity and sanctity, but as partaking with her, in some mystical sense, of the prerogative of being Mother of Jesus, "Mother of my Lord of heaven." Nevertheless, it is certain, that the idea of a reappearance of Mary, in the person of St. Brigid, which should make them one and the same person, was not in the minds of those writers, notwithstanding the extravagance of their language.¹³⁰ Yet, it is clear, that Mary and Brigid are spoken of as two distinct

¹²² According to Professor O'Looney's *Irish Life of St. Brigid*, pp. 11, 12.

¹²³ See the "*Liber Hymnorum*," Fasciculus I. Edited with notes, by Dr. James Henthorn Todd. Note B, pp. 65, 66, and nn. (f.g.) *ibid.* There we find a like account, under the heading, "*St. Brigid, the Mary of the Irish*."

¹²⁴ In the Third Life the language is: "Hæc est Maria (without the explanatory *altera*) quæ habitat inter vos;" and these are there given, as the words, not of the saint who saw the vision, but of the Angel seen in the vision, who stood with the Virgin Mary, and said, not of St. Brigid. But of the B. V. Mary herself, "Hæc est Maria quæ habitat inter vos," thus strangely confounding the person of Mary and Brigid. It will be observed, however, that this extravagance is avoided in the Office printed in 1622. See "*Liber Hymnorum*," Note B, n. (n.), pp. 68, 69.

¹²⁵ A portion of the original Irish of this Hymn, with an English translation, is given by Dr. Todd, in the work already quoted: and it is taken from the MS. "*Liber Hymnorum*," p. 32. In the preface, it is said, that St. Columkille is supposed to

have been the author. The Scholiast also adds, "or it was Ultan of Ardbreacan who made this Hymn."

¹²⁶ In one of these lines, St. Brigid is alluded to thus—

"Hæc Christi mater."

¹²⁷ There is still some undefined belief—notwithstanding the chronological discrepancy—among the Irish people, that St. Brigid was a sister of our Blessed Lady. A legend prevails, that St. Brigid advanced before the Mother of our Lord to the temple, and by an ostentatious exhibition, or "praisga," of herself, carrying lighted candles on her head, she wished to divert attention from the modest Mother-Virgin. Although the day was stormy, none of the candles were extinguished. Hence, our Blessed Lady enjoined St. Brigid's feast to be celebrated before that of the Purification. This account was furnished to the writer by Rev. David B. Mulcahy, C.C., Loughguile, Co. Antrim, in a letter, dated April 26th, 1875.

¹²⁸ His composition is also found in the "*Liber Hymnorum*," p. 33.

¹²⁹ As translated by Dr. Todd.

¹³⁰ St. Brogan Cloen afterwards says —

beings, and the notion of reappearance of the former in the person of the latter is excluded.¹³¹ Our Lord has said, that whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is his brother, and sister and *mother*,¹³² and this perhaps may be all that is meant by St. Brigid's pledging herself to be the Mother of Christ, and making herself so by words and deeds. According to another explanation, she who by continual elevation of mind, and fixed intention, keeps her thoughts ever upon Christ, may be said to travail with Christ, and figuratively to be the mother of Christ, and so to be, as it were, another Mary.¹³³ Colgan has interpreted this prerogative of St. Brigid to be "the Mary of the Irish," because of the honour and veneration our people entertained for her over every other Saint—the Blessed Virgin only excepted—and because of her having had some similar kind of religious deference in comparison with the Holy Mother of God.¹³⁴

The account of that supposed Synod, at Kildare—but in a somewhat modified form—is retained in an Office of St. Brigid, which has been printed in Paris.¹³⁵ This Office, containing some minor variations, is also to be found with full musical notation, in the Antiphonary of Clondalkin, a MS. of the fourteenth century.¹³⁶ It has also been reprinted by Colgan, and has

"The veiled Virgin who drives over the
Currech
Is a shield against sharp weapons;
None was found her equal, except Mary,
Let us put our trust in my strength."

In the last line there is a play upon the name of St. Brigid, and the Irish word *Brigi*, "strength." And again:—

"Every one that hears; every one that re-
peats [this poem],
The blessing of Brigid be on him;
The blessing of Brigid and of God
Be upon them that recite it together.

"There are two Virgins in heaven,
Who will not give me a forgetful protec-
tion,
Mary and St. Brigid,
Under the protection of them both may
we remain."

¹³¹ To passages taken from this Irish Hymn of St. Brogan Cloen, Dr. Todd appends the following notes. "The Currech—i.e., the Curragh of Kildare. The Scholiast in a gloss on this word says, "cuíreach a cursu equorum dietus est;" a curious proof of the antiquity of its use as a race-course: to which, perhaps, some allusion may be intended in the description of St. Brigid, as "the Nun (or veiled Virgin) who drives over the Currech." And again: *Two Virgins*.—The word *caillech*, here used, signifies a veiled or consecrated virgin, a nun, derived probably from the Latin *cucullus*." The learned editor of the "Liber Hymnorum" thus continues his remarks: "The words of the supposed stanza of the Hymn in the text (taking the corrected reading of *automata* for *aut amata*) are also remarkable: *Christi matrem se spopondit*; 'She

promised or pledged herself to be Christ's mother," and made herself so by words or deeds, Brigid, who is esteemed the Queen of the true God." The Hymn itself, however (v. 8), is content with the statement that she was a virgin like to Holy Mary, "*Mariae Sanctae similem*."

¹³² St. Matt. xii. 50.

¹³³ This seems to be the idea, presented to the mind of the author, supposed to have been St. Ultan: "*Christi matrem se spopondit, dietis atque factis fecit*."

¹³⁴ Dr. Todd here remarks: "This is certainly softening the matter as much as possible, seeing that the ancient authorities place her on an equality with the Blessed Virgin, giving to her also the seemingly incommunicable title of Dei Genetrix, and the still more unusual one of 'Queen of the true God.' And, moreover, they state expressly that she was called the Mary of the Irish, and was recognised as such by an assembled Synod, in consequence of her personal resemblance to the B. Virgin Mary, whilst still a child, and therefore before she was known to the Irish people, or could have received any honour or veneration from them." We are then referred by Dr. Todd to some learned and curious remarks on this subject in Mr. Herbert's *Cyclops Christianus*, p. 113, seq., p. 137, p. 141-2. See the "Liber Hymnorum," Note B, pp. 65 to 68, and nn. (f, g, h, i, j, k, l.) *ibid.* Also Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Appendix Secunda ad Acta S. Brigidæ, sec. xxiii., p. 606, and Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigidæ, cap. xii., p. 622, *ibid.*

¹³⁵ A.D. 1622. Noct. ii., Lect. v., Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," p. 600.

¹³⁶ This latter is preserved in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin. It is classed in a Catalogue of MSS. there preserved, B. I. 3.

been republished by him, in common with various lessons and prayers, relating to our Saint, as found in other Breviaries.¹³⁷ In the same Office, there is a Hymn at Lauds, the two first stanzas of which evidently paraphrase the verses commencing with "Christus in nostra insula."¹³⁸ The Irish Life of Brigid¹³⁹ relates, that after returning from the Synod, she went to visit her mother who was in bondage.

Some great characteristics of our holy virgin are thus alluded to in an ancient biography. "It was her anxious care to comfort the poor, to banish all distress, to relieve all wretchedness: there was no one more modest, more righteous, more humble, or more chaste; she never looked in the face of man; she was abstinent, she was spotless, she was prayerful, she was patient, she was joyful in the commandments of God. She was a consecrated shrine to receive the Body and Blood of Christ: she was the temple of God: her heart and her mind were an abiding throne for the Holy Ghost. She was bright in miracles; her type among creatures is the dove among birds, the vine among trees, the sun amidst the stars. It is she that relieves all who are in distress and danger; it is she that subdues disease. It is she that restrains the angry fury of the sea. She is the Mary of Ireland."¹⁴⁰ This is not the sole highly-coloured panegyric found in our ancient literature. A very old book of vellum, in which is found the Martyrology of Maelruain of Tallagh, and also the saints bearing the same name,¹⁴¹ with the names of many mothers of the saints, states, that Brighit was following the manners and the life, which the holy Mary, Mother of Jesus, had practised.¹⁴² Such was her aptitude for devotional feeling, that she possessed every virtue which could adorn a child of Mary, or which could endear her to those who were around her.¹⁴³

CHAPTER III.

STATEMENT REGARDING ST. BRIGID'S PARENTS—HER PERSONAL AND MENTAL ATTRACTIVE DURING HER EARLY YOUTH—ALLEGED TREATMENT BY HER PARENTS—HER GREAT CHARITY TOWARDS THE POOR—BROUGHT BEFORE DUNLAING, KING OF LEINSTER—HIS ADMIRATION OF HER VIRTUES—HER RESOLUTION TO EMBRACE A RELIGIOUS LIFE—A SUITOR PROPOSES MARRIAGE WITH ASSENT OF HER FAMILY—SHE REJECTS THIS OFFER—HER RELIGIOUS PROFESSION, AND OPINIONS ADVANCED RELATIVE TO IT—PROBABLE TIME AND PLACE—ESTABLISHMENT OF ST. BRIGID'S FIRST RELIGIOUS HOUSE—SHE SELECTS THE BEATITUDE OF MERCY FOR HER SPECIAL PRACTICE—HER MIRACLES.

A SINGULAR statement has been made,¹ that the parents of Brigid ruled over

¹³⁷ See "Trias Thaumaturga," Appendix Prima ad Acta S. Brigide, pp. 599 to 602. In this Office, the following is a portion of the Fifth Lesson: "Religiosa quaedam femina postulavit a patre suo, ut S. Brigide secum exiret ad synodum quae collecta erat in Campo Liffai, et a pater permittitur. Tunc vir quidem sanctus in synodo dormiens vidit visionem et surgens ait. Hæc altera Maria, quæ habitat inter nos. Respons. Virgo deportatur, honor ei amplius cumulat: Synodus instabat, nova Brigida stella micabat. Sacra cohors plaudit, quia siguum celitus audit. Vers. Presbyter hanc aliam denunciat esse Mariam. Sacra cohors plaudit."—*Ibid.*, p. 600.

¹³⁸ These stanzas are as follows:—

"Christo canamus gloriam,

Qui per beatam Brigidam
Decoravit Hiberniam,
Vitam dans ejus lucidam.

"Hæc speculum munditiæ,
Quæ mundo late claudit,
Hæc rosa temperantiæ
Cujus virtus non languit."

¹³⁹ Professor O'Looney's Copy, pp. 11, 12.

¹⁴⁰ From "Life of St. Brigid," in the "Leabhar Breac," and "Book of Lismore."

¹⁴¹ By some called *Homonymi*.

¹⁴² See "The Martyrology of Donegal," edited by Rev. Dr. Todd and Rev. Dr. Reeves, pp. 34, 35.

¹⁴³ See "The Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. i., p. 13.

CHAPTER III.—¹ By Camerarius.

the Orkney islands,² and had their residence in the province Cathensia³ in Scotia. Under King Congall,⁴ they helped to prevent Hengist and the Saxons⁵ taking possession of those islands, according to the same ill-instructed ecclesiastical historian.⁶ Several particulars, regarding our Saint's early youth, are supplied by Laurence of Durham, but, these are wanting in her other Acts. It is not easy to pronounce, whether some of those accounts are furnished by his own fertile imagination, or from authors, who wrote before his time. In various instances, however, they present a pleasing picture of virtues, that early adorned our Saint. We are told, as Brigid grew in age, she increased also in grace. Her natural endowments were likewise remarkable. She received an excellent education. To her, the Almighty granted personal gifts, which to others are often the occasion of danger, in a spiritual sense. Whilst a mere child, her countenance was radiant with smiles, but her looks were truly angelic. These even betokened her future exalted sanctity. Her figure was moulded with a peculiar gracefulness, while her natural intelligence caused the pagan master of her mother—for we are still left in the mirage of legend—to furnish his bond-woman's daughter opportunities for acquiring some special culture. Each day added effulgence of beauty to Brigid's mental faculties, and to her natural bodily endowments; while, owing to her individual merits, a blessing seemed to fall on the Magus himself, who began to grow rich in possession of this world's goods. From the very period of our Saint's infancy, it was surprising to find, that she exhibited little youthful levity. Her thoughts and actions were characterized by sound discretion, and while her lovely features beamed with a matronly reserve, she abhorred the follies of old dotards, as much as she did the amusements of young persons. All admired her justly-regulated mind, her propriety of speech, her dislike of merely terrestrial and transitory things, and her perseverance in holy practices. Worldly-minded men wondered, that she avoided all companionship with them, and women of light character could not but feel mortified, when the holy virgin regarded them with horror; while those pious females, who devoted themselves sincerely to God's service, felt rejoiced, when our Saint sought their company and con-

² These are twenty-eight in number, and they lie directly north from Caithness. They are partly in the Northern and partly in the German Ocean. In the old Pictish language, they are said to have been called *Ar Cath*, or the Tail of Caithness. Hence, classic writers have their denomination, *Oreades*. These are divided into the North and South groups of Islands. Some of these are called *Skirrach*s—corresponding with the Irish word *Skerries*—which are chiefly barren rocks, often covered by the salt-water. Others, which abound in pasturage, are designated *Holms*.

³ Now Caithness, a district in the extreme north-east of the mainland of Scotland. See an interesting account of it in Fullarton's "*Imperial Gazetteer of Scotland*," vol. i., pp. 218 to 222.

⁴ King Congall I., who was the forty-fourth monarch of Scotland, according to Buchanan, succeeded Constantine I. After a reign of twenty-two years, King Congall I. died A.D. 501. See "*Rerum Scotticarum Historia*," lib. v., pp. 133 to 135. In the list of Pictish Kings, as furnished by Rev.

Dr. J. F. S. Gordon, we find no such name. See "*Scotichronicon*," vol. i., pp. 5, 6.

⁵ Hengist invaded Britain in 449. See Dr. Lingard's "*History of England*," vol. i., chap. ii., p. 63. This happened, while Eugene or Evan, the forty-first Scottish king, was on the throne. He died A.D. 452. See Buchannan's "*Rerum Scotticarum Historia*," lib. v., pp. 125 to 131. The Picts and Scots had made so many inroads on the more southern Britons, after the Romans abandoned Britain, that King Vortigern invited the Saxons, under Hengist and Horsa, to make head against their enemies. This success, however, resulted in the final subjugation of the ancient Britons to the Saxon power, yet not without a prolonged and vigorous resistance. In some parts of Wales and Scotland, notwithstanding, the Britons seem to have held not inconsiderable territories. See Rev. Thomas Innes' "*Civil and Ecclesiastical History of Scotland*," Book i., secs. XLIX. to LIII., pp. 88 to 95.

⁶ See "*De Statu Hominis veteris simul ac novæ Ecclesiæ, et Sanctis Regni Scotiæ*," lib. i., cap. iii., sec. ii., p. 141.

versation. This most amiable child, from her earliest years, began to understand, that modesty should be the companion and guardian of all her other virtues; while, her most earnest desires were directed to cultivate this lily of female perfection. In her angelic countenance, in her words and her motions, in her gait, gestures, dress and actions, she exhibited that greatest adornment of her sex; but, those exterior appearances were supplied from the deep springs of her stainless soul, which would not admit there a single trace of impurity to leave any impress. She conceived herself, as bound to remove from the gaze of men, whatever might be calculated to afford them occasion for sin; and she knew, that the Almighty diligently searches the secrets of hearts, to judge how far the roots of evil passion make progress. A virgin, not alone in name, but in truth, Brigid left nothing undone to increase her merits in God's sight, while she desired nothing, which a true Christian should avoid procuring.

All these virtues, however, did not screen our Saint from the envy and persecution of her father's wife—thus runs the fable—when, with her nurse, she had been sent to her first home by the Magus. It usually happens, either through himself or through his instruments, the Devil pursues with malignity those most loved by God, and principally, with a view to pervert their understanding. Hence, our Saint's step-mother was accustomed to find fault with everything said or done by this unoffending child. Often were injurious words and even cruel stripes inflicted on the innocent creature. Not content with such a tyrannical course of conduct, by her incessant and secret denunciation, that wicked woman excited the Saint's father to adopt a like treatment towards a daughter he had heretofore so much loved. Thus, instead of finding a natural protector in the person of her parent, Brigid found a tyrant: from being much attached to his daughter, her father became a persecutor; his love was changed to dislike, and his kindness into the grossest injustice. However, his wife could not urge him to sell his daughter, as a slave; yet, she endeavoured to render the girl's position almost as intolerable, by directing her to engage in most servile and laborious offices. It is said, that moved by his wife's persuasions, her father imposed an obligation of tending swine upon his young daughter.⁷ Without a murmur, she accepted such a humiliating employment, to become reconciled under those injuries inflicted by her father, and partially to escape from the malevolent attempts of her step-mother. The young maid frequently meditated on Christ's passion, and thence derived most salutary thoughts. She considered, that the sufferings of this life are not worthy of being compared to the glories of that kingdom, which Christ shall reveal to His perfect ones. So, spending much time out-of-doors, while engaged at an humble employment, she did not neglect her duties to God. When at home, she was either occupied in prayer, or in relieving the wants of the poor.⁸ During a time thus spent, it chanced that her herd of swine dispersed while grazing, so that some escaped the supervision of their young guardian. At this moment, two thieves who were passing observed the opportunity afforded them to make a seizure. Accordingly, these men drove away two of the swine as a prey. But, it so happened, that Dubthach was distantly seen by the robbers approaching them; whereupon, fearing merited punishment, they betook themselves to flight. On coming to that spot, where his swine had been abandoned, the master soon discovered, that these were a portion of his herd.

⁷ See "Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. ii., p. 15.

⁸ See Rev. S. Baring-Gould's "Lives of

the Saints," vol. ii., February 1, p. 16. Likewise, Mrs. Anastasia O'Byrne's "Saints of Ireland," part ii., p. 14.

Having concealed them for a moment, he proceeded to the place where his daughter was. Meantime, at first concealing his anger, under an affected hilarity and in words calmly expressed, soon he changed this assumed countenance and tone, by asking his daughter, if she could account for the entire number of swine entrusted to her care, without the loss of a single animal. The holy maiden, having full faith in Almighty power, entreated her father to examine and see if he had the full number. Carefully counting the herd, Dubtach found included those swine he had concealed. Astonished at such a result, the chieftain then returned to his home.⁹

Our pious maid bore her trials with patience and constancy; while humility induced her on all occasions to refer her meritorious actions entirely to God, as she knew that all human virtues have their origin in the bestowal of Divine Grace. And, as she had not received these heavenly gifts in vain, Brigid zealously co-operated with them. She advanced each day towards the highest degree of perfection. The more humility endeared her to the Almighty, the more was His glory manifested through her, in the miracles which were wrought. Brigid's virtues are greatly extolled by her panegyrists.¹⁰ All these good dispositions, however, were not a sufficient protection from her step-mother's enmity. This woman even took occasion to find fault with the girl's excellent qualities, for she envied that good repute, which was justly due to our Saint's merits.¹¹ Such malignity seemed to increase each day, and reproaches were redoubled, when it had been reported miracles were wrought, on occasion of that theft which had been committed, and at the time of her nurse's infirmity. Thenceforward, envy began to assume the characteristics of a fixed hatred. All the efforts of a wicked woman's malice were directed towards the further persecution of an innocent child, on whom a variety of laborious occupations were imposed. Not only was the virgin employed as swine-herd, but she was obliged to bake, to cook, to weave, to tend sheep and to engage in harvest labours. Still more humiliating and onerous offices were exacted from her. These must have been sufficient to break the spirit and constitution of any child, even less eminently gifted and constituted than our Saint. Yet, Brigid considered no work more servile, than that of sin; and, therefore, she patiently commenced, prudently continued, and admirably executed, her various heavy tasks. The legend proceeds to state, that the hatred and envy of St. Brigid's step-mother, once aroused, could not easily be dispelled; and, as the holy virgin's own mother had become a free woman, efforts were made to reduce her innocent daughter to a state of servitude. As some plausible pretext was even wanting for this purpose, after an anxious scrutiny into the maiden's life, no single word or action of her step-daughter being open to reproach, resort was had to calumnies and intrigue.¹² The whole tenor of this sweet child's life was one of blameless virtue; yet, it was sought to give a false colouring to her good actions, and to represent them as worthy of blame and punishment. It was said, although possessing no property of her own, that Brigid notwithstanding bestowed large alms on the poor, and hence she must have stolen, what she did not rightly give away. To her husband, the step-

⁹ This is more briefly related in Professor O'Looney's *Irish Life*, pp. 9, 10.

¹⁰ These are specially enumerated in the Hymn of St. Brogan Cloen. See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," Vita Prima S. Brigidæ, secs. 3, 4, 11, 12, p. 515.

¹¹ The Count de Montalembert, whose fancy leans to the legend of Brigid having

been the daughter of a bard and of a beautiful captive, tells us, the latter was chased, like another Agar, by her master, and at the suggestion of his wife. See "*Les Moines d'Occident*," tome ii., liv. ix., chap. i., p. 462.

¹² See "*Life of St. Brigid*," by an Irish Priest, chap. ii., pp. 15, 16.

mother represented a probability of his house being robbed by his own daughter, as she abstracted all the value it contained to enrich others, and this under the guise of piety. Thus, it was urged, while the maiden extended her bounty towards strangers, her own father was likely to be reduced to great poverty, unless he took suitable precautions against such a result. Hence, the step-mother reasoned, that prevention being better than cure, her husband should obviate this state of things, as it must prove vain to mend matters, when he must be in actual need. In order to prevent the absolute poverty of his family, advice was given to sell his daughter as a slave, and if he rejected this counsel, it was represented, he must soon experience those difficulties, attendant on a complete loss of property. By these and similar arguments, the insidious woman wrought on her husband's mind, and in a short time, effecting the estrangement of his affections from the holy maiden, she excited prejudices against Brigid. As it formerly happened, when the enemies of Daniel the Prophet represented him praying to God, in opposition to the king's edict;¹³ so was it now said, that the Saint gave alms for God's sake, but at the expense of her father. And, as Daniel had been delivered to the jaws of lions to be devoured, so was Brigid about to be sold as a slave to strangers; yet, since both were found faithful to God, therefore did the Almighty liberate them from a fate to which they had been respectively doomed. Brigid's father, however, would only consent to sell his daughter to a king or chief, as being herself of noble birth. With this view, a chariot was prepared, which Dubtach drove to the neighbouring castle, where his king, named Dunlang, then dwelt.¹⁴ When he had arrived at this place, Dubtach left his daughter in the chariot without, while he entered the castle to pay his liege respects. After discoursing awhile on state affairs and things of moment, their conversation was directed to less important topics. Dubtach then added, that he had with him a virgin, who was to be sold, and that if it pleased the king to purchase her, there was every reason to believe she should not occupy the lowest place in his estimation among his other female servants. In reply to the king's inquiries, Dubtach acknowledged, also, that she was his own daughter. The king asked his reason for selling her, and was told, that her parents feared she should make him a poor man, since she abstracted all his worldly substance to bestow it on the poor.¹⁵ Thereupon, those who attended the king said: "The good report of this your daughter has reached all parts of Ireland, and raised her immeasurably in our estimation; and, it is very strange, that you her father should accuse her of being guilty, when all strangers concur in praising her." Whereupon, the king commanded her to be brought into his presence. We are told again, while Brigid's father delayed within his dynast's castle, a poor man came to ask alms from the daughter, when she presented him with her parent's sword.¹⁶ Her father afterwards introduced Brigid to the king, but, on learning what she had done, Dubtach felt greatly concerned at the loss of his sword. This was one of great value, and the more prized, as it had been a present from the King of Leinster, whom he then visited. Dubtach ordered the mendicant to be followed, that his sword might be recovered. Then conducting his daughter to the king, the chief angrily complained about the loss he had

¹³ Daniel vi.

¹⁴ In a note, we are told by Colgan, that the king, whom her father visited, was Dunlang, King of Leinster, as appears from an Irish Life of St. Brigid, cap. xiv. See "Trias Thaumaturga," n. 10, p. 543.

¹⁵ See Rev. S. Baring-Gould's "Lives of the Saints," vol. ii., February I, p. 16.

¹⁶ We can easily arrive at the legendary

character of this whole narrative preceding; for, our Saint is there represented as confounding ideas of charitable actions in practice with actual sins of injustice, not creditable to her moral or religious perceptive faculties. These are not the sole objections that may be taken, against such an incongruous and incredible story, under all its laboured and inventive characteristics.

sustained through her. Looking upon the young maid, the king greatly admired her candour and gravity of countenance, her habit and deportment, before asking why she gave that sword to a beggar, which he had presented to her father. Our Saint answered, "Do not wonder that I have bestowed what was in my keeping on the poor, since, were it in my power to do so, I should give all possessed by you, O king, and by my father, to them; for, the Almighty will confer eternal rewards on those, who for His sake give temporal riches."¹⁷ Then turning to Dubtach, the king exclaimed: "This virgin is too holy and exalted to be either bought or sold, and I have not even means for purchasing her, because she is more precious than any amount of silver or gold."¹⁸ As for that good sword which she gave to the poor man, I shall present you with one equally valuable; and, if you abide by my advice, you will allow her to follow the bent of her own inclinations."¹⁹ Approving this advice, and being honoured with gifts, Dubtach returned home with his daughter, whose freedom was thus assured.²⁰

In continuation of this same narrative, it is stated, that having thus obtained her freedom, the virgin of Christ could conceive no state of servitude worse than to abuse her liberty. Wherefore, her human was exchanged for a Divine service. She consecrated herself by vow to Jesus, the Spouse of Virgins,²¹ and being now more at leisure to indulge the bent of her inclinations, she considered all former religious exercises of too little value in the sight of God. She macerated her body with increased vigils and fasting. Her mind began to soar with greater ease and fervour to pious contemplation and Divine love. She imitated the industry of the bee, which, wandering through pleasant gardens, collects their sweet juices from various flowers, in order to produce a still more luscious essence, in the loaded hive. The holy girl is said to have visited the houses of pious virgins, and to have culled admirable practices of virtue from the conduct of each, with a view of adapting them to her own spiritual improvement. Such was her charity, and indefatigable zeal in visiting the sick, that whenever she heard about any of those holy women being confined to a bed of illness, Brigid immediately hastened to afford consolation to the invalid. Nor did she leave the patient, until this latter had either been restored to health, or had terminated a mortal career.

In various accounts, it is related, that Brigid had been sought in marriage from her parents.²² Her great wisdom, not less than her personal attractions, caused a general admiration.²³ A bard suitor, called Dubthach, the son of Luguir, is said to have proposed for her in marriage. This man had been very celebrated for his learning²⁴ and innocence of life.²⁵ He was

¹⁷ This anecdote is related in L. Tachet de Barneval's "Histoire Légendaire de l'Irlande," chap. viii. The writer adds, that as St. Patrick represented Christian and apostolic perfection, St. Brigid personified mercy and charity. See p. 75.

¹⁸ The foregoing narrative is found related in Professor O'Looney's Irish Life, where Dunlaing is called the son of Enna. See pp. 15, 16.

¹⁹ See "Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. ii., pp. 21 to 23.

²⁰ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Quinta Vita S. Brigidæ, cap. ix., xii., xiv., xv., xvi., xvii., xxii., xxiii., xxiv., pp. 569 to 573. Some of those circumstances are also briefly related in the Third Life.—*Ibid.* Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. xvi., p. 528.

²¹ See Rev. S. Baring-Gould's "Lives of the Saints," vol. ii., February 1, p. 16.

²² See "Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. ii., pp. 23, 24.

²³ See Le Comte de Montalembert's "Les Moines d'Occident," tome ii., liv. ix., chap. i., p. 462.

²⁴ He is generally known as one of Ireland's chief poets, in the fifth century. Some of the Poems, attributed to him, have been published in the Rev. John Shearman's "Loca Patriciana," No. vi. "Journal of the Royal Historical and Archaeological Association of Ireland," vol. iii. Fourth Series, No. 19, July, 1874, pp. 183 to 196.

²⁵ Such account is contained in the Irish Life of St. Brigid, chapter xv., as quoted by Colgan.

among the foremost of Leogaire's courtiers²⁶ to render public honour to St. Patrick, and to believe in Christ, as may be seen in the Life of our Irish Apostle.²⁷ Various versions of St. Brigid having been sought in marriage survive in popular belief.²⁸ An Irish Life of the Virgin simply states, that her suitor was a man of good family,²⁹ which indicates—if the narrative be accepted—that her own birth was respectable, both on her father's and mother's side. This proposal is stated to have been acceptable both to Dubtach and to his sons.³⁰

On a certain day, while she hastened on some errand of mercy, we are informed, that Brigid met her brothers on the way. These were four in number. One of them, named Baithen, seems to have inherited the persecuting disposition of his mother, and he is said to have addressed the others in these terms: "I know not what sort of superstitious vanity urges our sister to travel from place to place; she avoids all familiarity with men, moreover, obstinately living and seeming disposed to persevere in a state of life repugnant to natural feeling. She will not gratify father or brothers with any hope of her bearing children; but, preferring her own will to that of the Almighty, and her own laws to those of nature, she loves a state of virginity, with our family dishonour and privation, to the more honourable condition of becoming mother over a numerous offspring. But, my brothers, let us put an end to this egregious folly, and consulting our family interests, we must overcome her designs, seeking for some noble, as a suitable husband for her. This, I have no doubt, can easily be accomplished. Thus, shall he become the son-in-law of our father, as also a friend and an ally to ourselves." But, the other young men interposed on her behalf and said: "It is neither manly nor brotherly to persecute our young sister, especially as she has made the better choice, while resolving to leave terrestrial for heavenly things, and as she hath chosen Christ to be her spouse, rather than man. Would it not be base for us, and dishonourable as brothers, to divert our sister from her holy purpose, even if we could effect such an object? Should we fail to do so, must it not be equally disgraceful to make an attempt, over which her constancy must prevail, thus showing that a single

²⁶ Colgan remarks, however, that when Brigid had arrived at a marriageable age, this Dubthach must have been advanced in years. See "*Trias Thaumaturga*," *Tertia Vita S. Brigide*, cap. xvii., and n. 11, pp. 528, 529, 543.

²⁷ The Sixth Hexameter Life of our Saint commences its narrative of the foregoing circumstances with these lines:—

"Proximus huic fuerat juvenis, qui jura
parentum
Unica cura fuit; pulsabat virginis aures
Per se, perque patrem, per fratres atque
sorores,
Munera muneribus promittens addere
plura,
Auribus purpureas, argenti pondera, ves-
tes,
Divitiasque domus, millenos prædia,
servos."

²⁸ Thus, the people about Faughart have a tradition, that while St. Brigid and her sister lived in a church at this place, the holy virgin was obliged to shun the impor-

tunities of a young marriage suitor, by setting out one night for Castletown Church, which, it is said, was also called *Cill bpóin*. She passed by a small river, taking its rise at *Shlaibh Guilenn*, and running in a south-east direction, between Faughart Hill and Castletown, falling into the bay of Dundalk. She knelt by the banks of this stream, and escaped her pursuer. At the place, where this happened, a much frequented station used to be held, until the landed proprietor cut down certain bushes by the stream, and altered the whole local appearance. It is said, that after this circumstance, St. Brigid remained at *Cill bpóin*, while her sister continued to live at *Cill mure*, or Foughart. See "*Louth Letters* containing Information relative to the Antiquities of the County, collected during the Progress of the Ordnance Survey in 1835-1836," vol. i., pp. 287, 288.

²⁹ Such is the account in Professor O'Looney's *MS. Life of St. Brigid*, pp. 15, 16.

³⁰ *Ibid.* See, likewise, Bishop Forbes' "*Kalendar of Scottish Saints*," p. 288.

girl may obtain a victory over four men? Let our sister serve God in the way she purposes, and, by our goodness towards her, let us seek her happiness, for if we attempt to disturb it, the guilt will rest on our souls." This discussion became exceedingly animated as the subject of it approached. A quarrel seemed likely to ensue, when the holy virgin, who had come up to them, besought the Almighty most earnestly to restore peace among her brothers, and to manifest His Providence in her regard.³¹ Immediately, as the legend relates, one of her eyes became distempered, and it disappeared.³² So shocking an occurrence, attended with a consequent deformity of features, which before had been so singularly beautiful, caused that brother, who had so anxiously sought to engage her in a married state to change his intentions. Her other brethren, who had contended for our Saint's freedom of choice, on seeing her beautiful features thus sadly disfigured and injured, felt the greatest compassion for her. They cried out, that this privation could not have happened, if she had not been opposed in her desire of leading a single life.³³ They lamented, likewise, no water was near, to wash stains of blood, which trickled from her face, thus to assuage her pain, if they could not repair that injury, endured by their beloved sister.³⁴ But, the Virgin of Christ, knew that her holy Spouse would be her protector. That she might not leave her brothers anxious and inconsolable on her account, Brigid desired them to dig the ground where they stood. With full reliance in the Divine clemency, our Saint offered her prayers to heaven, when He, who formerly produced water from the desert rock, at the stroke of His prophet,³⁵ now brought forth a stream from the dry soil, to reward the confidence of His favoured child. Her three friendly brothers, amazed at this miracle, and full of fraternal affection towards their sister, at once began to apply that water to wash her bleeding face, when to their still greater astonishment, both her eyes seemed perfect, as before the late privation.³⁶ Full of joy at this discovery, they gave thanks to God. But, the brother, who inherited his mother's malignant and intractable nature, made use of reproachful expressions towards them and towards our Saint. For such reproaches, however, he was miraculously punished, by the instant loss of one of his eyes. This chastisement humbled him so much, that henceforward no serious obstacle was interposed to prevent his sister from following the bent of her inclinations, and that course of her life, decreed by heaven.³⁷

The whole course of Brigid's career was destined to be traced out by signs from heaven. In the most recently written lives of our saint,³⁸ we are

³¹ In Bishop Forbes' "Kalendars of Scottish Saints," it is stated, St. Brigid asked the Lord to send her some deformity, so as to avoid the importunity of her parents. See p. 288. Also, *Supplementum Breviarii Romani pro Hibernia*, Lect iv.

³² See Rev. S. Baring-Gould's "Lives of the Saints," vol. ii., February 1, p. 16.

³³ See "Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. ii., pp. 23 to 25.

³⁴ In the life of our Saint, by Cogitosus, it is merely said, that her parents "more humano viro desponsare vellent, illa celitus inspirata," &c.—*Ibid.* "Secunda Vita S. Brigidæ," cap. iii., p. 519. And, in the succeeding life, it is stated, that a certain honourable man visited Dubtach, to ask his daughter in marriage; but, although his suit was favoured by her father and brothers, it

would not be entertained by Brigid. When earnestly pressed to yield on this point, the Saint prayed the Almighty to inflict on her some corporal deformity, which would free her from man's solicitations. Then one of her eyes melted in her head. Still the virgin, preferring loss of corporal beauty to that of her soul's virtue, felt satisfied with this privation. Her father knowing this permitted her to assume the veil, at which time her lost eye was restored.

³⁵ See Exodus xvii.

³⁶ These incidents are somewhat differently yet more briefly related in Professor O'Looney's Irish Life, pp. 15 to 18.

³⁷ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Quinta Vita S. Brigidæ, cap. xxv., xxvi., xxvii., p. 573.

³⁸ As published by Colgan.

told, that seven holy virgins³⁹ proposed to themselves a course of spiritual discipline under St. Brigid's rule, being animated with a like spirit, and wishing to effect their sanctification, through the instrumentality of this pious lady.⁴⁰ For, it was now universally acknowledged, that the Holy Spirit wrought many wonderful works through our saint, and that all her designs prospered, through Divine inspiration. The illustrious virgin considered and approved their purposes and wishes. With the greatest readiness and pleasure, thinking that she could best promote their spiritual interests and her own, she resolved to take the veil with them, and to lead a life, directed by conventional rule. No sooner had their project been mutually agreed to, than it was deemed proper to hasten without delay to a certain bishop, named Maccalle,⁴¹ and by others, Macculleus.⁴² Full of pious fervour, the postulants sought his benediction, and requested through his offices, they might be consecrated to Christ. But, this bishop,⁴³ not knowing their previous course of life, and fearing those tender virgins were urged through some impulsive motive, rather than by an inspiration of the Holy Ghost, refused to comply at once with the prayer of their petition. For he knew, with the Apostle, that episcopal hands should not be lightly imposed on each person applying,⁴⁴ nor should it be supposed, that every spirit was from God,⁴⁵ until a sufficient probation took place. When St. Brigid found this natural hesitation on the part of the bishop, with a firm trust, she betook herself to the oft-repeated expedient of prayer.⁴⁶ She besought the Holy Ghost, as she had been inspired to undertake a course chosen, that she might also have the consolation to achieve its desired results. The Almighty never fails to sustain those, who worship him in spirit and in truth. That the interior fervour of this holy virgin might be manifested by exterior signs, while she and her companions prayed in the church,⁴⁷ a column of fire shone above her head, and extended even towards the roof of that sacred edifice, to the great joy and astonishment of those, who chanced to be present.⁴⁸ In admiration at this miracle, the bishop made diligent enquiries about our saint's

³⁹ In Professor O'Looney's Irish MS. Life, the number is not specified, pp. 17, 18.

⁴⁰ A certain writer of our saint's Acts says she had only three companions when professed. "Et assumptit secum tribus puellis perrexit ad Episcopum Machillan, Sancti Patricii discipulum."⁴¹—Capgrave's "Vita S. Brigidæ," sec. 4.

⁴² This seems the more correct form of title; as evidenced by the Festilog of Aengus, the Martyrologies of Tallagh, of Cashel, of Marianus O'Gorman, of Charles Maguire, and of Donegal, at the 25th of April. The same title will be found in St. Ullan's Life of St. Brigid (cap. 18), and in all her Irish written acts.

⁴³ The Acts of this saint will be found at the 25th of April. In the edition of Cogitosus, by Colgan, the name is written *Maccaille* and in that of Messingham and Canisius, he is called *Macca*. In the First Life of our saint, by Brogan Cloen, he is called *maccaille*. In a MS. of St. Hubert, he is designated, *Mackelle*, and in one belonging to the Monastery of St. Amand, *Maccilli*, while in Surius, the name is written, *Machillus*.

⁴⁴ Called *Maccille* by Cogitosus. See

Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." *Secunda Vita S. Brigidæ*, cap. iii., p. 519. The First and Fifth Life name him *Maccaleus*. See *ibid.* *Vita Prima S. Brigidæ*, strophe 8, p. 515. *Vita Quinta S. Brigidæ*, cap. xxviii., p. 573.

⁴⁵ See 1 Tim. iii.

⁴⁶ See 1 Cor. xiv.

⁴⁷ In Professor O'Looney's Irish Life, it is stated, that St. Brigid, through humility remained last of her companions to receive the veil from Bishop Mel, until a column of fire arose from her head towards the church-roof, pp. 17, 18.

⁴⁸ In one instance, the Third Life states, she had eight companions, who received the veil with St. Brigid. There, too, it is written, when she had read prayers and touched the wooden step of the altar with her hand, it became, as it were, green wood, and it continued without decay to the writer's time. St. Brigid's eye is said to have been healed, when she received the religious habit. See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." *Tertia Vita S. Brigidæ*, cap. 18, p. 529.

⁴⁹ See "Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. iii., pp. 25, 26.

parents and her manner of living, from the time of her infancy. One of his clerics informed him she was Brigid, the wonder-worker, and a daughter to Dubtach. Hearing this, the bishop was most anxious to comply with the desires of our saint, whose good fame seemed to herald her future career of usefulness in the Church. He placed a veil on the heads of herself and of her companions,⁴⁹ as he knew heaven had already, in a miraculous manner, decreed approval of this ministerial agency. It happened, at the same time, while sacramentary rites of benediction took place,⁵⁰ our holy virgin applied her hand to the wood which sustained the altar,⁵¹ and which appeared quite dry and seasoned,⁵² as it had long being stripped of its leaves and bark.⁵³ It is said, immediately upon being touched by St. Brigid, that it became virent.⁵⁴ On a subsequent occasion, when the church, where such occurrence took place, had been consumed by fire, that particular portion escaped the flames.⁵⁵ Thus, as he had formerly wrought great miracles under the Old dispensation, Almighty God would chose to continue his works under the New, through all time loving His elect and affording His protection to them. While the children of Israel journeyed towards the promised land, He preceded them by a pillar of fire;⁵⁶ and while St. Brigid directed her course towards the heavenly country of her adoption, by the column of fire ascending heavenwards, He directed her thoughts from a terrene to a celestial ambition. The Third Life relates, three virgins⁵⁷ accompanied her, on their visit to Bishops Mel⁵⁸ and Melchu. An Irish Life

⁴⁹ In the Third Life of our saint, it is related, how she took with her three virgins, with whom she went to the territory of the sons of Neill, and to the saints, Bishops Mel and Melchu. These are stated to have been disciples of St. Patrick, and to have had a disciple named Macaille, who said to Mel: "Lo, the holy virgins are without, who wish to receive the veil of virginity at your hands." When he had introduced them before Bishop Mel, and while the latter was looking at them, on a sudden, a column of fire seemed to surmount the head of Brigid.

⁵⁰ The Fifth Life of our saint has it, "inter ipsa benedictionum sacramenta," &c. We are not to understand, that the profession or clothing of a virgin is to be classed amongst the *sacraments* of the Church, properly so called; but, it is assigned to the *sacramentalia*—distinguished from the *sacramenta*. By *sacramentalia* are understood a variety of benedictions and consecrations, which do not confer sacramental graces, peculiar to the effective administration of the seven sacraments. See, in reference to this distinction, Devoti's "Institutionum Canonicarum," libri iv., tomus i., lib. ii., tit. ii., sec. i., pp. 365, 366. If the word *sacramenta* be found in Laurence of Durham's original MS., it seems to have been improperly introduced for *sacramentalia*. However, such verbal introduction may have been the error of a copyist.

⁵¹ See Camerarius, "De Statu Hominis, veteris simul ac novæ Ecclesiæ, et Infidelium Conversione," lib. i., cap. iii., sec. ii., p. 140.

⁵² See the "Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. iii., pp. 27, 28.

⁵³ In the following Latin verses, R. P. Bandinus Gualfredus, S.J., has recorded this miracle:

"Arida quod tenero revirescent robora tactu,
Inque suo vivit stipite vita redux;
Virginæ memoranda colas miracula dextræ;
Urentes nunquam senserat illa faces."
—Lib. i., "Sacrorum Mensium," pars. i.

⁵⁴ Here there is a comparison between the wood becoming green, to show the purity of those holy virgins present, and between the rod of Aaron, putting forth leaves and fruit. A writer adds: "quia illa quæ per eandem virgam præsignabatur, et virgo simul et mater fuit." See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Quinta S. Brigidæ, cap. xxviii., xxix., pp. 573, 574. Also, *ibid.* "Vita Prima S. Brigidæ," secs. 8, 9, p. 575. "Vita Secunda S. Brigidæ," cap. iii., p. 519.

⁵⁵ This is alluded to in our saint's various offices, and it is generally stated, such a miracle reconciled her parents to that happy choice of life she had made. Also, it is related, in the "Chronica Generalis Mundi," and by Petrus de Natalibus.

⁵⁶ See Exodus, xiii., 21, 22.

⁵⁷ Numerical accounts vary. Colgan observes, that in the Irish Life of our saint, cap. xiii., in the Fifth Life, even in this same Third Life, and in every account of St. Brigid, seven other virgins are described as having been veiled with her.

of St. Brigid states, that she was veiled in the territory of Feratulach;⁵⁹ while Mel and Melchu lived in a town of Medi or Midio.⁶⁰ Regarding the foregoing incidents of our saint's life, in rather a different manner, the Sixth or Hexameter Life of this holy virgin presents us with another narrative.⁶¹ However, notwithstanding apparent inconsistencies, Colgan is of opinion, that the latter may also be reconciled with former statements; for, as this illustrious virgin was to be espoused to Christ, might not St. Patrick have entrusted the charge of such an office to his disciple and nephew, Bishop Mel,⁶² and might not the latter have deputed it to his disciple St. Maccalleus? Thus, to each of them might be attributed a part in the ceremony of veiling, although it be immediately and properly referable to the ministry of St. Maccalleus.⁶³

Some modern Anglo-Scottish writers, taking Hector Boece⁶⁴ as guide, relate, that our St. Brigid of Kildare was veiled by St. Macchilla, Bishop of Sodor, in the Isle of Mona,⁶⁵ or Man, about the year 443. But, the casual affinity of name seems to have occasioned this error. As already seen, the bishop who veiled St. Brigid was called Maccalle or Maccalleus; while, the Bishop of Sodor—that being the episcopal see of the Isle of Man—is called Machaldus and Magiul, by Joceline,⁶⁶ Mac-fill by Probus,⁶⁷ and Mac-Cuill in an Irish MS. of the Life of St. Patrick.⁶⁸ Although both of those persons alluded to had been bishops and flourished in St. Patrick's time; it is certain, that this Maccullius or Macaldus, Bishop of Sodor or Man, was altogether different from St. Maccalleus,⁶⁹ the consecrator of St. Brigid, not only in reference to time, place and acts, but, even as regards the name. Differences between them in point of time show that they must be distinguished. For St. Maccalleus,⁷⁰ the consecrator of St. Brigid, was bishop before he veiled

⁵⁸ In Professor O'Looney's Irish MS. Life, not only is it stated, that St. Brigid went to take the veil from Bishop Mel, but it is even asserted, he bestowed on her the honour of a bishop, "above all other women, so that it is the honour of a bishop the men of Erin give to the successor of St. Brigid ever since," pp. 17, 18. Such account indicates great antiquity for this Irish Life. However, it must be remarked, that St. Brigid received confirmation from St. Mel, and hence probably arose some confusion between his having conferred orders and the veil on this pious virgin, as stated by some old writers. See "Obits and Martyrology of the Cathedral Church of the Holy Trinity," edited by John Clarke Crosthwaite and Dr. James Henthorn Todd. Introduction, p. xeviii., and n. (y), *ibid.*

⁵⁹ In Professor O'Looney's Irish MS. Life it is called Tealach Midhe, pp. 17, 18.

⁶⁰ By this is probably to be understood, the district of the Methians in Ultonia. See "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Tertia S. Brigide, cap. xviii., and nn. 12, 13, pp. 529, 543.

⁶¹ The Irish Life of St. Brigid in the Leabhar Breac likewise renders some portions of it different from that in the Book of Lismore. In the latter we read from Professor O'Looney's English translation: "On the eighth hour Brigid was born, and on a particular Wednesday in the eighteenth [year of her age] she took the veil, in the

eightieth [year of her age] she went into heaven. On the eighth, Brigid was consecrated under the eight beatitudes [foods] of the Gospel, which she fulfilled, and the food of mercy is what Brigid used to call them," pp. 17, 18.

⁶² See on this subject, Rev. James Henthorn Todd's "St. Patrick, Apostle of Ireland." Introductory Dissertation, pp. 11 to 14.

⁶³ As the native word *mac* signifies a son, hence Tirechan, who wrote St. Patrick's Acts a thousand years before Colgan's time, when speaking of a certain church founded by the Irish Apostle, in the southern part of Meath, observes, "in qua S. Brigida pallium capit sub manibus filii Caille in Uisnech Midhe."

⁶⁴ See "Historia Scotorum," lib. ix., fol. 158.

⁶⁵ According to Camerarius, the sepulchre of the Scottish kings was in the Island of Mona. See "De Statu Hominis, veteris simul ac novæ Ecclesiæ, et Sanctis Regni Scotiæ;" lib. i., cap. iii., sec. ii., p. 141.

⁶⁶ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Sexta Vita S. Patricii, cap. eli. p. 98.

⁶⁷ See *ibid.* Vita S. Patricii, lib. ii., cap. x., p. 53.

⁶⁸ Lib. iii., cap. 35.

⁶⁹ He was a disciple to St. Mel and to Melchu, the nephews of St. Patrick.

⁷⁰ He lived, died and was venerated in a part of Leinster, called Ifalge, in a place

her,⁷¹ and he died in the year 489.⁷² But, St. MacCuill or Maccaldus, afterwards Bishop of Man, it is stated, does not seem to have been baptized, much less consecrated as bishop, when St. Brigid had been veiled.⁷³ Besides, circumstances of their lives and deaths, their acts and the places in which they flourished, evidence their non-identity.

Brogan Cloen states,⁷⁴ that Maccalleus placed the veil over St. Brigid's head;⁷⁵ while the Calendar of Cashel and Maguire⁷⁶ corroborate such an account. By both the latter, too, are we informed,⁷⁷ that this holy man had been venerated at Cruachan Brigh-eile,⁷⁸ now Croghan Hill,⁷⁹ in the former territory of Hy-Failge or Offaly.⁸⁰ In like manner, Tirechan and Cogitosus⁸¹ assert, that the virgin received her religious dress, at the hands of Bishop Maccalle.⁸² To one well versed in the Irish language, it will be found, that both names, Maccalle and Macald are distinct, although from their ambiguity, or supposed affinity, they have led writers to confound St. Maccalleus with St. Maccaldus.⁸³

called Cruachan, as appears from several Lives of St. Brigid, published by Colgan. In no writer do we read of his having been a robber, in any part of Ulster, called Maginis, or that he there exercised his vocation, after St. Brigid had been veiled and rendered renowned by her miracles, or after St. Patrick traversing Munster had returned to Ulster.

⁷¹ While Ussher assigns this veiling to A.D. 467, Dr. Lanigan thinks it may be admitted, that she was professed in the year 469. See "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. viii., sec. iii., p. 386.

⁷² As the "Annals of the Four Masters" have it from those of Senat-mac-magnus, of Clonmacnoise, and of the Island.

⁷³ By Ussher, Maccaille has been confounded with Maguil or Maccaldus, Bishop of Man. In this island, it is said, likewise, our saint was veiled. See Dr. Lanigan's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. viii., sec. iii., and nn. 39, 40, pp. 386, 388.

⁷⁴ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Hymnus, seu Prima Vita S. Brigidæ, p. 515.

⁷⁵ Regarding St. Brigid's virtues and miracles, a short time after this holy virgin's death, we find the following Latin version of his Irish Hymn:—

"Posuit avibus Maccalleus velum
Super caput Sanctæ Brigidæ
Clarus est in ejus gestis;
In cælo exaudita est ejus petitio
Deum precor in omnibus adversis,
Modis omnibus, quibus valet os meum,
Profundiorum pelago, magnificæ prædicabilem.

Trinum et Unum. Veridica narratio."

—*Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Commenting on St. Ængus' "Festilogy," he calls it "the white veil."

⁷⁷ At the 28th of April.

⁷⁸ In a letter, dated Tullamore, January 4th, 1838, John O'Donovan identifies Cruachan Bri Eile with the present conspicuous Hill of Croghan, in the parish of Croghan, and in the barony of Lower Philipstown.

It lay within the ancient territory of Ofalia. It rises on the confines of ancient Meath and Leinster. See "Letters containing Information relative to the Antiquities of the King's County, collected during the Progress of the Ordnance Survey in 1837," vol. i., pp. 104 to 115.

⁷⁹ On the very summit of Croghan Hill is a small moat or sepulchral *tumulus*. This seems to have been the monument of Congal, alluded to in the "Laoidh na Leacht," or Poem of the Monuments.

leacht Congaile,

pop. bpi eile po pounta.

—*Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁸⁰ From the top or moat on Croghan Hill, the whole level plain or *cláir* of Ofalia and its natural boundaries may be seen at a glance. It stretches, nearly as level as a lake southwards, to the foot of the Slieve Bloom Mountains, and to the Sugar Loaf shaped Hills, at Killone, in the Queen's County, and eastwards to the Hill of Allen, in Kildare county. See *ibid.*, p. 112. Dr. O'Donovan describes the extent of this territory, which he illustrates with hand-drawn maps from pp. 24 to 47, *ibid.*

⁸¹ He calls it "a white one." See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Secunda Vita S. Brigidæ, cap. iii., p. 519.

⁸² We have already seen, that the Irish Martyrologists name the saint venerated at the 25th of April *Maccaille*, i.e., filius *Caille*. Colgan remarks, that *Mac* signifies son, and *Caille* is either the proper name of a man, or if it be appellative, it has the signification of a *veil*: so that in Latin, *Mac-caille* could be rendered *filius veli*, he having obtained such a name perhaps, from the circumstance of his having veiled St. Brigid.

⁸³ The Bishop of Man, in St. Patrick's Irish Life and elsewhere, is called *Maccaille*: by Probus *Mac-fill* or *Macfail*; and by Joceline he is named *Macaldus*, in Latin; thus by use of the single *c*, it seems to be supposed, that in Irish, he was called *Mac-cail* or *Mac-aild*. The Irish word *Cail*, which in the genitive case becomes *Cuill*,

The profession of St. Brigid is held to have occurred A.D. 467.⁸⁴ or possibly A.D. 469.⁸⁵ That our Apostle St. Patrick⁸⁶ officiated on this occasion⁸⁷ has been affirmed by such writers as John Brampton⁸⁸ and Henry of Marlborough.⁸⁹ According to another account,⁹⁰ she was veiled by two holy bishops, who were disciples of St. Patrick. In his *Life of the saint*, Ultan relates, that she received the veil from Bishop Mel,⁹¹ a disciple of St. Patrick;⁹² and the same statement is to be found among her other acts, in the Irish language. This representation has been adopted by Harris.⁹³ However, the story about St. Mel of Ardagh having veiled her is contradicted by the best authorities, and it is not even worthy of refutation, in Dr. Lanigan's opinion.⁹⁴ It is to be regretted, that we have not on record the exact name of that church,⁹⁵ in which St. Brigid made her religious profession. Cruachan Brigh-eile it is usually called.⁹⁶ From the account left us by Cogitosus, that church⁹⁷ would seem to have been renowned for religious pilgrimages in his day, and to have been the scene of numerous miracles, wrought on behalf of the devout clients of our saint. Still, this unnoted church has possibly been identified.⁹⁸ It is thought to have been on the eastern side of the conspicuous Hill of Croghan,⁹⁹ near Tyrrell's Pass, on the confines of

has the same signification as *nut*; and the word *Cuill*, the same as *cu*; the word *fuil* as *wolf*; whilst *all*, *ail* or *aill* means a *forst*. Wherefore, *Mae-cuill*, *Mae-aill*, *Mae-aill* or *Mae-aill* may have the signification of *filius nucis*, *filius sylve*, *filius lusi*, or *filius saltus*, in Latin; as if the name had been bestowed on him, "ex eo quod in sylvis et saltibus latrocinia exercebat." Colgan adds, that these notices are given by him, not because he would assert, that he had furnished the right origin for such proper names; but, because they show differences existing between them, and may be adopted, until better interpretations or derivations are offered. With those two names of the saints in question, and from many appellatives of saints in Ireland, which commence with *Ma*, scarcely one—at least adopting its etymological origin—can be considered a name proper to whom it may be applied, but many are conventional.

⁸⁴ See Ussher's "Britannicarum Ecclesiarum Antiquitates," cap. xvi., p. 336. Also, Index Chronologicus, A.D. CCCCLXVII.

⁸⁵ See Dr. Lanigan's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. viii., section iii., p. 386.

⁸⁶ Joceline relates, that St. Brigid was present at a sermon of St. Patrick, in a place called Pinnabhair. Afterwards, St. Patrick went to Munster, where, as well as in other Irish provinces, he spent nine years. See *Sexta Vita S. Patricii*, cap. xciv., xcv., pp. 86, 87. Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga."

⁸⁷ Some writers place St. Patrick's death so early as A.D. 458, while others say that he lived until A.D. 493. See "Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. iii., p. 28.

⁸⁸ See "Historia Joronalsensis," ad ann. 1185.

⁸⁹ In his "Chronicle," at A.D. 493.

⁹⁰ See "Hystorie plurimorum Sanctorum noviter et laboriose ex diversis libris collecte." Louvanii, A.D. 1485, 4to.

⁹¹ See, in reference to this account, "The Book of Obits and Martyrology of the Cathedral Church of the Holy Trinity," edited by John Clarke Crosthwaite and Rev. James Henthorn Todd. Introduction, pp. xevi. to cii., with accompanying notes.

⁹² See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Tertia Vita S. Patricii, cap. xviii., p. 519.

⁹³ See Harris' Ware. Vol. iii., "Writers of Ireland," book i., chap. iii., p. 12.

⁹⁴ He adds: "It is to be found in the Third Life (cap. 18), with the author of which Mel appears to have been a great favourite. . . . Yet, however partial to Mel, it mentions Maccaille, but makes him a disciple of Mel, and represents him as introducing St. Brigid to him."—"Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. viii., sec. iii., p. 388.

⁹⁵ In the Second Life, it is stated, while the saint made her vows to heaven, she touched a wooden support, on which its altar rested. Cogitosus says, in his time, this wood was still green, as if it had not been cut down and barked, but had yet remained attached to its roots and growing.

⁹⁶ Bri Eile or Croghan was the church of St. Maccaille. See "Letters containing Information relative to the Antiquities of the King's County, collected during the Progress of the Ordnance Survey in 1837." John O'Donovan's letter dated Tullamore, January 4th, 1838, p. 112.

⁹⁷ This was "in the city Medi." See Bishop Forbes' "Kalendars of Scottish Saints," p. 288.

⁹⁸ See Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., n. (m), p. 152.

⁹⁹ The parish of Croghan is described on the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the King's County." Sheets 3, 10. On

the King's County and Westmeath. No church at present marks this site, but a frequented graveyard is to be seen on the spot indicated. The place itself is elevated and greatly exposed to the action of passing winds. It would seem, according to another opinion, that our saint received her religious habit at Huisneach Midi,¹⁰⁰ usually supposed to have been identical with Usny Hill.¹⁰¹ According to Tirechan, Maccaille was then at this place,¹⁰² which, although not his usual residence, was probably comprised within his ecclesiastical district.¹⁰³ Likely, also, the church had been built of wood, and had not suffered from fire, down to the time, in which Cogitosus wrote. This accident occurred, however, before the Latin Hexameter or Sixth Life of our saint had been composed. Allusion is there made to the miraculous circumstance regarding that portion of the altar, touched by the holy virgin, having escaped conflagration.

Although certain writers have assumed, that St. Brigid made her religious profession so early as her fourteenth year;¹⁰⁴ yet, nothing has appeared in evidence to sustain this opinion. It is true, before the passing of a decree, at the Council of Trent, that age was deemed sufficient for receiving the veil. Hector Boece¹⁰⁵ seems therefore to have inferred St. Brigid's earliest acceptance of her privilege.¹⁰⁶ On this subject, a more reliable authority declares, St. Brigid must have been at least sixteen years old, at the period of her consecration, as in those times, that was the earliest age, compatible with the performance of such a ceremony. It is probable, she had attained this latter age, at least, as her parents considered her marriageable, at a time she expressed her preference for the state of virginity. In the early ages, consecrated virgins lived with their friends, and discharged the ordinary household duties. Afterwards, it was found more desirable they should live in community. Strict enclosure was of a later date, and it was gradually introduced among the religious houses. It is needless to state, how much it has conduced to promote sanctity in such holy institutions.¹⁰⁷

Maccaille is said to have clothed her with a white cloak¹⁰⁸ and to have placed a white garment or veil over her head. Relating like circumstances, Tirechan says, that she received the pallium from Mac-Cuille or Maccaille. It is worth while remarking, the dress of ancient nuns was white; nor were there any distinct orders of religious females in Ireland, until some centuries after St. Brigid's time, as all consecrated women followed the same rule she had observed.¹⁰⁹

A learned Irish ecclesiastical historian¹¹⁰ will not have it inferred, that

the latter may be traced the curious antiquities adjacent to the ruined church on Croghan Hill.

¹⁰⁰ In Professor O'Looney's *Irish Life*, the place of her profession is said to have been at Tealach Midi, where Bishop Mel was then living, pp. 17, 18. In other words, this place may be rendered Tulach Midi, or the Hill of Meath.

¹⁰¹ In the present county of Westmeath.

¹⁰² According to Ussher.

¹⁰³ See Dr. Lanigan's "*Ecclesiastical History of Ireland*," vol. i., chap. vii., sec. vi., p. 335.

¹⁰⁴ See Rev. S. Baring-Gould's "*Lives of the Saints*," vol. ii., February 1., p. 17.

¹⁰⁵ Ussher and other writers drew similar accounts from him.

¹⁰⁶ See Dr. Lanigan's "*Ecclesiastical History of Ireland*," vol. i., chap. viii., sec.

iii., and n. 41, pp. 386, 388.

¹⁰⁷ See "*The Life of St. Brigid*," by an Irish Priest, chap. iii., pp. 33, 34.

¹⁰⁸ The white garment of St. Brigid is mentioned in her Third Life. See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*." *Tertia Vita S. Brigide*, cap. 108, p. 540.

¹⁰⁹ Such is the opinion of Dr. Lanigan, who adds: "We find nothing about cutting of hair, which was not practised in the profession of holy virgins as early, or, at least as generally, as the regulation for their wearing a particular habit."—"*Ecclesiastical History of Ireland*," vol. i., chap. viii., sec. iii., n. 34, p. 387. He quotes Tillemont's "*Memoires pour servir a l'Histoire Ecclesiastique*," tomus x., pp. 84 to 302; and Bingham's "*Ecclesiastical Antiquities*," book vii., chap. iv., sect. 6.

¹¹⁰ Dr. Lanigan.

our saint's father resided in the ancient province of Meath, as he is constantly called a Leinsterman. According to the same writer, he seems to have lived not far from Kildare, where Brigid afterwards founded her nunnery.¹¹¹ The reason why she had recourse to Maccaille was probably, because he was then the nearest bishop to her father's house; and, as the consecration of virgins was reserved to the episcopal order, a priest could not receive her profession. It is a matter of considerable difficulty to determine the place, where the holy virgin first established her religious house. According to a local tradition, we find it stated, St. Brigid and her sister lived in Faughard Church.¹¹² This, however, is unreliable. Another opinion has been offered,¹¹³ that our saint founded her first religious establishment in that part of the King's County, which formerly belonged to the ancient province of Meath, as may be conjectured from its having been not far from Usneach or Usny hill,¹¹⁴ where Brigid received her veil. The place is spoken of, as being surrounded by the towns of Meath.¹¹⁵ Usny hill¹¹⁶ is not far distant from the present King's County.¹¹⁷ There Maccaille seems to have usually resided. In Fearcall, formerly a part of Meath, now the baronies of Ballycowen and Ballyboy,¹¹⁸ in the King's County, there was a place called Rath-brighide, *i.e.* Brigidstown.¹¹⁹ Dr. Lanigan supposes, St. Brigid's dwelling was either about that district, or in an adjoining one of

¹¹¹ "In the Fourth Life (L. 2 c. 3) it is still that after an absence of some duration, she returned to her own country, that is, to the district where her relatives resided, and that *in said tract* a place was assigned to her for erecting a monastery for holy virgins, afterwards called Kill-dara." "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," chap. viii., § iii., and n. 37, pp. 385, 388.

¹¹² Tradition states, that it is likewise called *cill mhuir*, or "the Church of Mary." See "Louth Letters, containing Information relative to the Antiquities of the County, collected during the Progress of the Ordnance Survey in 1835," vol. i., p. 287.

¹¹³ By Dr. Lanigan.

¹¹⁴ It lies about four miles north-west from the Castletown station of the Midland Railway, and in the county of Westmeath. The hill is a long swelling green eminence, lying east and west. It has never been submitted to the plough. It has two summits, and the eastern one is occupied by an ancient cemetery. A broad avenue formerly led to it from the south, and the lines of this are still traceable on the green sward. With the exception of the Cat Stone, and some smaller earth-works, on the lower part of its eastern slope, no other structural works remain on the hill. See "Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy," second series, vol. i., No. 7. A paper (xvii.) read by Samuel Ferguson, LL.D., Vice President, February 26, 1872, "On Ancient Cemeteries at Rathcroghan and elsewhere in Ireland (as affecting the question of the Site of the Cemetery at Taltin)," p. 118.

¹¹⁵ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. xxi., p. 529.

¹¹⁶ Interesting engravings, representing a

ground plan of Usneach cemetery, and a sectional part of its upper surface, are presented by Dr. Ferguson, in the paper to which allusion has been already made. The principal cemetery enclosure is an irregular circle, or rather a square, with the angles rounded off, being about 250 feet in diameter. Subsidiary to this, there is on the western side an *annexe* of the same general outline. This is about 180 feet in diameter. There appears to have been a five-fold partition in the enclosures. Each division contains *tumuli*, and some of these seem to have been erected on the intersection of demarkation mounds. All have been opened. In the western division, the mouth of a cave has been exposed. Other holes in the surface show where the roofing stones have filled up passages. These mounds and *tumuli* are exhibited on the ground plans. See pp. 119, 120.

¹¹⁷ In his account of the parish of Conna, Dr. O'Donovan gives some notices of *Cnoc Uirniú*, or the Hill of Usneach, on which the pagan monarch Tuathal Teachtmhar erected a *temple* in the second century. See "Letters containing Information relative to the Antiquities of the County of Westmeath, collected during the Progress of the Ordnance Survey in 1837," vol. i. Letter of John O'Donovan, dated Ballymore, Lough Sewdy, September 17th, 1837, pp. 117 to 125.

¹¹⁸ This place has been improperly confounded with St. Brigid's Town in "The Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. iii., p. 34.

¹¹⁹ This conjectural statement of Dr. Lanigan has been unreservedly adopted as a correct one, in "The Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. iii., p. 34.

Westmeath.¹²⁰ As in the immediately subsequent events of St. Brigid's career, the great central territory of Teathbha, or Tefia,¹²¹ is frequently mentioned, it seems likely enough, her first religious house was situated either within that district, or at least in a not very remote situation from it. Perhaps, owing to the recorded intimacy and friendship between herself and Bishop Mel, her community, at first, was under his supervision and guardian-



Old Church Ruins at Ardagh.

ship, and it may have been at Ardagh, where at present a very ancient ruined church is shown.¹²² It is one of the most cyclopean and archaic type.¹²³ The door-way was perfect, but remarkably low.¹²⁴ Also, it must be observed, that a very prevailing popular tradition associates St. Brigid with St. Mel, as a chief patroness of the Ardagh diocese,¹²⁵ and a holy

¹²⁰ He adds, that we may find a Tegh-brighide, or Brigid's house, in Kinel-fiacha *i.e.*, the country about Kilbeggan. See "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. viii., sec. iii., and n. 47, pp. 386, 389.

¹²¹ This territory, called Tefia, in Certani's Life of the Saint, lay north and south of the Ethne or Inny river. The former, in St. Patrick's time, included the greater part of the present County Longford, and the latter the western half of Westmeath County. See "The Topographical Poems of John O'Dubhagain and Giolla na naomh O'Huidhrin." Edited by John O'Donovan, LL.D., p. ix.

¹²² The greater number of its stones are eight feet long. These ruins are to be seen at the south-east angle of a modern grave-

yard. See letter of John O'Donovan, dated Edgeworthstown, May 18th, 1837. "Letters and Extracts containing Information relative to the Antiquities of the County of Longford, collected during the Progress of the Ordnance Survey in 1837," p. 39.

¹²³ This has been sketched by George De Noyer, and it is to be found among the folio drawings in the Royal Irish Academy's Library. It has been thence transferred to the wood and engraved by Mr. Gregor Grey of Dublin for this work.

¹²⁴ In 1837. The church itself was never very large.

¹²⁵ Such information the writer has received from Very Rev. Thomas Canon Monaghan, P.P., Loughduff, in the Diocese of Ardagh.

well¹²⁶ dedicated to her is to be seen near the town of Ardagh.¹²⁷ In one of our saint's lives, we are told, that the bishop,¹²⁸ who received her religious profession, prepared a suitable place for her monastic habitation,¹²⁹ and presented her with so many cows, as there were members in her community.¹³⁰ When she and her sisters took possession of their dwelling, St. Brigid applied herself anew to labours, to vigils, to fasting, to prayer and to divine contemplation. Thus, she endeavoured to advance in the narrow paths of perfection, on which she had already entered. Although excelling others, in station and merits, yet would she manifest her humility, by claiming to be an associate merely in that society she had founded. By her example and encouragement, she induced many ladies to embrace the most sublime practices of a religious profession.¹³¹ The bishop and people of the district, in which she lived, felt delighted with her sojourn in that place. Even they showed themselves more desirous of contributing to relieve the corporal wants of the community established, than these religious were to receive their gifts. If any superfluities remained, these were bounteously bestowed on the poor, by the holy superioress, and according to the measure of their necessities.¹³²

On a certain day, Maccaille invited St. Brigid and her nuns to a banquet. But, when the table had been laid, and the viands placed thereon, the holy virgin entreated that bishop to refresh the minds of his guests with spiritual, before they should partake of corporal, food. To this request he willingly assented, and exercised his eloquence, by taking as the subject of his discourse our Divine Lord's exhortation from the mount. He dwelt on the various virtues of a Christian, and especially on those eight Beatitudes, by which the kingdom of heaven is secured. At the conclusion of his discourse, St. Brigid said to her nuns: "My dearly-beloved sisters in Christ, we are in number eight virgins, and eight virtues are proposed to us for your observance and sanctification. Although, whoever has one virtue, in a perfect degree, must necessarily possess many other religious excellencies, as every

¹²⁶ There is no well in the parish of Ardagh dedicated to St. Mel, and it is strange that St. Brigid is the patron. Her holy well, called Toberbride, lies in the townland of Banghill. See John O'Donovan's letter, dated Edgeworthstown, May 18th, 1837. "Letters and Extracts containing Information relative to the Antiquities of the County of Longford, collected during the Progress of the Ordnance Survey in 1837," pp. 38, 39.

¹²⁷ This well and the old church are noted on the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Longford." Sheet 19.

¹²⁸ See the "Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. iii., p. 35.

¹²⁹ In the Third Life, it is stated, that the eight virgins, veiled with St. Brigid, and their parents, said to her, "Do not leave us, but remain with us, and occupy a dwelling in this place." Then, we are told, Brigid remained with them. See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Tertia Vita S. Brigide, cap. 18, p. 529.

¹³⁰ The distinctive number of holy women, that first joined St. Brigid, has been thus reconciled. "The Fifth Life (*cap.* 28, *seq.*) has seven; the third (*cap.* 18) men-

tions eight, although a few lines before it states that St. Brigid set out from her father's house with only three of them. It seems that when they arrived at the place where the bishop was, they met four or five other postulants."—Dr. Lanigan's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. viii., sec. iii., n. 44, pp. 388, 389.

¹³¹ "In the first ages of Christianity in Ireland, circumstances did not warrant the strict enclosure, nay, it was not enforced in any part of the Church; and consequently Brigid and her companions lived in community, under a certain rule, without being bound to remain within the precincts of their convent."—"The Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. iii., p. 34.

¹³² See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Quinta Vita S. Brigide, cap. xxx., p. 574. In the Breviary of the Canons Regular of Lateran, it is said, so many virgins were induced to imitate St. Brigid's example after her profession, that in a short time Ireland was filled with religious houses of nuns, while the house in which our saint lived was the principal one on which all the rest were dependent.

single virtue is bound up and connected with one of a different kind ; however, let each of you select whatever particular beatitude you may desire for your special devotion." This injunction pleased all the holy sisterhood, and they asked their superioress to make her first choice of a virtue, as she held a first position among them. Without a moment's hesitation, St. Brigid selected Mercy for her particular practice. However, although she cultivated this beatitude, because she considered without it, that all other virtues must be inefficacious or of little account ; yet, day and night she ceased not the performance of other meritorious actions, connected with her high vocation. Her religious sisters also applied themselves with constancy and fervour to their sanctification, through that virtue of their special choice ; nor did they relax in their efforts, until rewards promised for their holy ambition were received. Having thus refreshed their souls with aliment of the Divine word, on invitation of Bishop Maccaille, they partook of those viands placed before them. Thenceforth, it was the constant habit of St. Brigid, during the whole course of her life, never to take corporal refreshment, until she had first fortified her soul with God's holy word.¹³³

As a light placed in a candelabrum cannot be hidden, so the frequent recurrence of miracles caused Brigid's fame to be diffused, through all parts of Ireland. Innumerable holy virgins and widows, embracing a rule of life under her direction, and resolving to abandon all things for Christ's sake, flocked to her religious fold. Thus God's pious servants became greatly multiplied. Still the holy abbess was particularly solicitous that virtues and merits should be increased. Although moral goodness does not usually abound to a very exalted degree, except in large religious communities, yet, virtue consists not in having many together so much as in a store of merit ; and a numerous sodality is not so much to be admired as a fervent one. Neither should it be a desirable object, for many to live in community, unless they are sanctified by the practice of distinguished virtues. Through her illustrious example and precepts, our holy abbess urged her sisters to advance from one grade of perfection to another ; with argument, by entreaty and by the exercise of authority, she withdrew those who were frail from their errors ; while she manifested the liberality of her disposition, in a care for the poor. She even deprived her monastery of means necessary for the support of its inmates, with a view of releasing from want many suffering members of Jesus Christ.¹³⁴ On a certain day, three religious pilgrims visited St. Brigid and her nuns. These were regaled with bacon and other food. Yet, not wishing to eat the three different portions of bacon set before them, they secreted this meat, while partaking of other refreshments. On the succeeding day, St. Brigid saluted them, and requested them to see that food they had concealed. Then they found, that their three portions of flesh meat had been changed into so many loaves of bread. At another time, two of those men were about to engage in manual labour, while the other, and the youngest, remained in the house. St. Brigid asked this latter man why he did not go out of doors to work with his companions. The stranger replied, that he wanted the use of one hand. On examination, Brigid found such to be the case. Immediately she restored it to a condition, which enabled him to engage with his comrades in their out-door employment.¹³⁵ The Acts of this holy woman abound in such wonders.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, cap. xxxi., p. 574.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, cap. xxxii., p. 574. See, also, Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiola. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese."

Libro Terzo, pp. 170 to 176.

¹³⁵ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." *Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ*, cap. xix., xx., p. 529.

CHAPTER IV.

REMARKABLE MANIFESTATIONS OF PROVIDENCE IN ST. BRIGID'S REGARD—SHE CURES MANY DISEASED AND AFFLICTED PERSONS—HER BOUNTIES AND HOSPITALITY—SHE VISITS ST. HEAR—BISHOP MEL'S RELIGIOUS INTIMACY WITH ST. BRIGID—HER MIRACLES IN TILBEA OR TILFIA—SAID TO HAVE MET ST. PATRICK AT TAILTIN—HER POWER OVER DEMONS.

THE incidents of St. Brigid's life are differently arranged by her various biographers, so that it is almost impossible to trace them out in succession, or place them in any exact chronological order.¹ By different writers of our Saint's Acts, there are various miracles ascribed to her; but, as the periods and places in which these occurred are not usually particularized, it may be proper to comprise within circumscribed limits the recital of such supernatural occurrences. However, some of the miracles attributed are of such a vague and an improbable nature, that their relation may rather tend to obscure than to illustrate her history, and further to crowd it with unauthentic statements.

In her Life, as written by Cogitosus, we are told, that on a particular occasion, when St. Brigid was visited by some Bishops, who were her guests, she found herself at a loss to provide in a certain respect, for their entertainment. Having only one cow to supply their wants, contrary to her usual custom, she was obliged to milk this animal, three different times during the same day.² She found, notwithstanding, as great a quantity of milk had been furnished by this animal, as the three best of cows usually produced.³ Perhaps then, or at another time, a band of thieves, coming from a certain province, passed over a river and stole some oxen, belonging to our Saint. But, on their return, the river became swollen within its banks to such a degree, that in attempting to cross it, those freebooters were drowned, and their bodies were swept down its course; while, the oxen, escaping to its banks, returned to the herd with those reins, by which they were secured, hanging to their horns.⁴

During the time of harvest, a day being appointed for reapers to assemble, in order to cut down some corn, which was ripe, and which belonged to the Saint; it so happened, clouds began to darken, and afterwards these dissolved in torrents of rain. Throughout a whole district, harvest labours were necessarily suspended, during the continuance of those heavy showers; still, our Saint's labourers exercised their vocation a whole day, from the rising to the setting sun, without even the least impediment. Yet, in all the neighbouring districts, rains poured down without cessation, flooding the whole country with ponds and rivulets of water.⁵

CHAPTER IV.—¹ See "Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. iv., p. 48.

² This narrative seems somewhat inconsistent with an account previously given, that she received a cow for each religious sister in her convent. Yet, her bountiful disposition and her necessities might have diminished the number of cattle she then owned.

³ See "Secunda Vita S. Brigidæ," cap. vi., p. 519. Also, "Vita Quinta S. Brigidæ," cap. xxxvii., pp. 575, 576. This miracle is also given in the "Prima Vita S. Brigidæ," sec. 16, p. 516. Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga."

⁴ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Cogitosus, Vita S. Brigidæ, cap. xvii. Also, "Vita Prima S. Brigidæ," sec. 27, pp. 516, 520. This circumstance appears to be related in a different manner by Capgrave, in that Life of St. Brigid, which is contained in the "Legenda Sanctorum Angliæ Scotiæ et Hiberniæ," cap. xiv.

⁵ When celebrating the Virtues and Miracles of St. Brigid in his Irish Hymn, St. Brogan Cloen has this incident recorded. See "Prima Vita S. Brigidæ," sec. 15. Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," p. 516. Cogitosus' or "Secunda Vita S. Brigidæ," cap. v., p. 519. "Tertia Vita S. Brigidæ,"

St. Brigid wrought many miracles, in favour of persons afflicted with leprosy and other diseases.⁶ Those were relieved from their various infirmities.⁷ She restored to sight, by her prayers, a man who was born blind.⁸ The lame and infirm were likewise cured, through intervention of the holy virgin.⁹ An instance is recorded regarding a woman, with her daughter—only twelve years of age and born dumb—coming to visit our Saint; the latter, stooping down with great humility, kissed the child, who exhibited by her looks and gesture an affectionate reverence of manner, which the virgin's virtues so well merited. Ignorant concerning that defect of speech, under which the child laboured, Brigid took her by the hand, and addressed some affectionate and pious inquiries, as to whether she designed taking the veil or embracing another mode of life. Her mother declared, the daughter could give no answer. Brigid replied, she should not relinquish that child's hand, until an answer had been given. Being asked the question a second time, the girl said, "I desire to do only what you wish me." And from that time forward, she spoke without the least impediment.¹⁰ Afterwards, she remained in a state of celibacy, to the very hour of her death.¹¹ According to other accounts, St. Brigid had been approached, in the first instance, through the medium of another pious female, named Darlugdacha—most probably one of her own nuns, and her immediate successor in the government of her institute at Kildare.¹² The mute girl's mother had secured the good offices of this Darlugdacha, or Durlaghacha,—as we also find her called—on behalf of the afflicted daughter. The restored girl afterwards remained under care of St. Brigid.¹³

Our Saint possessed the gift of multiplying in quantity various kinds of food and drink, which she either touched or blessed. Thus, we are told, when the Paschal or Easter day was near, on a certain time, Brigid wished to prepare a banquet for all the Meathian churches,¹⁴ in various towns¹⁵ of that province, surrounding her own establishment. There was a scarcity of corn prevailing in this particular district at the time, and she had only very limited means at command to enable her to effect such an object. The small quantity of beer she possessed was contained in two tubs,¹⁶ as she had no other vessels to hold it; but, this beverage was divided into measures,

cap. c., p. 540. "Quarta Vita S. Brigide," lib. ii., cap. lxvii., p. 560. "Quinta Vita S. Brigide," cap. xli., p. 577, *ibid.* Capgrave also states, that from the rising to the setting of the sun, not one drop of rain fell on St. Brigid's reapers. See "Legenda Sanctorum Angliæ," &c., in Vita S. Brigide, cap. xxiii., and also Messingham's "Flori-legium Insule Sanctorum." This account is contained, likewise, in Petrus de Natalibus, in Camerarius, in the "Chronica Generalis Mundi," and in many of St. Brigid's Offices.

⁶ See the Lectons of her ancient Office, contained in the Breviary of Aberdeen. Bishop Forbes' "Kalendars of Scottish Saints," p. 289.

⁷ See, likewise, Officium S. Brigide, ii. Nocturno, Lect. v. De Burgo's Officia Propria Sanctorum Hiberniæ," p. 12. Also, at the same day, Supplementum Romani Breviarii, as used in the Irish Church, Noct. ii., Lect. vi.

⁸ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Prima Vita S. Brigide, sec. 21, p. 516.

Secunda Vita S. Brigide, cap. xii., p. 520,

ibid. Also, Camerarius, p. 140.

⁹ See Capgrave's "Vita S. Brigide," cap. xviii.

¹⁰ See "Trias Thaumaturga," Vita Prima S. Brigide, sec. 22, p. 516. Cogitosus, or Secunda Vita S. Brigide, cap. xviii., p. 520, *ibid.*

¹¹ See Capgrave's "Vita S. Brigide," cap. xxv.

¹² In such case, her festival occurs, also, on the 1st of February. Her acts may be seen immediately succeeding those of St. Brigid.

¹³ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Tertia Vita S. Brigide, cap. cxxvi., p. 541. Quarta Vita S. Brigide, cap. xci., p. 562, *ibid.*

¹⁴ This seems to indicate her living, with her religious, in the province or diocese of Meath—most likely in its western part.

¹⁵ From this statement, we may infer, how populous that district had been.

¹⁶ In one barrel, according to Lectons of St. Brigid's Office in the Breviary of Aberdeen. See Bishop Forbes' "Kalendars of Scottish Saints," p. 289.

and distributed among eighteen neighbouring churches or monasteries. It served for the abundant refreshment of those in attendance there, during Holy Thursday, Easter Sunday, and the week following.¹⁷ At another time, according to custom, Bishop Maccaille paid the Saint a visit, being accompanied, however, with an unusual retinue of clerics. Brigid joyfully and hospitably received them. Having heard the word of God proclaimed by them, she prepared to minister in turn for the corporal refecton of her guests. She placed whatever viands she could procure on the table; yet, with the exception of a very small quantity of beer, contained in a vessel, she had no other kind of drink than water.¹⁸ However, presuming on God's goodness, she made a sign of the cross over the beverage, when it was miraculously increased, so as to satisfy more than the wants of all her assembled guests. And, we are told, that several vessels were filled, with the contents of this particular measure, through the holy virgin's merits: as formerly the Almighty had filled the widow's cruise of oil, through the Prophet Elias.¹⁹ The bishop and his clerics departed, after having experienced the hospitality of their pious hostess, and even more gratified because of her merits and the miracle she wrought, than with any corporeal entertainment she afforded them.²⁰

It happened, that a scarcity of corn prevailed in the Liffey's plains, on a certain occasion, and St. Brigid was requested by her nuns to visit St. Ibar²¹—a bishop who then dwelt in the plain of Gesille²²—to ask him for corn. Our Saint assented, and on her arrival, she was joyfully received by this holy bishop. However, when Brigid and her companions came, he had nothing for their entertainment, but stale bread and some bacon. Although this visit took place in Lent, both saints partook of such fare; but, two of the nuns, who accompanied our Saint, refused to eat portions of bacon set before them. A miraculous occurrence, however, reproved their recusancy. St. Brigid heard of it, and she greatly blamed her nuns in St. Ibar's presence. She ordered them, at the same time, to go out of doors, and to commence a penitential fast. Then said Brigid: "Let us fast with them, and pray to God." The Almighty heard their prayers, and soon afterwards a second miracle was wrought. Bread was set before them, and when blest, it was partaken of by the saints.²³ Bishop Ibar asked Brigid the cause for this her

¹⁷ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. xxi., p. 529. It is said, that the quantity supplied "ad clausulam Pasche." This seems to mean, to the following Sunday, or "Dominica in Albis," which closes the Easter Octave. *Ibid.* n. 15, p. 543. During the same Easter, it is stated, that a certain leper came to her, and demanded the gift of a cow. But, not being able to afford him this present, Brigid asked, if he should pray to God, that he might be healed from leprosy; when the leper replied, that he would esteem such favour as the greatest of all gifts. The Saint then blessed some water, with which she sprinkled the leper's body, and he was immediately cured of his disease. He gave thanks to God, and remained with St. Brigid, to the time of his death.—*Ibid.* cap. xxv., p. 529. This seems to be the same miracle, which is a little more diffusely and differently related, in the "Vita Quinta S. Brigidæ," cap. xxxiii., pp. 574, 575, *ibid.*

¹⁸ This account is also briefly given in Professor O'Looney's Irish Life of St. Brigid, pp. 19, 20.

¹⁹ *iii.* Kings xvii. 17.

²⁰ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Vita Quinta S. Brigidæ, cap. xxxvi., p. 575.

²¹ For further particulars, on this subject, Colgan refers to the Life of St. Ibar, which he intended to have published, at the 23rd of April.

²² This "Campus Gesilli," called *Magesille*, in Irish, was situated in the district of Hi Falgi or Ofsaly, not far from the Liffy's plains. It was connected with a tragic and unnatural incident, in our early history; for old chronicles state, that Heremon, King of Ireland, there slew his brother Heber, when contending about the respective boundaries of their provinces. See Miss M. F. Cusack's "Illustrated History of Ireland," chap. v., and n. 7, p. 78.

²³ In the Third Life is mentioned a very wonderful transformation "in duos Euehas

Lenten visit. Then she told him her desire to obtain a supply of corn. The bishop smiling said: "O Brigid, if you had seen and known the quantity of corn in our possession, you should find, that the amount of our gift to you must be small." The virgin replied, "This is not the case, at present, for you have twenty-four waggon-loads of grain in your barn." Although the bishop had only a very small quantity at first, yet on enquiry, he found the prediction of the holy abbess verified. He gave thanks to God, and then he divided the heaps. Ibar retained twelve waggon-loads for his own use, reserving the remaining twelve for Brigid and her sisterhood.²⁴ It would seem, that this visit of the Abbess had been returned by Bishop Ibar, for in the Sixth Life of our Saint it is related, how he then celebrated Mass in a solemn manner for all the people²⁵ who were there.²⁶ In the Third Life of our holy Abbess of Kildare, we find the following recorded miracles. One of her nuns had been afflicted with a severe illness, and this patient asked for a little milk.²⁷ But, Brigid's community had no cow to afford it; when, the Saint told a companion to fill with cold water, and then to give the vessel to the sufferer. Such an order having been complied with, it was found replenished with milk, and warm as if this had been just drawn from the cow.²⁸ When the sick nun tasted this beverage, she recovered. Two females, belonging to her own family, and who were paralysed, lived near St. Brigid. These asked the holy abbess to visit and heal them. She complied with their request. When she arrived, having blessed salt and water, of which those women partook, both were soon restored to health. Afterwards, two Britons, who were blind, had been conducted by their servant, a leper, to the gate of that church, near which the Saint dwelt. They asked her to heal them. She then told them to enter the refectory and to eat, while she should pray for their salvation. They indignantly cried out, "You heal the sick of your own family, but you neglect strangers and attend only to prayer."

in pascha & in natalitiis Domini." But, in a note on this passage, Colgan remarks, that the text is here vitiated; for, in the Book of the Island, "*oblatas panis*" is read for "*duos Euehas*," and in the Fourth Life, lib. ii., cap. xxii., "*in duos panes*;" while in both these Acts are wanting the words, "*in pascha & in natalitiis Domini*." The author of the Third Life would seem to insinuate, in Colgan's opinion, that those miraculously transmuted portions of bread were usually exhibited on the festivals of Easter and of the Nativity, for a commemoration. And, by the term "*Euehas*" may be understood the Eucharistic breads, not sacramentally consecrated, or perhaps only blessed bread, or resembling the Eucharistic species. However, that account in the Fourth Life, as given in the text, seems to controvert his opinion, regarding their preservation, for any popular exposition.

²⁴ See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," Tertia Vita S. Brigidæ, cap. liv., pp. 552, 553, and nn. 27, 28, p. 543, *ibid.* Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. xxiii., xxiv., p. 553, *ibid.* The foregoing incidents are somewhat differently given in the Fifth Life, where we are told, Ibar had not more than four or five measures of corn in his barn, when Brigid first arrived. The reason, why

both saints partook of meat, during Lent, was owing to a prevailing scarcity of other prescribed food, and owing to a dispensation from usual Lenten observances. The nuns of St. Brigid, rejecting their permission, seem to have given way to a species of vain glory, preferring to obedience the practice of their customary Lenten mortifications. See "*Quinta Vita S. Brigidæ*," cap. li. lii., p. 580, *ibid.* See, also, an account of this miracle in the "*Vita Sexta S. Brigidæ*," sec. xlvii., p. 592, *ibid.*

²⁵ "*Ibarus ad cellam vir sanctus venerat alma
Dicere missarum populis sollempnia
cunctis.*"

²⁶ Immediately after the lines previously quoted, Colgan says, that certain portions of the Poem seem to be missing. The last line is marked, as if for a note, which, however, has been omitted in the proper place. See "*Vita Sexta S. Brigidæ*," sec. lii., p. 593. "*Trias Thaumaturga*."

²⁷ In the Lectons in St. Brigid's Office taken from the Breviary of Aberdeen, we find a similar statement made in reference to this remarkable recovery. See Bishop Forbes' "*Kalendar of Scottish Saints*," p. 289.

²⁸ In Professor O'Looney's Irish Life this account is given, pp. 19, 20.

She received this reproof by meekly going out from the church, and taking blessed water to them. When she had sprinkled them with it, the leper was cleansed and the blind men saw. All three praised God, and returned thanks for such benefits as He there bestowed on them.

A woman came one day to St. Brigid. That visitor drove a cow, with its calf, which had been intended as an offering for the abbess. However, the calf strayed away into a very thick wood. Finding she could not drive the cow without it, the woman called out with a loud voice, that Brigid might assist her. Immediately, the cow went gently with her conductor, and direct to the virgin's house. Brigid then told the woman to feel in no way concerned about the calf, which should soon follow in the traces of its dam. Another day, when the Octave of Easter had closed,² Brigid said to her nuns, "Hath that beer reserved for our Easter solemnity been given out, for I am solicitous regarding Bishop Mel, and the guests of Christ?" The nuns replied, that God would send them a sufficiency. Then they brought on their shoulders a vessel filled with water to the Saint, that she might bless it, according to her usual custom. Supposing it to be beer, their abbess said, "We give thanks to God, who hath reserved this for our Bishop." On examination, it was found, that water had been changed into such a beverage, as had been mentioned by the Saint.³ At a certain time, likewise, she suffered from sore eyes; and on hearing about her affliction, the same Bishop Mel sent a messenger, that she should visit him, so that both might seek a physician to heal her. Brigid said, although not desiring to visit a corporal physician, yet she would act as the bishop directed. It so happened, the Saint fell from her chariot, into the ford of a certain river,⁴ whilst on her way with the bishop to seek the practitioner. Her head struck against a stone, and a great quantity of blood began to flow from her wound.⁵ After such an accident, that medical professor whom they sought, met them on their way.⁶ Placing his hand on the Saint's head, he cried out: "O holy virgin, a physician infinitely superior to me hath healed thy head, and always seek that physician, who is able to expel all manner of disease from thee." Bishop Mel then said to her: "I shall never again advise you to seek any human physician."⁷

The fame of Brigid's holiness, in a short time, caused this wonder-worker to be known and universally admired by the bishops, clergy, religious, and people of Ireland. Her miracles had most beneficial effects on the newly-converted Christians, while they caused a great many conversions among the Pagans. St. Mel and other distinguished prelates held with her frequent spiritual conferences and took her counsel.⁸ After the foregoing occurrences, as related by her biographers, Bishops Mel and Melchu, with St. Brigid,⁹

²² This account occurs in Professor O'Looney's *Irish Life of St. Brigid*, pp. 19, 20.

²³ This miraculous occurrence is more minutely detailed in the *Fifth Life*, chap. xxxvi.

²⁴ This is briefly stated in the *Lections of the Breviary of Aberdeen for St. Brigid's Office*. See Bishop Forbes' "*Kalendar of Scottish Saints*," p. 289.

²⁵ The *Third Life* adds, that when it was mixed with water, two mute women were restored to the use of speech.

²⁶ These accounts are also given in Professor O'Looney's *Irish Life of St. Brigid*, pp. 19 to 22.

²⁷ See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*,"

Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. xxvii., xxviii., p. 529. See, also, *Vita Quinta S. Brigidæ*, cap. xlvii., xlviii., and n. 12, pp. 578, 579, 640. *¶* In the latter *Life*, it is stated, St. Brigid suffered from a pain in her head. That physician, to whom Mel sent her, was Bishop Echeus, Echenus or Echianus, of whom it is said, he was skilled in the knowledge and practice of various diseases, and in the remedies for their cure.

²⁸ See "*The Life of St. Brigid*," by an Irish Priest, chap. iv., pp. 39, 40.

²⁹ From the poetical description in our Saint's *Sixth Life*, it would seem, that this journey had been undertaken in the middle of the Summer season, and with a view of

proceeded towards the plain of Theba,³⁷ or Tefia, where the aforesaid prelate, Mel, had a large monastery.³⁸ During this journey, the favoured virgin wrought many miracles.³⁹ The ancient principality of Anghaile⁴⁰ seems to have been their point of destination. While the Virgin and her companions dwelt there, the King of Theba⁴¹ gave a banquet, at some distance from their dwelling. An awkward servant, on approaching the royal table to remove a precious vessel of priceless material and workmanship,⁴² chanced to let it fall, when it was immediately broken in pieces.⁴³ Full of anger, this king arbitrarily ordered him to be bound and put to death. But, on hearing about such a cruel and an unjust sentence, Bishop Mel sought the king to intercede for that captive. The chief, however, would not grant his petition. Then Mel gathered up the fragments of the broken vessel, and brought them to St. Brigid. He asked her to repair it, and she effected this task.⁴⁴ The captive was subsequently liberated; while the fame of such a miracle diffused itself throughout that part of the country.⁴⁵

Near this place, St. Brigid was asked to visit another pious virgin,⁴⁶ called Briga,⁴⁷ and at the house of this latter. Her house was at a place called Kilbrige.⁴⁸ Our saint accepted such an invitation at the time, as she had often done on similar occasions. Arriving at the house, she was received with great joy and honour. According to the usual custom of treating guests, her feet were washed; and, after the water had been removed, it cured another nun, whose feet were

assisting at a council held by St. Patrick. At this Synod, many prelates were present, from remote places. Regarding those bishops and our Saint, it is added :—

“Cum quibus illa suis perrexit sancta puellis;
Tempore quo rutilus torrentia sol geminorum
Sidera perlustrat; ardent confinia Caneri,
Fit calor in terris, fervet sol igneus astris.”

³⁷ Colgan says of Thebe or Theba, that it was a plain known as Tefia or Tefia, otherwise called Anghaile, in the county of Longford. See “Trias Thaumaturga,” *Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ*, n. 16, p. 543.

³⁸ This monastery was Ardagh, which afterwards grew into an Episcopal See.—*Ibid.*, n. 17.

³⁹ In favour of the blind, lame and afflicted. We are told, also, that during the progress of herself and of her companions,

“rectis properando gressibus ibant
Fluminis ad ripam cujusdam nomine Bannæ.”

It seems more probable, however, that Barua should be the reading, as probably the River Barrow is meant.

⁴⁰ The Muintir-Fearghaill or family of the O’Ferralls were its chief lords for many centuries, although in point of genealogy, the O’Quinns of the same race were their seniors. They had sometimes sovereignty over that sub-section of Fergus’s race, on the east side of the Shannon. Still, they never ruled over the whole race of Fergus, who had large territories in Connaught, as likewise in Thomond and Kerry. See “The Topographical Poems of John

O’Dubhagain and Giolla na Naomh O’Huidhrin.” Edited by Dr. O’Donovan, n. 277, p. xxxviii.

⁴¹ The King of Longford, he is rather incorrectly called in the “Life of St. Brigid,” by an Irish Priest, chap. iv., p. 41.

⁴² The writer of her Third Life says, this vessel among our ancestors was called “Septiformis Calyx.” It might be a curious subject for enquiry, to ascertain the exact form and material of this cup or chalice. Have we amongst our ancient vessels any of a peculiar shape, to which this and the following description might apply? The many-sided mether, or drinking cup of the ancient Irish, may have been one of its class. It is said to have been “a richly ornamented vessel” in Professor O’Looney’s Irish Life of St. Brigid, pp. 21, 22.

⁴³ From this account, we may infer, that the material was either glass or pottery-ware.

⁴⁴ This account is contained, but in a brief way, in the Lectons of the Breviary of Aberdeen. See Bishop Forbes’ “Kalendars of Scottish Saints,” p. 289.

⁴⁵ See Colgan’s “Trias Thaumaturga,” *Tertia Vita S. Brigidæ*, cap. xxix., pp. 529, 530. *Sexta Vita S. Brigidæ*, secs. xxvi., xxvii., pp. 587, 588.

⁴⁶ She is called Brigid the daughter of Conaille [Congal] in Professor O’Looney’s Irish Life of the Saint, pp. 21, 22.

⁴⁷ This Briga or Brigh is supposed to have been venerated at the 21st of January, or again her feast may be found at the 9th of March.

⁴⁸ See “The Life of St. Brigid,” by an Irish Priest, chap. iv., p. 42.

crippled.⁴⁹ One day a woman came to our saint, with a present of apples,⁵⁰ while Brigid dwelt in the plain of Theba. Before that woman left the place, some lepers came up demanding alms. Brigid told the woman to divide this fruit with them. Then her visitor replied, "I brought these apples, not for lepers, but for yourself and for your nuns." Such a remark displeased our saint, and she rebuked that woman for her want of charity, telling her at the same time, her trees should never afterwards bear fruit.⁵¹ On returning to her house, the woman found not a single apple remaining in her orchard; although, only a short time before, her trees were bending with fruit. Thenceforward, her garden remained barren, according to St. Brigid's prediction.⁵²

At another time, St. Brigid journeyed through the plain of Thebe in her chariot, when, with many cattle, she saw a man, his wife and whole family, labouring and bearing heavy burthens. These greatly wearied them, as the heat of summer was then excessive. Compassionating these people, our saint gave them the horses, which were under her own chariot, to assist their efforts. At this time, with her nuns, she sat down on the way-side. Brigid then said to her religious daughters, "Dig beneath the sod which is near, that a well of water may be produced, for some persons shall come hither, who although having food, shall require drink." Having obeyed her orders, and dug a few feet, a fountain immediately sprung up in the place.⁵³ After some short time, with a great number of persons on horse and foot, accompanying him, a certain chief came to the place. Having learned, that St. Brigid had given away her horses, he presented her with two untrained ones. These became as tractable under her management, as if they had been accustomed to the traces of her chariot.⁵⁴ Afterwards, some of St. Patrick's disciples and family are related to have passed the same way. These said to Brigid: "We have laboured on our journey, having food, but no drink." The sisters of our saint replied, that running water had been prepared for them to drink, and that the abbess had predicted their arrival. Then all eat and drank together, while the fame of our saint was extolled. Thanksgiving was likewise returned to the Almighty, for such a blessing.

While St. Brigid was travelling, with a great crowd, two lepers followed her, and according to her usual custom, she kindly received them. However, these miserable creatures quarrelled with each other, and proceeded to blows. Meantime, the arm of that man, who struck first, became curved, so that he could not lift it; while, the right hand of his opponent, which had been raised, could not be moved again to its natural position. The hands of these lepers remained in the condition described, until St. Brigid on coming up healed them. Then they repented.⁵⁵ At another time, our saint's chariot was brought to carry a sick man, who was at the point of death. About even-tide, he was conveyed to the place, where our saint resided; and, on that very night, his recovery set in, so that by morning he was able to walk. On finding this to be the case, some lepers asked for her

⁴⁹ See, *Tertia Vita S. Brigidæ*, cap. xxx., p. 530. *Vita Quinta S. Brigidæ*, cap. xlv., xlv., p. 578. *Vita Sexta S. Brigidæ*, secs. xiv., xviii., pp. 584, 585.

⁵⁰ This anecdote is contained in Professor O'Looney's *Irish Life of St. Brigid*, pp. 23, 24.

⁵¹ This anecdote is more briefly related in the *LECTIONS OF ST. BRIGID'S OFFICE* in the *Breviary of Aberdeen*. See Bishop Forbes' "*Kalendar of Scottish Saints*," p. 289.

⁵² See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*."

Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. xxxi., p. 530. *Vita Sexta S. Brigidæ*, sec. xxx., p. 586, *ibid.*

⁵³ See "*The Life of St. Brigid*," by an Irish Priest, chap. iv., p. 45.

⁵⁴ The foregoing circumstances are related, with more prolixity, in the *Sexta Vita S. Brigidæ*, secs. xxxi., xxxii., xxxiv., pp. 588, 589. Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*."

⁵⁵ The same account is given in Professor O'Looney's *Irish Life of St. Brigid*, pp. 23, 24.

chariot. This vehicle, with her horses, the virgin is said to have bestowed on them.⁵⁶

Being invited, St. Brigid went to a certain nunnery, in the territory of Theba, to celebrate Easter. The pious abbess⁵⁷ of the place, on Holy Thursday,⁵⁸ asked all her sisters, who would wish to wash the feet of certain infirm nuns.⁵⁹ All seeming to feel repugnance for this office, St. Brigid declared her willingness to assume such a task; and the abbess was pleased with a compliance, which she knew to have been inspired by heaven. Four of the nuns were then infirm; one was a paralytic, another had been subject to epileptic fits, one was a leper, and another had been blind.⁶⁰ Our saint first began to wash the paralytic, who said to her: "O holy mother, pray to Christ for me, that I may be healed." Brigid prayed for her, and she was instantly restored to health.⁶¹ While our saint remained in this part of the country, she occupied a cell for some days, and it chanced, also that a boy who had been mute and a paralytic⁶² was there, although St. Brigid was ignorant about his infirmities. Some passengers arrived, who asked for food.⁶³ Our saint enquired from this boy, if he knew where the cellar key was to be found. He immediately spoke and said "I do." Brigid replied, "Go, and bring it to me."⁶⁴ The paralytic, hereupon, arose cured, and presented the keys, whilst, afterwards, with the holy virgin, he ministered food to the guests, after the Scottish manner.⁶⁵ When returning home, this boy's friends were greatly astonished on finding him both walking and speaking. The boy told them circumstantially how he had been healed; and all who heard his account gave thanks to God and praised His holy servant.⁶⁶ At a time, the holy bishops Maol and Maolchu⁶⁷ came to St. Brigid. They asked, if she would accompany them on a visit to their sanctified patron, Patrick, then dwelling in the plain of Bregh.⁶⁸ Our saint replied, that she very much desired to do so, as she wished to obtain his blessing. Then those holy bishops set out on their journey, with Brigid and her companions. A certain cleric, who had a large family, with cattle and two waggons, asked

⁵⁶ See, also, "Trias Thaumaturga," *Sexta Vita S. Brigidæ*, secs. xxxviii., xxxix., p. 590.

⁵⁷ She had probably been the subject of St. Brigid, in an affiliate house.

⁵⁸ See "Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, pp. 43, 44.

⁵⁹ This account is varied in the *Lectons of St. Brigid's Office* as found in the *Breviary of Aberdeen*. See Bishop Forbes' "Kalendars of Scottish Saints," p. 289.

⁶⁰ In the *Irish Life of St. Brigid*, belonging to Professor O'Looney, we are told instead, that "there were four diseased persons in the house, viz., a man in a decline, a maniac, a blind man and a leper," pp. 23, 24.

⁶¹ This miracle is also recorded in the "Vita Sexta S. Brigidæ," sec. xix., p. 585. See "Trias Thaumaturga." There, however, it is stated, in addition, that the other three afflicted persons were healed by St. Brigid, after praying her to interpose on their behalf.

⁶² Relating this incident, "The Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, calls him "a deaf and dumb child." See chap. iv., p. 44.

⁶³ This anecdote is somewhat differently related in Professor O'Looney's *Irish Life of*

St. Brigid, pp. 23, 24.

⁶⁴ This is somewhat differently related in the *Lessons of St. Brigid's Office* in the *Breviary of Aberdeen*. See Bishop Forbes' "Kalendars of Scottish Saints," p. 289.

⁶⁵ Colgan has appended a note, to the corresponding Latin passage, in which he proceeds to show—a question not so much debated now as in his time—that the Irish were anciently called Scots, as St. Brigid is remarked to have dwelt then, in the country of Theba, near Meath, and that the author of her *Fourth Life* must have lived at a remote period, the Irish having been commonly called Scots, in his time. See "Trias Thaumaturga," *Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ*, n. 18, p. 564.

⁶⁶ This miracle is also related, in the *Quinta Vita S. Brigidæ*, cap. xlix., p. 579. See "Trias Thaumaturga."

⁶⁷ So called in the *Fourth Life* of our saint. In the *Third Life*, they are named Mel and Melchu.

⁶⁸ Probably *reaghmlagh*, a transposed form of the name *Magh-Breagh*, a famous plain in East Meath. See "The Topographical Poems of John O'Dubhagain and Giolla na naomh O'Huidhrin." Edited by John O'Donovan, LL.D., p. xv., n. 63.

permission to accompany the saints, that he might minister to their wants on the journey; but, the bishops would not consent, lest their travelling might be impeded by the number of beasts and the amount of baggage. Then, St. Brigid said to the bishops; "Proceed you before us, I shall remain, and assist those people."

The bishops obeyed her, and the saint, remaining with the cleric's family, asked why they did not put their baggage in the waggons. She was informed that two infirm persons, a paralytic man, and a blind woman, occupied them. The fellow-travellers of Brigid refreshed themselves and slept for the night, while she fasted and kept vigil. On the following morning, this spouse of Christ blessed some water.⁶⁹ Pouring it on the paralytic and on the blind woman, both were restored; one to the use of his limbs, the other to her eyesight. Then, according to our saint's orders, their baggage was placed in the waggons, while prosecuting their journey and giving unfeigned thanks to God. With their permission and blessing, our saint and her companions parted company, in order to hasten progress.

On seeing a certain rustic greatly concerned regarding his cattle, and being near the house in which our saint lived, Brigid told her nuns to enquire about the cause of his grief; when he replied, that his whole family, consisting of twelve persons, lay sick at home, and there was no woman found to milk his cows. Our saint told her nuns to perform this kindly office. Having complied with her order, the religious sisters were invited by that man to partake of some refreshment. With this request they complied, while their holy abbess fasted. All having dined, the saint of God blessed some water, with which she sprinkled the house and its sick inmates. The holy virgin's presence and her ministrations restored all those infirm persons to health. Then they gave thanks to God, and invoked blessings on his glorious servant. Subsequently, in a direct course, St. Brigid and her companions⁷⁰ proceed to a place called Tailten,⁷¹ where St. Patrick, with an assembly of holy bishops and saints, held a council.⁷² Brigid was received by the assembly with becoming honour.⁷³ Here she is related to have vindicated the character of Bishop Bron⁷⁴ in a miraculous manner.⁷⁵ Tailten has been identified⁷⁶ with the modern Teltown,⁷⁷ a parish⁷⁸ in the barony of

⁶⁹ Thus, the circumstance is related, in her Fourth Life. In the Third, it is said, our saint used the "morning dew," as *materies* for their restoration.

⁷⁰ According to Professor O'Looney's Irish Life of St. Brigid, one of these was Bishop Mel, pp. 25, 26. Melchu is also named as one of them in "The Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, when alluding to this narrative. See chap. iv., pp. 46 to 48.

⁷¹ This place was situated in the northern part of Meath. In ancient times, it was greatly celebrated. See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Quarta S. Brigide, n. 19, p. 504.

⁷² It is called a "Convocation of the men of Erin at Tailtin," and "the Synod of Erin," in Professor O'Looney's Irish Life of the saint, pp. 25, 26. A very interesting description of Teltown, identified with Tailtean, is given in Sir William Robert Wilde's "Beauties of the Boyne and its Tributary the Blackwater," chap. vi., pp. 149 to 154.

⁷³ In the Fourth Life of our saint, we are told, on this occasion, St. Brigid received

St. Patrick, the Apostle of Ireland, as her father, and that, in turn, he adopted her as his daughter. It is also said, that for the first time, these two great saints saw each other there; and from this date forward, common consent allowed St. Brigid to be the greatest of all the Irish saints, after St. Patrick.

⁷⁴ See his acts at the 8th of June.

⁷⁵ See the Lectons of St. Brigid's Office in the Breviary of Aberdeen. Bishop Forbes' "Kalendars of Scottish Saints," p. 289.

⁷⁶ John O'Donovan has given an account of ancient Tailten—which he identifies with Teltown—in letters, dated Keannanus, July 12th, July 13th, July 14th, 1836, pp. 6 to 16, in "Letters containing Information relative to the Antiquities of the County of Meath, collected during the Progress of the Ordnance Survey in 1836."

⁷⁷ A townland of 626 acres so called contains a remarkable eminence called Rach Dubh or Black Rath. It is about sixty perches northward from the Blackwater River.

⁷⁸ It is also called Killalton Parish.

Upper Kells, county of Meath.⁷⁹ Yet, another opinion has been advanced with much ability,⁸⁰ that the remains of the celebrated Royal Cemeteries of Tailltin should be sought for on the Lough Crew Hills,⁸¹ at Oldcastle, in the same county.⁸² Here an annual meeting of the people, called in Irish Oenach, "a fair," had been held in ancient times, on "the fair-hilled Taillten," which seems a term inapplicable to Telltown, which lies in a low situation, and which is singularly destitute of hills. It is probable, St. Patrick took advantage of the popular gathering there to hold a synod or to give a public mission. It is said, the fair was held with great pomp,⁸³ and that it was celebrated for national games, which commenced on the 1st of August each year, although occasionally interrupted or prevented, owing to civil discords or to other causes. When the day, on which the foregoing occurrence took place, drew to a close, on seeing the miracles which our saint wrought, a certain man asked her to visit, with her virgins, a house lately built, and which he wished should be consecrated by her presence. She went according to his request, and was received by her host, in a hospitable and respectful manner. When food had been placed before the nuns for their refreshment, Brigid said to her sisters, with a prophetic spirit; "The Lord hath now shown me, that this man is a Gentile, and as he will not be baptized, we should not partake of his meats." One of her nuns replied: "You speak truth, for I have heard, that of all others, he hath most resisted St. Patrick's preaching and hath refused to receive baptism." St. Brigid then told her host, that they could not eat with him until he had been first baptized. Immediately afterwards, the Lord touched this man's heart with compunction for his sins, and he believed, together with his whole family. Bishop Bron, St. Patrick's disciple, who accompanied our saint, administered the baptismal rite. On being informed about these circumstances the following day, St. Patrick told the holy virgin, that henceforth she should not journey,⁸⁴ without having a priest to accompany her.⁸⁵ Then, the illustrious bishop ordained a priest, named Natfroich,⁸⁶ who during the whole course of

⁷⁹ See Lewis' "Topographical Dictionary of Ireland," vol. ii., p. 600.

⁸⁰ See some admirable investigations, relative to this matter, which were presented by Eugene Alfred Conwell, M.R.I.A., in a series of communications to the Royal Irish Academy on the 23rd of May, and on the 14th of November, 1864; as also on the 26th of February, 1866, and on the 12th of February, 1872. These were published in "Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy," vol. ix. First series, pp. 355 *et seq.*, and vol. i., second series, pp. 72 *et seq.*

⁸¹ The pre-historic monuments here were first discovered by Eugene Alfred Conwell, M.R.I.A., on Tuesday, the 9th of June, 1863. See "Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy," vol. ix., p. 356. "Examination of the Ancient Sepulchral Cairns on the Loughcrew Hills, County of Meath."

⁸² Mr. Conwell has issued in book form, thin 8vo, an interesting account of this locality. This is intitled "Discovery of the Tomb of OLLAMH FÖHLA (*Ollav Föla*), Ireland's famous Monarch and Law-Maker upwards of Three Thousand Years Ago," Dublin, 1873. It contains several interesting illustrations, pertinent to the subject.

The same writer proposes to publish a very valuable contribution to our ancient history and antiquities, intitled, "Taillten and Brugh: in the County of Meath: being an account of the present condition of two of the Royal Cemeteries of Ireland in Pagan Times." Illustrations, from correct drawings, are designed for this work.

⁸³ Here "games similar to the Olympian are described to have been held for 15 days before, and 15 days after, the 1st of August, and the time appointed for this grand festival was also that commonly chosen for giving young people in marriage."—Thomas Cromwell's "Excursions through Ireland," vol. ii., p. 125. London, 1820. 8vo.

⁸⁴ See "Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest," chap. iv., p. 48.

⁸⁵ In the Irish Life of St. Brigid, belonging to Professor O'Looney, the foregoing occurrences are noticed. We are informed, moreover, that St. Patrick's injunction to St. Brigid "caused Natfraech to take Holy Orders," pp. 25, 26.

⁸⁶ This priest was afterwards numbered among our national saints, and according to Marianus O'Gorman and the Martyrology of Donegal, he was venerated on the 11th of

her life attended St. Brigid, in quality of guardian, while on her travels.⁸⁷ Having taken leave of St. Patrick, the holy abbess returned to her nunnery. About this time, also, a certain man⁸⁸ came to the saint, and bore his mother, a paralytic, on his shoulders. When he had arrived in our saint's presence, placing his mother on the ground, under the holy virgin's shadow,⁸⁹ no sooner had the infirm woman been set in this position, than she arose and cried out: "I give thanks to God, because the moment I touched your shadow, O saint, I was healed, and felt no more pain." Then audible exclamations of praise to the Almighty issued from the lips of all present.⁹⁰

After some interval of time, a certain demoniac, bound with strong chains, was about being brought to St. Brigid; but, on learning to whom he was being conducted, he cast himself on the ground and persistently declared, they should never bring him to her. The conductors told him, that he neither knew where Brigid was, nor the purpose they had in view; still, he replied, he well knew their object, and the place where our saint dwelt, which he named. Finding they could not move him from the spot where he lay, his guardians were of opinion, that a message should be sent to Brigid, requesting her to visit him there in Christ's name. The holy virgin assented to their request; and, on her approach, a demon fled from that man, whilst as yet she was at some distance. This was a marked privilege our saint possessed, for she caused devils to fear and to fly her approach, wheresoever she came. On the instant, this man's reason returned, and he gave thanks to God.⁹¹

CHAPTER V.

AT ST. LASARA'S CONVENT ST. BRIGID WORKS MIRACLES—HER EXCURSION TO MUNSTER WITH BISHOP ERC—THE HOLY ABBESS VISITS CONNAUGHT—HER LABOURS AND AUSTERITIES WHILE THERE—THE PEOPLE OF LEINSTER REQUEST HER TO RETURN—SHE COMPLIES, AND RE-CROSSES THE SHANNON—SHE RESOLVES ON BUILDING HER GREAT ESTABLISHMENT AT KILDARE.

WHILE some legendary writers of the illustrious saint's acts intersperse them with fantastic recitals, others recount the daily wonders of her life, and the benefits her charitable solicitude everywhere spread around in providing, not only for the wants of the clergy and religious with whom she associated, but even for those of the poor and humble.¹ At a certain time, Brigid, with her companions, was entertained by a St Lasara or Lasrea, at the church of this latter virgin. It has been conjectured she was the daughter of Fergus,²

December. An Irish Life of our saint, in Colgan's possession, mentions him in the fourteenth chapter. See "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Tertia S. Brigide, n. 20, p. 543.

⁸⁷ See L. Tachet de Barneval's "Histoire Légendaire de l'Irlande," chap. ix., p. 87.

⁸⁸ He is said to have been from Northern Bregia in Professor O'Looney's Manuscript Life.

⁸⁹ In the Irish Life of St. Brigid, Professor O'Looney renders this passage "the shelter of Brigid," pp. 25, 26.

⁹⁰ See "Vita Sexta S. Brigide," section xvi., p. 585, *ibid.*, for an account of the foregoing miracle.

⁹¹ The foregoing miracles are copied, with little variation, from the Third and Fourth Lives of St. Brigid. See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Tertia S. Brigide, cap. xxxii., xxxiii., xxxiv., xxxv., xxxvi., xxxvii., xxxviii., xxxix., xl., xli., xlii., xliii., pp. 530, 531. Vita Quarta S. Brigide, lib. i., cap. xxxiv., xxxv., xxxvi., xxxvii., xxxviii., xxxix., xl., xli., xlii., xliii., xlv., pp. 547, 548, 549. In many, if not in most, of these chapters, one life seems to be almost a verbal copy or transcript of the other.

CHAP. V.—See L. Tachet de Barneval's "Histoire Légendaire de l'Irlande," chap. viii., p. 82.

² The Martyrologies of Marianus Gorman,

son to Fethlemid, son to King Leogaire.³ This identification, however, is not well ascertained.⁴ Her place is called Kill-Laisre,⁵ or "Laisre's Church,"⁶ although it is difficult to identify the foundress,⁷ among the many recurring and similar names inscribed on our calendars.⁸ While resting at this retreat, on the evening of a particular day, accompanied by a great multitude, St. Patrick, it is said, came to demand hospitality. Then, the nuns of St. Laisre's church,⁹ being concerned about the poor provision made in that place for entertaining such a number of persons, manifested their inquietude to St. Brigid. She enquired, what store they possessed. Being told, they had only twelve loaves, an egg, and a little milk,¹⁰ which were prepared for herself and her sisters, our holy abbess replied, that these should prove sufficient for a great number of persons, through God's bounty. She then required the Sacred Scriptures to be read, so that their corporal necessities might presently be forgotten. St. Brigid and St. Patrick afterwards partook of some food, which had been prepared. The quantity of provisions greatly increased, even when their repast concluded. St. Lasrea then offered her place to God and to St. Brigid, for ever.¹¹ This account seems to indicate, that previously, it had been a convent and not subject to her jurisdiction.

Our Divine Redeemer proclaimed, "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God."¹² While holy Brigid remained at the nunnery of St. Lasara, a certain man, whose wife bore him some unaccountable aversion, came to the virgin. He entreated, that she should employ her pious offices for the restoration of a connubial love, which ought to exist between himself and his companion. Then, Christ's holy spouse, blessing some water, ordered the man to sprinkle his house with it, in God's name.¹³ This order he obeyed. During the absence of his wife, food and drink, with his bed, were aspersed by him. When she returned home,¹⁴ her

Tallagh, and Cathal Maguire treat concerning her at the 18th of February, and at the 29th of March, in the opinion of Colgan. See "*Trias Thaumaturga*," n. 21, p. 543.

³About the year 520, his great-granddaughter, St. Lasre, flourished, on the borders of Meath and Leinster. She was a disciple to St. Finnian of Clonard, as may be seen in the twenty-second chapter of his life, and also in the sixteenth chapter of the Life of St. Kieran of Clonmacnoise.

⁴The Abbate D. Giacomo Certani assumes it as established, in his work, "*La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese*." Libro Quarto, p. 265. For the use of this very rare work, the writer is indebted to its learned and courteous owner, Jasper Robert Joly, LL.D., 38 Rathmines, Dublin.

⁵In an Irish life of our saint, at chapter xviii.

⁶In Latin "*Cella S. Lassaræ*."

⁷The time and place are thought by Colgan to favour such identity.

⁸There are at least fifteen or sixteen holy virgins, called Lassara, Lassar or Lasrea, in our Irish *mænologies*. Marianus Gorman, the *Martyrologies* of Tallagh, of Cathal Maguire, and of Donegal, name them at the dates of their respective festivals, which are enumerated at the 6th of January, where the

first of these occurs.

⁹There are many churches bearing such a name in Ireland. One of these was in Ulster, during Colgan's time. It was a parish church of Clogher diocese, and situated on the banks of a lake called Lochmacnen. Allusion has been made to it, in the notices of St. Lassar of Achadh-foda. There was another in the diocese of Lismore, in Munster. A third was in Elphin diocese, in the territory Oirecht Hymainin; while, a fourth was in the diocese of Achonry, and within the territory of Lugny: both these latter being in the province of Connaught. But, from circumstances of this relation and place, none of the aforementioned churches seem to be here alluded to.

¹⁰In Professor O'Looney's Irish Life of St. Brigid, "a sheep" is added to these resources, pp. 25, 26.

¹¹See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*." Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. i., cap. xvi., p. 549. Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. xlv., p. 531. *Ibid*.

¹²St. Matt. v., 9.

¹³In his usual erudite and fanciful manner, Abbate D. Giacomo Certani has amplified his narrative of this incident. See "*La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese*." Libro Quarto, pp. 269 to 272.

¹⁴This was at Killassair, according to

heart filled with affection towards her husband, while their mutual harmony and love continued so long as they lived.¹⁵ At this time, also, St. Brigid was visited by a certain virgin, descended from the race of Guais or Guasius.¹⁶ Their district was in Meath, where they were known as the *Hu Mac Huais*.¹⁷ This virgin sought alms from every house in the kingdom. Brigid said to her: "I will give you either my cloak, or a heifer lately presented to me."¹⁸ The religious told our saint, that neither of these gifts could profit her, for way-side robbers might deprive her of them. Brigid then asked her visitor, if she would receive a girdle, worn by herself, and which should heal several kinds of diseases, prevailing in that part of the country, provided this zone were immersed in water, the name of Christ being also invoked. The virgin¹⁹ received this gift from our saint very thankfully. Taking the girdle, she first went to a certain boy, who was sick, and who was greatly beloved by his parents. The Almighty was pleased to restore him to health, through the instrumentality of this Brigidine relic.²⁰ That virgin in like manner was enabled to heal many, who were sick, so long as she lived.²¹ According to St. Brigid's prediction, she even received several presents in return for such services. With the gifts thus acquired, she bought lands, giving all the wealth she possessed to the poor. While living a chaste and holy life, she became a distinguished saint.²² Her name, however, does not appear to have been recorded.

Another time, St. Brigid went into the district of *Feara Ross*.²³ Having been requested by some persons, the Abbess visited a king, living in the plain of *Breagh*,²⁴ that she might obtain a certain man's liberation. This person had been held as a prisoner by the dynast. Our holy virgin promised a

Professor O'Looney's *Irish Life of St. Brigid*. An additional incident is added to prove the affection, which the wife evinced for her husband, pp. 27, 28.

¹⁵ This miraculous renewal of affection between the parties is related in the sixth metrical life of our saint, with some additional particulars. The following line concludes this narrative:—

"Virgini's ob meritum Christi firmavit amorem."

—Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," *Sexta Vita S. Brigidæ*, sec. xl., l. 550.

¹⁶ Thus found in the *Third and Fourth Lives* of our saint. In a note thereon, prefixed to the *Third Life*, Colgan writes an emendation, that in the Irish idiom this family should be named the *Mac-Huais*. This tribe's name they took from an old and respectable stock, descended from *Colla Huasius*, who is numbered among the Irish kings. See "*Trias Thaumaturga*," n. 22, p. 543.

¹⁷ The Abbate D. Giacomo Certani has it "Ella era d'vna Regione della Media, che allora chiamausi Nac-Hunis, et oggi di vien detta *Hu Machunis*."—"La Santità Prodigiola. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese," libro quarto, p. 272.

¹⁸ This narrative is somewhat differently presented in the *Lections* taken from the *Breviary of Aberdeen*. See Bishop Forbes' "*Kalendar of Scottish Saints*," p. 289.

¹⁹ This person is said to have been in great misery, before St. Brigid bestowed on her the gift. Professor O'Looney's *Irish Life of St. Brigid*, pp. 27, 28.

²⁰ This same miracle seems the one alluded to, in the metrical life of our saint; but, in this life, it is said, that a poor man was the recipient of St. Brigid's girdle.

²¹ It is stated, in the *Sixth Life*, that by means of this girdle, many miracles, in favour of the sick and afflicted, had been wrought, throughout the districts around *Kiadare*. These miracles are said to have been continued, after it had been brought to the recipient's country. See *Sexta Vita S. Brigidæ*, sec. xxv., pp. 580, 587.

²² See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," *Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ*, cap. xlv., xlv., and *Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ* lib. i., cap. xlvii., xlviii., pp. 531, 549.

²³ Which means "the men of Ross." Professor O'Looney's *Irish Life of St. Brigid*, pp. 29, 30. This was a tribe and territory, comprising the country around *Carriackmacross*, in the County of *Monaghan*, and a part of *Louth County*. See "*Three Fragments, Copied from Ancient Sources, by Dubhaltach Mac Firbisigh*," edited with a translation and notes, by John O'Donovan, LL.D., p. 72, n. (b.)

²⁴ Otherwise, *Breaghmhagh*, or *Bregia*, the great plain of Meath, in which Tara is situated. See "*The Irish Version of the Historia Britonum of Nennius*," edited with

ransom to him for that captive. But the king would not consent to release his prisoner.²⁵ He even vowed, this man should be put to death on the same day; and the utmost concession, our saint could obtain, was a delay of execution, until the ensuing night. Accompanied by the kindred and friends of that captive, Brigid went at night to the place where he was confined; and while her companions slept, she alone remained awake. The dynast's friends said to him: "Unless, O king, thy captive be put to death, during this night, no person can deprive him of life on to-morrow, for St. Brigid will liberate him. We have held a council amongst ourselves, resolving to take him away by violence, and to kill him, independently of your wishes. This course, we trust, will serve to your being considered inculpable." But the holy virgin was miraculously admonished, regarding this plot. During the first night-watch, a vision appeared to the chained man. He saw Brigid standing near him, and he heard her pronounce these words: "Behold, evil men are intent on killing thee this night, but when thou art dragged to death, thou shalt often call on me by name. And when the chain shall have been removed from thy neck, that they may proceed to murder thee, slip away from thy executioners, on the right side, and thou wilt safely escape from them to your friends." After this announcement, and while the captive remained awake, his executioners came. Removing him without the door of the king's castle, they unbound that chain which confined him. We are told, this man immediately escaped from their hands, and without molestation, he came to St. Brigid; his enemies, meantime, thinking they had killed him and had cut off his head. On the following day, however, neither his head nor body could be seen, and this man's enemies were astonished at the result of their search. In the early part of that same day, Brigid sent a messenger to the king, with a true account concerning the transaction. Hearing this, the dynast repented of his evil intentions, and dismissed all inimical thoughts towards the man, on account of that veneration he entertained for holy Brigid.²⁶

One of the holy men, who had been distinguished owing to his virtues in St. Brigid's time, was Bishop Erc or Ercus of Slane.²⁷ He was an early convert and a disciple of St. Patrick.²⁸ This Bishop Erc's immediate progenitors and family lived in Munster; although, he descended from Fergus Rogius,²⁹ and the royal line of Ulster kings.³⁰ His hermitage was at Slane,³¹

a translation and notes by Dr. James Hen-
thorn Todd and by the Hon. Algernon
Herbert, p. 124, n. (q.)

²⁵ The account is more fully given in Ab-
bate D. Giacomo Certani's "*La Santità
Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese*,"
libro quinto, pp. 354 to 359.

²⁶ See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*."
Vita Quarta S. Brigide, lib. ii., cap. xxxix.,
p. 556. Also, *Vita Tertia S. Brigide*, cap.
lxviii., p. 535. *Ibid*.

²⁷ His festival occurs at the 2nd of No-
vember.

²⁸ In addition to this, D. Giacomo Certani
makes him, absurdly enough, a Canon Re-
gular of St. Augustine. See "*La Santità
Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese*,"
libro quinto, p. 362.

²⁹ His son was Corb, surnamed Ulom.
Eight sons of this Fergus, with their pos-
terity, held large tracts of land, in different

provinces of Ireland, viz., in Ulster, Con-
naught, and Munster.

³⁰ From this line descended St. Brendan
of Birr, St. Caiman, St. Leathan, St. Erc,
bishop, and the holy sisters Criada, Derusia,
and Sincha, daughters of Ernan. According
to the "*Sanctilogic Genealogy*," chap. 30,
these were near relatives of St. Brendan.
In this old record, the several holy persons
enumerated are derived from their common
progenitor, Corb. See "*Trias Thaumaturga*."
Vita Tertia S. Brigide, nn. 42, 43,
p. 544.

³¹ In the "*Diocese of Meath, Ancient and
Modern*," vol. i., chap. xxxix., p. 297, the
Rev. Anthony Cogan writes in sympathy
with his subject. "The Rev. Mervyn Arch-
dall, Protestant Rector of Slane, the distin-
guished author of the *Monasticon Hibernicum*
and of the *Peerage of Ireland*, is buried in
the Protestant churchyard of Slane. He

on the banks of the Boyne, and it stood in a most charming locality.³² Here too, at the present time, may be seen some most interesting relics of our



Franciscan Abbey Ruins, at Slane.

ancestors' piety.³³ Beside that romantically situated cell of the holy man,

was an indefatigable compiler, and to his valuable labours we are all indebted for much interesting information. Over his remains a monument has been erected, with the following inscription:—

'We shall also bear the image of the
Heavenly.'

Sacred to the Memory
of
MERVYN ARCHDALL, A.M.,
Rector of this Parish,
Who died the 8th August,
1791.
Aged 65 years."

³² A very interesting history and description of Slane—so associated with early and closing scenes of the amiable and learned writer's life—will be found in the Rev. Anthony Cogan's "*Diocese of Meath, Ancient and Modern*," vol. i., chap. ix., pp. 58 to 64, and chap. xxxix., pp. 283 to 297. The lamented deceased was a native of Slane, where he was born in the year 1826. He was ordained a priest A.D. 1850. As a lecturer and pulpit orator, he was highly distinguished. By the admirable work he published in three octavo volumes, an incalculable service was rendered to the diocese of Meath. Attached as dean to the

Diocesan Seminary of Navan, he won all hearts by his goodness and gentleness. His collegiate duties were faithfully discharged; while his literary labours were of a peculiarly arduous nature, and must, no doubt, have greatly tended to undermine his constitution. In his preface to the first volume the author says: "I went from churchyard to churchyard, taking the dimensions of the existing ruins, deciphering the tombs of priests, transferring the inscriptions on the pedestals of old altars, searching the registers, gathering old documents and letters of the deceased pastors, examining the lists of subscribers catalogued in old books, visiting the old crosses and the holy wells, and taking notes of every surviving memorial of the faith and piety of the people," p. viii. In declining health, "It is strange," he often observed to his friends, "I believe that I had a vocation to write this work, and I should not be surprised if God would call me soon, since I have finished my labours." He departed this life on Saturday, January 28th. 1872, at Slane, with his relatives so dearly loved by his bedside, at the comparatively early age of 46. He was buried on the following Monday, in the Parish Church of Slane, where a handsome public monument has been erected to commemorate his worth and services.

³³ The accompanying engraving, by Mrs.

yet visited by so many pilgrims of taste, who delight to wander along the winding waters of the Boyne, some towering and extensive abbey ruins³⁴ crown a magnificent height, which presents a vast view over one of the most lovely landscapes in Ireland.³⁵ A fine, lofty, and nearly perfect abbey-tower dominates over the deserted and ruinous cloisters beside it.³⁶ A much frequented graveyard surrounds the ruined Franciscan monastery, that had been founded here A.D. 1512.³⁷ The pious and noble Flenings'³⁸ pile of buildings was soon diverted to secular purposes, while the church and monastic portions gradually fell into decay. It is said, that several fragments of St. Eric's ancient hermitage and some ornamental details were taken from the older ruin, and inserted in the more modern erection.

With blessed Eric, the great St. Brigid was specially intimate and bound by ties of holy friendship. This appears from her Acts, and it is supposed,³⁹ that about the year 484, she was his travelling companion to his native province.⁴⁰ Such tour of the holy abbess possibly preceded one she made to Connaught;⁴¹ although, indeed, this matter has not been very clearly established.⁴² St. Brigid entertained a great inclination to see certain consecrated places and holy persons in Munster; but, according to another account, her visit there was induced, through a desire to accompany St. Eric on a visit towards that country, where his relatives lived.⁴³ One day, while prosecuting their journey, St. Brigid said to the bishop, "O venerable father, point out to me the quarter of Munster, in which your family resides." When the bishop had complied with her request, the holy virgin exclaimed in continuation, "At present, a war is there waging, between your tribe and another clan." The bishop replied to her: "O holy mother, I believe what thou hast told me is true, for when I last left them to see you, they were in a state of discord." Then Brigid cried out, "O Father, your people are now routed." One of St. Eric's disciples,⁴⁴ hereupon, thoughtlessly remarked to

Millard, Dublin, from a drawing made on the spot, represents the ruins of the Franciscan monastery at Slane.

³⁴ At Slane, it is said, Dagobert, King of Austrasia, took refuge, when he was banished into Ireland, by Grimoald, Mayor of the Palace, at the age of seven years, and A.D. 653.

³⁵ Canons Regular of St. Augustine have been placed here by Harris, and St. Patrick is called the founder in the sixth century. See Harris' Ware, vol. ii., "Antiquities of Ireland," chap. xxxviii., p. 264. But, Sir James Ware more sensibly states, that Christopher Fleming, Baron of Slane, and his wife, Elizabeth Stukely, were the founders. In the charter of its foundation, it is stated, to have been "in loco Hermitorii S. Erci." See "De Hibernia et Antiquitatibus ejus," cap. xxvi., pp. 167, 168.

³⁶ A very inexact engraving of this ivy-shrouded object is presented in the "Dublin Penny Journal," vol. ii., No. 102, p. 393.

³⁷ See Archdall's "Monasticon Hibernicum," pp. 572, 573.

³⁸ See some account of them in Rev. C. P. Meehan's "Rise and Fall of the Irish Franciscan Monasteries and Memoirs of the Irish Hierarchy in the Seventeenth Century," chap. iii., pp. 144 to 156.

³⁹ By Dr. Lanigan.

⁴⁰ Whether this or the Connaught journey took place, before or after the foundation of her nunnery at Kildare, seems uncertain. Perhaps, she made more journeys than one to either province, for she appears to have been an indefatigable traveller on her holy missions, like the great Apostle St. Patrick.

⁴¹ See Dr. Lanigan's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. viii., sec. x., n. 116, p. 407.

⁴² In "The Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, he gives precedence to the holy woman's Munster visit, in the order of narrative. See chap. iv., v., pp. 50 to 56. Some of her Latin Acts seem to reverse this arrangement. Abbate D. Giacomo Certani—no great historical authority, however—places the Connaught journey after the Munster one. See "La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese," libro quinto, pp. 362 to 404. See also p. 408, *et seq.*

⁴³ See Dr. Lanigan's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. viii., sec. iv., p. 389.

⁴⁴ In Professor O'Looney's Irish Life of St. Brigid he is called a clerical student, while it is stated St. Brigid and Bishop Eric were in Leinster, at the time of this occurrence, pp. 41, 42.

the holy abbess, "How are you able to see the fight at such a distance?" The bishop reproved this incredulity for his not recognising the Holy Spirit's illuminating gifts conferred on a virgin, who was blessed both in soul and body. Then said Ere to our saint: "O servant of God, sign our eyes that we may witness those things thou seest." The spouse of Christ immediately complied with this request, so that they clearly observed the battle's progress. Looking on, in great grief, his disciple cried out to Bishop Ere: "Alas! also, my Lord, at this moment, my eyes behold the decapitation of two brothers." The result of enquiry established the reality this vision detailed.⁴⁵ Afterwards, in a certain place, and near a mountain, the holy Bishop Ere⁴⁶ and the sanctified virgin Brigid sat down, with their attendants. These were greatly fatigued after their journey, and they experienced great hunger. A youth in their company thereupon remarked, that whoever gave them food should confer a great charity on them. St. Brigid then said, "I predict, that if food and drink be required, you must wait awhile in expectation of assistance from on high; because, I behold a house, in which they are to-day preparing alms for a certain church. Within an hour it shall come here, and even now it is put up for us in packages." While our saint was speaking, refreshment carriers arrived, and when they had learned the illustrious Brigid and holy Bishop Ere, with their disciples, were there, those bearers greatly rejoiced to relieve their wants. Alms were presented to the famished travellers, with such words: "Receive those refreshments, which God Himself hath intended for you, as your wants and merits should be taken into consideration, before those of any other congregation." Giving God thanks, our travellers partook of this food presented; yet, as they only received edibles, some drink was required, likewise, to allay their thirst. Then Brigid told them to dig the earth near this spot.⁴⁷ On obeying her order, a spring of clear water issued from the ground. Afterwards, it bore the name of St. Brigid's well, and it might be seen at the time our virgin's Third and Fourth Lives had been written.⁴⁸

The holy travellers subsequently visited Magh-Femyn,⁴⁹ at a time when a great Synod of Saints was there assembled.⁵⁰ They were obliged to remain at that synod.⁵¹ The holy Bishop Ere gave an account of those miracles wrought by our saint, while he was assisting at this council.⁵² The neighbouring inhabitants, hearing that Brigid was there, brought many infirm persons to her, that she might heal them. Among these were included some lame, leprous, and demented persons.⁵³ Such fortunate patients

⁴⁵ Abbate D. Giacomo Certani has a laboured account of the foregoing incidents. See "La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese," libro quinto, pp. 362 to 368.

⁴⁶ In the Third Life of St. Brigid, the words "Bronus Episcopus" are introduced erroneously, as is evident from the context.

⁴⁷ See D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese," libro quinto, pp. 368, 369.

⁴⁸ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. xlii., xliii., pp. 556, 557. Also, Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. lxxi., pp. 535, 536. *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Otherwise, Magh-Femhin, or "the plain of Femhin," which is a celebrated and extensive level in the territory of the Decies in Munster. See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, n. 45, p.

544.

⁵⁰ We appear to have no other historical notices regarding this synod preserved. It does not occur in the List of Councils, contained in Sir Harris Nicolas' "Chronology of History," pp. 212 to 269.

⁵¹ See "The Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. iv., p. 51.

⁵² Near Fethart, in the county of Tipperary, there is a Kilbride; but, it is not known to have been erected by St. Brigid, or to indicate the site of any residence, which had ever any connexion with her, and which existed in the neighbourhood. See Dr. Lanigan's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. viii., sec. iv., and nn. 51, 52, pp. 389, 390.

⁵³ See "La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese," libro quinto, pp. 369 to 373.

were released from their several afflictions, through Divine assistance, and the prayers of our merciful saint.⁵⁴

After this, Brigid went to a place, adjoining the sea, and at no great distance from that house in which Bishop Erc then dwelt.⁵⁵ Here she remained for a long time, with her companions.⁵⁶ An anchorite lived not far from them. He was a most devout and perfect man. Wishing to avoid all female society, he sought a desert place for his habitation, and directed his course to an island.⁵⁷ While on his way thither, he came near a cell, in which St. Brigid lodged. The disciples of the anchorite said to him: "O Father, let us visit holy Brigid, that she may bless us." The anchorite replied: "My children, you know already my vow to visit no woman."⁵⁸ Then continuing their course, they recollected, in the evening when they had reached a hospice, that some of their luggage had been left behind. It was generally supposed, this loss of their effects occurred, through their neglect of visiting our saint to receive her blessing, and they resolved to fast that night, in atonement for their fault. After these religious men had taken their departure, St. Brigid was inspired to address the following words to her nuns: "Go and bring hither the property of God's servants, and which has been left behind on the road near to us." On the following morning, the monks went back to Brigid, and found their effects in her safe keeping. The holy anchorite and his disciples remained three days and as many nights, near to where she lived. All offered joint prayers to Heaven. God's holy word⁵⁹ was preached, likewise, during this visit.

Those devout men afterwards prosecuted their course, and St. Brigid complied with their wishes, by accompanying them one day's journey. Our pious virgin had compassion on those disciples of the anchorite, for she saw their burdens were too heavy. Beholding two horses descend towards her from a neighbouring mountain, she ordered their baggage to be placed on these animals. When the end of that day's journey had been accomplished, Brigid wished the return of those horses to their owners. Her desire was accomplished, although none of the company knew whence they came, or to whom they belonged. Parting with those religious men, St. Brigid bestowed her benediction on them. Afterwards, she returned towards her cell. When that anchorite came to the island of his selection, a man who had previous possession entered it, with his wife, sons, daughters, and servants.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Quarta S. Brigide, lib. ii., cap. xlv., p. 557. Also, Vita Tertia S. Brigide, cap. lxxii., p. 536. *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Dr Lanigan says the place is now known as Kilbride, near Tramore, Waterford County. See "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. viii., sec. iv., and n. 54, pp. 390, 391.

⁵⁶ The Third Life of our saint says, that she remained here for some years. Colgan thinks this place where she lived must have been a church, called Killbrighde, or St. Brigid's cell, in Kill-medain Deanery. This place is to be found in a catalogue of churches, belonging to the Waterford diocese. See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Tertia S. Brigide, cap. lxxii., and n. 46, pp. 536, 544.

⁵⁷ Colgan is unable to identify the particular anchorite, who is said here to have lived in this Munster island. He hazards a pos-

sible conjecture, that it might have been a St. Killian, whose festival occurs on the 3rd of March, and who dwelt in the island of Inisdoinle, within the bounds of Munster. Perhaps it was St. Barrindus, or Bairrinn, who is venerated on the 30th of January, in the same place. See "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Tertia S. Brigide, n. 47. p. 544.

⁵⁸ See Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." libro quinto, p. 375.

⁵⁹ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Quarta S. Brigide, lib. ii., cap. xlv., p. 557. Also, Vita Tertia S. Brigide, cap. lxxiii., p. 536. *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ See this account amplified and embellished with illustrative observations, according to his usual pedantic style of quoting classical and sacred writings, in Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese," libro quinto, pp. 378 to 385.

Some cattle, also, he wished should graze there during the summer season. The holy anchoret, who had so much desired separation from worldlings, besought this man to leave the place. To such a request, the latter would not accede, saying that he held this island as a portion of his paternal inheritance. The anchoret then sent for St. Brigid, to exert her influence in his behalf; and, when the holy virgin came to the place, she vainly pleaded with the proprietor to relinquish his claim. On the day following, however, a large eagle came and bore off through air this man's infant son. The proprietor's wife and the child's mother came to St. Brigid. Her interposition was sought with tears and lamentations. Our holy virgin said: "Weep not, for your infant lives." The eagle brought her child back and left him safely on the shore. The infant's father was still obdurate, and dwelt near the place, which he was unwilling to leave: but, on the following day, Divine Omnipotence wrought a miracle, which proved the cause of his conversion. The proprietor's heart was now touched, and he repented his former obstinacy. Afterwards, he devoted himself to God and to St. Brigid, promising he would not enter into that island, without the anchoret's permission.⁶¹

On another day, while St. Brigid remained here, some religious guests came to visit her.⁶² Our saint gave a fisherman directions to kill seals, and to proceed out towards the sea, in search of something for her guests.⁶³ The fisherman took his lance, or harpoon, which served to capture marine creatures. When he had sailed out to sea, a seal crossed his course. Raising his harpoon, it was driven home into the animal's head, while a rope attached to it remained in the fisherman's hand. Having received a deadly wound, this seal drew the mariner and his bark out towards the deep. Nor was his course stayed, until the shore of a certain island,⁶⁴ lying far away in the ocean was reached. There the rope was cut, while the mariner reached shore in his boat. That seal, however, with the harpoon fixed in his head, took an opposite direction. It swam in a direct line towards the shore of that place, where St. Brigid dwelt, and there the animal died. The Britons gave the man a currach to return,⁶⁵ and, trusting in Divine Providence, as also on St. Brigid's protection, the fisher set out in this frail bark. Through God's blessing, he fortunately reached that port from which he had started, about the sixth hour.⁶⁶ There he found the seal, lying on the sea-shore,⁶⁷ and with the lance fastened in him. Entering their house, he gave an account, setting forth those incidents of his voyage, to all the religious inmates.⁶⁸

⁶¹ See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," *Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ*, lib. ii., cap. xlv., xlvii., p. 557. Also, *Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ*, cap. lxxiii., p. 536. *Ibid.* These circumstances are related, likewise, with some additions and changes, in the Sixth Metrical Life of our saint. It is there stated, that the anchoret was a priest, and that he was obliged to sail over in a vessel to the island, when he came to a seaport. That child taken away by the eagle is said to have been the only charge his parents had, and in consequence he was greatly beloved by them. See *Vita Sexta S. Brigidæ*, secs. xx., xxi., xxii., xxiii., pp. 585, 586. *Ibid.*

⁶² See this account as given by Albate D. Giacomo Certani, "*La Santità Prodigirosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese*." *Libro Quinto*, pp. 385 to 387. He places the incident here narrated at Kill-Medain.

⁶³ According to Professor O'Looney's Irish Life of St. Brigid, this incident occurred at Tealagh (Tealach na Nespoc), in the west (east?) of Leinster, where pious nobles, *i.e.*, seven bishops, were her guests, pp. 37, 38.

⁶⁴ Possibly the Isle of Man.

⁶⁵ Such is the account in Professor O'Looney's Manuscript.

⁶⁶ In the morning he went across the British sea, and arrived back at mid-day, is stated in Professor O'Looney's Manuscript.

⁶⁷ "Of the Leinster sea at this side" is stated in Professor O'Looney's Manuscript.

⁶⁸ Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," *Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ*, lib. ii., cap. xlvii., p. 557. In the Third Life of our saint, it is said, that the fisherman was dragged by the wounded seal to the British coast, when the rope was cut by a rock on the sea-shore. See *Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ*, cap. lxxiv., p.

Afterwards, St. Brigid, with her nuns, went towards Cliach plain,⁶⁹ in the county of Limerick, and province of Munster.⁷⁰ At a certain place there, she remained for some time. During this interim, a fugitive female servant came to her, for she had left a mistress whose bearing was intolerable. However, following this servant, the mistress intended to bring her back; but, Brigid, wishing to procure the captive liberty, besought her manumission. That female slave-owner would not agree to her proposition, as the servant wove valuable stuffs. The imperious dame, taking her maid by the hand, even proceeded to drag her, with some degree of violence, from the saint's side. Such conduct greatly displeased Brigid, and when the servant had been drawn a certain distance from her, the tyrannical mistress's right hand, which held the slave, immediately withered. Then sorrowfully the dame wept, finding herself unable to move her hand. On retiring, she repented this violence. She restored her maid to freedom, and at the same time sent her to our saint. Immediately afterwards, the woman's hand recovered its former strength.⁷¹

Referable to the fine early national taste for music and poetry, in alluding to the succeeding incident recorded in St. Brigid's Acts, an agreeable French writer observes, that, as being children of Erin, austere eremites, contemplative virgins, grave abbots, and venerable bishops, heard with delight the metallic harp-strings vibrate harmoniously, where such practices were fostered.⁷² When St. Bridget visited the county of Limerick, she had an interview with a chieftain, who lived there in Cliach plain.⁷³ This district stretched over the country around Knockany, and it embraced in part the barony of Conagh.⁷⁴ St. Brigid had been asked to procure liberty for a certain captive; but, when she came to the chief's house for such a purpose, he was not at home. The chief's foster-father and his children, however, were in the house. St. Brigid asked them to play upon harps, which were hanging there, but they told her that the harpers were away. Hereupon, some of Brigid's companions jocularly remarked, they should try their skill, as the saint would bless their hands, and enable them to play, if they only attempted it. Then, the chief's foster-father, with his sons, said, "May God's saint bestow her blessing to enable us to harp for her." Brigid gave her benediction to those, who were ignorant of musical art or notes. Then they played with all the skill of trained harpers. While thus engaged, the chief returned towards his house. Approaching it, he asked who had produced this music he heard. When told it was his foster-father, with his sons, and at St. Brigid's command, the chief was amazed.⁷⁵ He next asked a blessing from their illustrious visitor. This she promised to bestow, provided he would liberate the captive. With her request he complied. The foster-father and his sons followed the profession of harpers to the very day

536, *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Colgan says, this appears to be the plain in Momonia which stretches around Cnoc Aine mountain, for the district in which it rises is called Aine-Cliach. See "Trias Thaumaturga," Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, n. 48, p. 544.

⁷⁰ It is amusing to read in D. Giacomo Certani, this place called Aine Chiac, under the mountain of Croc Aine. See "La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Quinto, pp. 387, 388.

⁷¹ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. xlix., p. 557. Also, Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap.

lxxv., p. 536, *ibid.*

⁷² See L. Tachet de Barneval's "Histoire Légendaire de l'Irlande," chap. viii., pp. 79, 80.

⁷³ It is called Aracliach by the writers of our Irish chronicles. See Colgan's "Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ," Jan. iii., p. 13, n. 4.

⁷⁴ See Dr. Lanigan's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. viii., § iv., and n. 55, pp. 390, 391, and chap. vi., § viii., p. 287, *ibid.*

⁷⁵ See D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Quinto, pp. 392 to 395.

of their death. In after times, their posterity even became esteemed as the bards of kings.⁷⁶

At another time, two lepers visited Brigid, and entreated her to cleanse them from their leprosy. Then praying to God, the saint blessed some water, in which she told these lepers they should wash each other.⁷⁷ While one washed his companion, this latter was freed from his leprosy. Clean garments were then put upon him. The virgin afterwards said to the restored man, "Do you, in like manner, wash your companion." Finding that he was cleansed and had clean garments, the person addressed felt pleased at his good fortune; but, he had a great repugnance to touch his afflicted fellow-man. Our saint observed, he should do for his neighbour, what he wished the latter to do for him; yet, still he objected and absolutely refused. Then Brigid, rising up, washed that leper with her own hands, until he was cleansed. Afterwards, she had him clothed with clean garments. He who had been first healed then said, "Just now, I feel sparks of fire settling on my shoulders." Immediately his whole body was covered anew with leprosy, as a punishment for his pride or want of charity. Thus was fulfilled that Scripture sentence, "He who exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."⁷⁸ The restored man rejoiced and gave thanks to God, who had healed him, through Brigid's transcendent merits.⁷⁹

Two other lepers seeking alms came to the charitable abbess. But, she had nothing to give at the time, save a cow, and this she offered for division between them. One gave thanks to God for her gift; but the other, who was proud and ungrateful, said, unless the whole cow were bestowed, he should not receive that part of it, which might fall to his lot.⁸⁰ Then our saint addressed the humble leper: "Do you wait awhile with me, until the Lord send us something, and let the other man have this cow to himself." The covetous man departed with the animal, but after awhile he found himself unable to drive it. At length, wearied with such vain efforts, he returned to St. Brigid. He even insulted her with reproaches, conveyed in these terms: "I could not urge the animal forward, because you have not given her, with a willing mind, besides you are too exacting and severe." The abbess endeavoured to appease him, but she could not succeed. This conduct, so perfectly unjustifiable, much displeased her. At length, she said to the insolent fellow, "Thou art a son of perdition, and your cow shall now become docile, yet this shall not profit you in the least." At that very moment, a man presented himself with a cow, which he destined as an offering for St. Brigid. This gift, however, our virgin handed over to the good leper. Then both lepers drove their respective cows towards a river.⁸¹ Here the unthankful man was drowned, nor was his body afterwards recovered. The humble leper safely escaped from danger, and brought his cow with him.⁸²

⁷⁶ See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," *Tertia Vita S. Brigidæ*, cap. lxxvi., pp. 536, 537. *Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ*, lib. ii., cap. l., pp. 557, 558, *ibid.*

⁷⁷ This account is contained in Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "*La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese*," *Libro Quinto*, pp. 395 to 398.

⁷⁸ Luke, xviii. 14.

⁷⁹ See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," *Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ*, lib. ii., cap. li., p. 558. Also, *Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ*, cap.

lxxvii., p. 537, *ibid.*

⁸⁰ See "*La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese*," *Libro Quinto*, pp. 398 to 401.

⁸¹ In Professor O'Looney's *Life of St. Brigid*, where this miracle is recorded, the river in question is called the Bearbha, or Barrow; and, from this it would seem, St. Brigid was hardly in Munster at the time of its occurrence, see pp. 33 to 36.

⁸² See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," *Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ*, lib. ii., cap. lii., p.

Many other actions of St. Brigid, and worthy of being recorded, took place, while she dwelt in the Munster province. There she also blessed many churches and monasteries. Afterwards, she set out on a journey to her own city, in the province of Leinster. Travelling through the plain of Femhin, in her chariot, she met a husbandman, cultivating his field, or enclosing it with a hedge. The charioteer of the holy virgin said to him: "Allow us to pass the chariot of St. Brigid through your land, and afterwards you can surround your field, with a hedge." The husbandman refused this request, however, and told the charioteer he must drive round the circuit of the field.⁸³ Our holy virgin hereupon replied: "Let us do as he requires, lest anything happen on this man's account." Still, the charioteer disobeyed her, and drove his horses into the man's field. On seeing this, however, the owner furiously struck the horses' heads with a club. This assault caused the animals to prove restive. Although, St. Brigid was then thrown out of her chariot, she suffered no further injury, while her charioteer was hurt by the fall. Afterwards, her horses stood quietly, the holy woman saying, "Did I not tell you to avoid this man, because I foresaw he was doomed to death and destruction." The rude agriculturist was about to repeat his violent behaviour, disregarding the wickedness he meditated against God's holy servant. But the Almighty avenged the injury and insult offered to his saint; for that insolent boor was prostrated on the earth, and there he died.⁸⁴ We are next told, that the pious abbess came towards Leinster's bounds, and entered a province or region, called Labrathi,⁸⁵ or Labraide. This is supposed⁸⁶ to be an equivalent for Hy-Kinsellach.⁸⁷ There, she dwelt in a certain spot.⁸⁸ Whilst here, a woman, accompanied by a leprous daughter, visited our holy virgin, to interest this latter in her cure. The charitable servant of God fasted, and blessed some water,⁸⁹ with which she ordered the leprous girl to be washed. No sooner had the patient been sprinkled with this water, than she was cleansed from her leprosy. Both the mother and her daughter then gave thanks to God and to St. Brigid.⁹⁰

558. Also, *Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ*, cap. lxxix., p. 537, *ibid.* This miracle, according to Colgan, is alluded to, in the *Vita Sexta S. Brigidæ*, § xvii., p. 585, where a portion is truncated, through the fault of him who copied the original MS. See *ibid.*, n. 11, p. 598. Yet, it may be doubted, if the latter fragmentary account had not reference, rather to a miracle, which is related in *Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ*, cap. ci., p. 540, and in *Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ*, lib. ii., cap. lxx., p. 560, *ibid.*

⁸³ See D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Quinto, pp. 401 to 404.

⁸⁴ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." *Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ*, lib. ii., cap. liii., p. 558. Also, *Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ*, cap. lxxx., p. 537, *ibid.* In the latter life, it is said, St. Brigid went from Cliaich plain to Leinster, to assist the poor of her race, in this latter province. It is stated, also, that she was hurt, as well as her charioteer, when she fell from the chariot. The work, at which the man was engaged, is said to have been enclosing his field with a hedge.

⁸⁵ A certain Labrathius or Lauradius, son

to Bressal Belach, King of Leinster, was the founder of the Hy Kinsellach family. From a son Enda, surnamed Kinsellach, and his family, this territory had been called Hy-Kinsellach. See "Trias Thaumaturga." *Tertia Vita S. Brigidæ*, n. 50, p. 544. Also, Dr. Lanigan's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. viii., § iv., and n. 57, pp. 390, 391.

⁸⁶ By Colgan.

⁸⁷ If so, it was a well-known territory in southern Leinster.

⁸⁸ See the account given in Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Quinto, p. 404, *et seq.*

⁸⁹ There was a well, bearing the name of Tobar-Brighe in Hy-Kinsellagh. It was much resorted to, on account of various cures wrought there, in Colgan's time. This distinguished Irish hagiologist and antiquarian is of opinion, that this spring, which was situated in the Leinster province, must have been one mentioned in St. Brigid's Acts, as having had a miraculous origin. See "Trias Thaumaturga," n. 44, p. 544.

⁹⁰ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga."

We are told,⁹¹ that Brigid, with her religious daughters, took a journey towards Connaught; as, for special reasons, she wished to leave her own province of Leinster. On arriving in Connaught, she dwelt, for a time, in the plain of Hai.⁹² This was a large and an extensive plain, situated in the county of Roscommon and province of Connaught. While there, she built cells and monasteries, in the surrounding country. Then, also, did she take possession of that parish, about which she uttered the prophecy during her infancy, by saying: "This shall be mine, this shall be mine."⁹³ It is supposed, that some of the cells and monasteries, said to have been founded there, and in its neighbourhood, by St. Brigid, were probably Kill-bride,⁹⁴ in the territory of Siol-Muireadhaigh; Druim-na-bfeadh,⁹⁵ and Disert, within the district Tir-Mhaine; and Druim-dhaim or Druim-dubhain,⁹⁶ in the territory of Tirolill.⁹⁷

In the Third Life of St. Brigid, an account relating to this journey is given, and towards the end of that treatise.⁹⁸ It is probable enough, as numbers of pious females flocked from various districts in Ireland, to embrace a religious rule, under our saint's direction, that she might have judged it expedient, to extend her institute, in various districts of which several pious postulants were natives. Besides the inconvenience of having so many persons living in the same establishment, it is likely, Brigid had been invited by some bishops, to found houses for religious women, in their respective dioceses, to forward thereby and diffuse more widely the interests of religion.⁹⁹ When necessity or duty required, consecrated virgins often appeared, and travelled on public roads. Although there are several places in Connaught mentioned, as bearing Brigid's name: yet, we are not bound to believe, that nunneries or churches were established in all such localities by the holy virgin, nor during her lifetime.¹⁰⁰ Many of these had probably been erected at periods long subsequent; and their dedication, either to her conventual discipline, or possibly only under her invocation, may be fairly assumed, in the majority of cases. The series of our saint's transactions has been confused, and frequently inverted, by her different biographers. Dates or localities for these narratives are not generally specified. With respect to the present

Vita Quarta S. Brigide, lib. ii., cap. liv., p. 558. Vita Tertia S. Brigide, cap. lxxx., p. 537, *ibid.*

⁹¹ In the Fourth Life.

⁹² In Colgan's time, it was called, Machaire Connacht; and, in more ancient times, Mag-ai.

⁹³ Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Quarta Vita S. Brigide, lib. i., cap. xlix., and n. 20, pp. 549, 564.

⁹⁴ Kill-brigide, already mentioned, was a chapel, in the parish of Kill-luckin.

⁹⁵ Druim-na-bfeadh was a parochial church, belonging to the diocese of Tuam, or otherwise, of Elphin.

⁹⁶ Disert and Druimdhain were parochial churches, belonging to the diocese of Elphin. See "Trias Thaumaturga." Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigide, cap. xvi., pp. 624, 625.

⁹⁷ In each of these places, St. Brigid was venerated, as the special patroness, according to a catalogue of churches, in Elphin diocese, sent to Colgan, by the Most Rev. Boetius Egan, Bishop of Elphin. This worthy prelate was not only an ornament to

the Franciscan order, but he deserved well of Ireland in general.

⁹⁸ There the saint is said to have dwelt in the plain of "Atr." In a note Colgan adds, that in the Irish language, it is called, *Ma, h'atr. i. e.*, "the plain of slaughter." In the Fourth Life, lib. i., cap. 49, we find it placed in the province of Connaught, where St. Brigid and St. Bronius are known to have dwelt, at the time of the occurrences narrated. See "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Tertia S. Brigide, cap. xciv., and n. 56, pp. 539, 544, 545.

⁹⁹ Teffa, or the country about Ardlagh, of which St. Mel was bishop, having been particularly mentioned as a district travelled by our saint, her frequent interviews with that prelate may have given rise to an opinion, that she received the religious veil, at his hands.

¹⁰⁰ See the observations of Dr. Lanigan on this subject, and on matters preceding, in his "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. viii., § iv., and nn. 53, 60, pp. 389, 390, 391.

journey of our saint to Connaught, as in the other cases, Brigid and her companions, in travelling from one place to another, were often obliged to lodge at private houses.¹⁰¹

While our saint remained in this part of the country, one day she went to receive the Holy Eucharist, from a certain bishop.¹⁰² One of the clergy held the chalice, from which our saint refused to drink, on beholding within it the vision of a monster. The bishop demanded a reason for her refusal, and on being informed, he asked the assistant cleric, what crime he had committed, urging him at the same time to confess his sin, and glorify God. The cleric¹⁰³ humbly confessed, that he had partaken of what had been stolen. The prelate then requested him to repent. On complying with this injunction, penitently weeping, our saint approached to partake of the chalice, and Brigid found the monster had disappeared. Thus the tears of this cleric procured pardon for his offence; while, the virgin and the bishop retired rejoicing from the church, after having been refreshed with our Lord's body and blood.¹⁰⁴ At another time, a certain aged woman had a dangerous infirmity, and Brigid, with many holy women of the place, visited her, to watch and pray by her bedside. When this sick person was at the point of death, some of her attendants suggested, that her better or superfluous garments might be removed, before departure, and especially to save the trouble of afterwards washing them at a very cold time of the year. But, St. Brigid would not consent to this course, saying, the patient should not live long, and that it was not charitable, to take away those garments she wore, as a protection from that season's inclemency.¹⁰⁵ All who were there admired the saint's charity, and returned thanks to God.¹⁰⁶ We are told, also, that when St. Brigid dwelt in this part of the country, she was often accustomed to seek a pool of cold water, near the monastery.¹⁰⁷ There she remained immersed, while she prayed and wept during the whole night. This rigorous mortification at one time she endured, while snow and frost prevailed, and in presence of one from among her sisterhood. But, as this rough corporal treatment surpassed the powers of nature to endure, for any continued length of time; so, it pleased the goodness and mercy of God to prevent it, by a miracle. On a night immediately following the occurrence related, Brigid went with the same companion to renew like austerities, but on arriving at the pond, it was found to have become completely dry, nothing appearing but the exposed bottom sands. Surprised at this occurrence, the virgins returned home; yet, at the earliest hour of day-break, on the following morning, its waters were found to have returned to their usual level in the lough.

¹⁰¹ The missionary state of things at the time warrants such a supposition.

¹⁰² In D. Giacomo Certani's account, he is called Bishop Bron. See "*La Santità Prodigiata. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese.*" Libro Quinto, pp. 408 to 410.

¹⁰³ In Certani's account he is called a deacon.

¹⁰⁴ Such is the narrative as given in the Fourth Life of our saint. An account in the Third Life is nearly similar, only we are told in this latter, that one of the bishop's boys held the chalice. In the former, it is said, "*unus tunc de ministris Christi tenebat calicem.*" It would seem from this anecdote, according to the primitive discipline of the Irish Church, in St. Brigid's time, that Holy Communion had been received

under both species. We have also warrant for the Catholic dogmas of the Real Presence and Sacramental Confession, prevailing in the early Irish Church, from the foregoing narrative.

¹⁰⁵ See Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "*La Santità Prodigiata. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese.*" Libro Quinto, pp. 410 to 412.

¹⁰⁶ In giving an account of this circumstance, our saint is said to have wrought a miracle, recorded in the Third Life. It is also mentioned in the *Vita Sexta S. Brigidæ*, § lvii., p. 594.

¹⁰⁷ See Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "*La Santità Prodigiata. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese.*" Libro Quinto, pp. 412 to 417.

St. Brigid resolved the third night similarly to repeat her practice, when a similar disappearance of the waters took place on her approach. These waters returned to the bed of that lough early on the following morning. Almighty power was pleased to work such a miracle, on account of God's holy servant. Always pleasing in his sight, as the beloved disciple, St. John, Brigid had been delivered from impending torture and death. A knowledge of this event, also, caused all persons to extol those wondrous favours of Heaven manifested towards the holy abbess, who was entreated by her friends to restrain her mortifications, because they seemed to be providentially discouraged. Coinciding in a like opinion, Brigid yielded her own desires to these urgent requests, after such Divine warnings.¹⁰³

Following nearly the order of events, henceforward, as recorded in the Fourth Life of our saint—although it is by no means certain, that the series of her actions as given in the Third Life might not, on the whole, be more strictly chronological and consecutive—it will be necessary, mainly to accommodate those narratives contained in her other lives, to accounts comprised in the Second Book.¹⁰⁴ By adopting this course, we are brought immediately to the foundation of her great religious establishment at Kildare; and, from the most reliable chronological date, a considerable period must have elapsed from the time of this erection to the year of her death. This appears the more necessary, to give some degree of probability to accounts regarding her various journeys in distant parts of the island, while promoting the great objects of her mission. Sufficient time should thus be allowed for accomplishing those excursions, and for the performance of many miracles, attributed to her, in connexion with various localities. It is to be regretted, however, that the places where they occurred are rarely mentioned, nor are times usually specified, by any of her biographers.

While Brigid resided in the western province, the fame of her sanctity became diffused all over Ireland. Numbers flocked from all parts to visit her;—some for the purpose of holding conferences or seeking advice on religious matters—others for the relief of corporal and physical necessities. But the people of Leinster—especially those residing in the territory, where she was born¹⁰⁵ and had received her earliest education—conceived themselves best entitled to the honour and advantages to be derived, from the holy virgin's local residence. Taking counsel together, they resolved on sending a respectful request, through a deputation of her friends, that the virgin might be induced to revisit her own province, there to found a religious house, which should become the parent establishment for her different institutes, throughout the whole island. Having arrived in Connaught, this deputation proceeded to unfold the object of their journey, and to enforce their wishes by such reasons as they supposed should soonest determine her acquiescence, in the unanimous opinion of those people whom they represented. Brigid yielded without much difficulty to their desires. Having arranged matters, connected with her existing nunneries, in the western province, she set out towards her better known district.¹¹¹

Returning to Leinster, she was obliged to cross the river Shannon,¹¹² and

¹⁰³ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. i., cap. l., li., lii., pp. 549, 550. Also, Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. xciv., xcv., xcvi. p. 539, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Namely of St. Brigid's Fourth Life.

¹⁰⁵ This place, however, was not within the bounds of ancient Leinster; if we credit most accounts.

¹¹¹ See Dr. Lanigan's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. viii., § x., pp. 405, 406.

¹¹² "Intra quam Kelltra est conventus rite virorum Præulonium, sacro Benedicti dogmate florens."

So says the Sixth Life of our saint. The place here mentioned is situated between

we are told, that she came to a place called Ath-Luain¹¹³ for this purpose. The present town of Athlone¹¹⁴ probably marks the spot. This is situated nearly in the centre of Ireland, being partly in the county of Roscommon, and partly in that of Westmeath. It is thought to have derived its name from *Ath*, an Irish word signifying "ford," and *Luan*, "the moon,"¹¹⁵ to which heathen deity it was said to have been dedicated in pagan times.¹¹⁶ Near it is Tobar-Brigde, on the Connaught side.¹¹⁷ Here, St. Brigid found some people, respectively belonging to the province of Connaught and to the race of Neill, contending with each other. The Shannon, the largest of our Irish rivers, formed a boundary, between the ancient provinces of Meath and Connaught. The former of these provinces belonged to the Hi Niell family, because the southern O'Neills, or the posterity of Laogaire, Conall, Crimtham, Fiach, and Manius, four sons to Niell the great, King of Ireland, were its colonists. The companions of St. Brigid asked some ferry-men on the river bank to take them across, but the boatmen demanded a fare for this service.¹¹⁸ This demand the sisters refused to comply with, and they declared their intention to walk across the river,¹¹⁹ believing that through St. Brigid's blessing the Almighty would preserve them, as he had formerly opened a passage through the Red Sea and the river Jordan, for his ser-

the ancient territories of Thomond and Connaught. It is an island in the Shannon, now called Inis-Keltra. The circumstance of the Benedictine institute mentioned, as flourishing there, at a time when the Sixth Life was written, may furnish a clue to the period of its composition. The foregoing Latin lines are quoted by Archdall, who gives us no account, however, regarding a Benedictine institute having been here established. Yet, he seems to refer its foundation to the seventh or eighth century. See "Monasticon Hibernicum," p. 48.

¹¹³ In Irish, it is called *Athluain*, a town lying between the ancient bounds of Connaught and Meath, where the Shannon separated both provinces. A bridge thrown across the river afforded a passage long before Colgan's time, and at present, more than one bridge spans the Shannon, at this place. In the Latin lives of St. Brigid, it is here said, that she came, "juxta vadum Lua," or otherwise "vadi luain," as expressed in "Quarta Vita S. Brigide," lib. ii., cap. i.

¹¹⁴ It seems unaccountable, when Marcus Keane in his "Towers and Temples of Ancient Ireland" alludes to St. Lu as *alias* Molua—whom he identifies with a Pagan divinity, the Moon—that the writer did not discover such fanciful derivation for the town, and did not connect St. Luan in some way with Ath-luain, which is missing from his curious list of cognate localities. See pp. 59, 60.

¹¹⁵ A very interesting account of this town, and the siege, it stood, first when Lieutenant-General Douglas arrived before the place, July 17th, 1690, and when a second time General de Ginkel appeared before it, June 19th, 1691, at the head of 27,000 men, are presented in Charles French Blake Foster's "Irish Chieftains; or a Struggle for the

Crown; with numerous Notes and a copious Appendix." Chap. xxi., pp. 166 to 168, and chap. xxx. xxxi., pp. 208 to 220.

¹¹⁶ "The derivation of the name would appear to be confirmed by the discovery of several lunettes and crescents of gold in an adjoining bog, which were sold to a Dublin jeweller for £858, by whom they were melted down. Had they been previously examined by a clever antiquary, they would most probably have thrown great light on early Irish history, as I have been informed that some of them bore inscriptions which were unintelligible to the finders."—*Ibid.*, note 86, p. 495.

¹¹⁷ Colgan informs us that on account of many miracles wrought there, not only Catholics, but those without the fold, were accustomed to visit it, coming from the most distant parts. Whereupon, the illustrious Lord Randall MacDonnell, Count of Antrim, distinguished as much for his Christian piety as by his noble birth, had it surrounded with handsome and firmly-pointed mason-work. See "Trias Thaumaturga," n. 44, p. 544. It must be incorrectly stated by Frazer, that the first Earl of Antrim in 1685 erected an old building, which encloses the sacred fountain at Brideswell, in Roscommon county, about six and a-half miles from Athlone. Colgan, who mentions it, published his work in 1647, many years previous. The inscription on a door-way over the well must reveal some earlier date. See "Hand Book for Travellers in Ireland," No. 105, p. 479.

¹¹⁸ In the Third Life of our saint, it is said, they asked for a cloak or a blanket, belonging to these virgins, as a recompense for the service required.

¹¹⁹ During very dry seasons, the Shannon was formerly fordable at Athlone.

vants.¹²⁰ Then they besought their holy abbess to make a sign of the cross over the Shannon waters, that they might decrease, so as to become fordable. This request she heard most favourably: with her sisters she entered the river, and in presence of people belonging to both contending factions. To the wonder and admiration of beholders, although without the aid of boats, the strongest men and soldiers there assembled could not pass, it was found, the waters did not reach the knees of this holy company of virgins, then crossing. Before the saint and her companions entered the river, some clerics, who had hired a small vessel, asked one of Brigid's nuns to accompany them. She permitted a young and timid sister to cross the river before her in that vessel.¹²¹ This virgin had previously asked the blessing of her superioress, from whom she feared to be separated in crossing over; and Brigid said: "Go in peace, the Lord will preserve you." But, in sight of all, the bark sunk in the mid-stream, when, fearful of danger, the men invoked aid from the holy abbess. Brigid blessed and prayed for her nun; the waves carried this sister safely to her destination, without even wetting her garments. All, who were near the spot, gave glory to God, and lauded the wonders it pleased Heaven to accomplish through the merits of our illustrious saint.¹²² Yet greater moral miracles than these was she destined to effect; and, filled with a happy inspiration, she directed her course to that place, which afterwards became inseparably connected with her heroic actions while living, and with their memory, when she was called away to her eternal reward.

CHAPTER VI.

KINGS OF IRELAND IN THE FOURTH AND FIFTH CENTURIES—CONDITION OF LEINSTER AFTER THE MIDDLE OF THE FIFTH CENTURY—KILDARE—PERIOD WHEN SELECTED BY ST. BRIGID FOR HER CHIEF MONASTERY—GRADUAL GROWTH AND IMPORTANCE OF THE PLACE—INSTANCES OF HER PROTECTION.

THE Annals of Ireland relate certain revolutionary changes, whereby the supreme sovereignty passed from one family line to another, during the fourth and fifth centuries. Ambitious and enterprising warriors aspired to rule the island, as fortune or the force of circumstances favoured their designs. After the middle of the fourth century,¹ the monarch Eochaidh, surnamed Muigh Mheadhoin,² slew his predecessor, Caelbadh, A.D. 357,³ and afterwards he reigned for eight years,⁴ when he died at Tara,⁵ A.D. 365.⁶ Twice had he

¹²⁰ Exodus, xvi. 22.

¹²¹ See "The Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. v., pp. 65, 66.

¹²² See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. i., ii., and n. 1, pp. 550, 504. Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. xcvii., and n. 56, pp. 539, 545, *ibid.* Vita Sexta S. Brigidæ, § lviii., p. 594, and n. 16, p. 598, *ibid.*

CHAP. VI.—¹ In the following historical *resumé*, we chiefly follow the chronology of the Four Masters in the text.

² He received this name, rendered "Camporum Amplificator," according to Dr. Charles O'Connor, probably because he was an extender or improver of lands. See "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus ii. Tigernachi Annales, pp. 72, 73.

³ This is set down to A.D. 353, in O'Mahony's Keating's "History of Ireland," book i., chap. vii., p. 367. He only reigned one year. See Gratianus Lucius (Dr. John Lynch), "Cambrensis Eversus," vol. i., chap. viii., pp. 492, 493. Rev. Dr. Kelly's edition.

⁴ See an account of this king and his epoch in O'Flaherty's "Ogygia," pars. iii., cap. lxxix, lxxx., pp. 373 to 389.

⁵ During his reign, it is said, St. Patrick was carried as a captive into Hibernia. See William M. Hennessy's "Chronicum Scottorum," pp. 14, 15.

⁶ Or A.M. 5564, according to the statement in Dr. John Lynch's "Cambrensis Eversus," vol. i., chap. viii., pp. 492, 493. See Rev. Dr. Kelly's edition.

been married.⁷ Crimthann,⁸ son of Fídhach, a warlike and an accomplished prince, succeeded Eochaidh Muighmeadhóin. It is recorded, that he made successful predatory inroads on the shores of France, Britain and Scotland, from which countries he obtained tribute and submission, returning to Ireland with hostages and captives.⁹ After a reign of thirteen years,¹⁰ he is said to have died of poison, administered by his own sister, Mongfinn.¹¹ Thus she hoped to obtain the succession for her favourite son Brian,¹² as Crimthann died without issue; but, in this expectation she was disappointed, and her own death is said to have happened, about the same time, A.D. 378. Her step-son, the celebrated Niall of the Nine Hostages,¹³ next came on the throne. This king commenced his reign, A.D. 379,¹⁴ and distinguished his career by a series of brilliant and successful expeditions against the Albanians, Britons, Picts and Gauls, from whom he carried away valuable spoils and several captives. Among the latter, as generally supposed, was our illustrious national saint, at a subsequent period destined by Divine Providence to become the great apostle of Ireland. It is said, that when Niall arrived in Albain or Albania, now Scotland, to assist the Dailriads of Irish extraction against the incursions of the Picts, he changed the name of that country to Scotia at their request. Scotland was thenceforward known as Scotia Minor, to distinguish it from Ireland, which was denominated Scotia Major. The reason why this heroic monarch received the name of Niall of the Nine Hostages is said to have been owing to the circumstance of his having had four noble hostages from Scotland, and five other distinguished pledges from the different provinces of Ireland, confined at Tara. Yet, accounts are somewhat discordant as to the nine regions from which these hostages were taken. The people of Leinster are represented as having surrendered

⁷ This monarch had four sons by his first wife Mongfinn, who was daughter to Fídhach, of the royal family of Munster. Her sons were: 1. Bryan, ancestor of the O'Conors of Connaught and their kindred; 2. Fiachra, ancestor of the O'Dowdas, O'Heynes and O'Shaughnessys; 3. Fearghus; and 4. Oilíoll, whose people were formerly located in Tir-Oilíolla, now the barony of Tirerrill, in the county of Sligo. By his second wife, Carinna, a Saxon or Pictish lady, the most illustrious of his sons, Niall of the Nine Hostages, descended.

⁸ Crimthann ascended the throne A.D. 360, according to O'Mahony's Keating's "History of Ireland," book i., chap. vii., p. 369. According to Tigernach, his reign commenced about A.D. 366.

⁹ To his predatory excursions, Eumenius, Claudian, Ammianus Marcellinus, Gildas, and Venerable Bede, allude. Those raids checked the Roman conquests in Britain, but they so harassed the Britons, that these in turn were induced to call the Saxons to protect them. This led to the settlement of that warlike race in England. See John D'Alton's "History of Ireland and Annals of Boyle," vol. ii., pp. 55, 56.

¹⁰ In the "Chronicon Scotorum," however, it is said he only reigned five years, and died A.D. 376. See pp. 16, 17. Edited by W. M. Hennessy.

¹¹ She appears to have been living at the same time with Eochaidh Muigh Mheadh-

oin's second wife; so that, she had either been divorced by the monarch, or, as seems likely enough, a plurality of wives was in vogue among some of the Pagan Irish.

¹² See O'Mahony's Keating's "History of Ireland," book i., chap. vii., pp. 371, 372.

¹³ Niall had fourteen sons, eight of whom left issue: viz., 1. Laeghaire, from whom the O'Coindhealbhains or Kendellans of Ui-Laeghaire are descended; 2. Conall Crimluthainne, from whom the O'Melaghlins are derived; 3. Fiacha, the ancestor of the MacGeoghegans and O'Molloys; 4. Maine, the progenitor of the O'Caharneys, O'Breens and MacGawleys, with their correlatives in Telfia. All these sons settled in Meath. The other four acquired extensive possessions in Ulster, where they resided: viz., 1. Eoghan, ancestor of the O'Neills and various kindred families; 2. Conall Gulban, ancestor of the O'Donnells; 3. Cairbre, whose posterity dwelt in the barony of Carbury, in the present county of Sligo, and in the barony of Granard in the county of Longford; 4. Enda Finn, whose descendants settled in Tir-Enda of Tyrconnell, and in Kinel-Enda, near the hill of Uisneach, County Westmeath.

¹⁴ See Dr. Charles O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus ii., p. 80. In O'Mahony's Keating's "History of Ireland," the date for his accession is A.D. 377. See book i., chap. vii., p. 372.

Eochaidh, son of Enna Ceinnseallach, king of the province, for a pledge of their allegiance. This prince, however, contrived to escape from his guards, and followed the King of Ireland on a warlike expedition. At the sea, called Muir-n-Icht, between France and England, and supposed to have been situated near the site of the present Boulogne, the Prince of Leinster assassinated the warlike Niall, A.D. 405, after the latter monarch had reigned gloriously, during the term of twenty-seven years. Other accounts have it, that he was killed near the banks of the Loire. The posterity of this renowned warrior were known as the northern and southern Hy-Niall, or descendants of Niall. From this distinguished race, nearly all the kings of Ireland derive their origin down to the twelfth century.¹⁵ Dathi, grandson of the former monarch of Ireland, Eochaidh Muighmheadhoin, succeeded. This prince was remarkable for activity of body and a spirit of military adventure. He pushed his conquests with great success in the territories of France, where he was at length killed by a stroke of lightning at the Alps. His body was carried home to Ireland, and interred with military honours at Rathcroghan, where his grave was marked by a red pillar-stone, according to the accounts contained in some old and trustworthy records.¹⁶ Dathi closed his reign of twenty-three years, A.D. 428. He was immediately succeeded by the last king who ruled over Pagan Ireland, Leaghaire,¹⁷ son to Niall, the hero of the Nine Hostages. During his reign, the illustrious St. Patrick preached the Gospel in Ireland,¹⁸ and it is probable, also, St. Brigid first saw the light. This monarch's chief engagements were fought with the people of Leinster.¹⁹ When a reign of thirty years had been completed, Leaghaire, who does not appear to have embraced the Christian religion, died, A.D. 458.²⁰ He was succeeded by Oilioll Molt,²¹ son of Dathi. After a disturbed reign of twenty years, during which he contended with the Leinstermen, Oilioll was slain at the battle of Ocha, in Meath, A.D. 478, by Lughaidh, son of Leaghaire, who succeeded.²² It does not seem to be well established that even this monarch had been a believer in the sublime truths of

¹⁵ A very complete account of this monarch, and of the incidents during his reign, will be found in O'Mahony's Keating's "History of Ireland," book i., chap. vii., pp. 372 to 394.

¹⁶ See an illustration of the "Pillar of Dathi, Rathcroghan," with a description of Relig-na-ree, as also a ground plan of the tumuli there, in "Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy," vol. i., series ii.; a paper, by Samuel Ferguson, LL.D., "On Ancient Cemeteries at Rathcroghan and elsewhere in Ireland," read February 26, 1872, pp. 114 to 118.

¹⁷ In John D'Alton's "History of Ireland and the Annals of Boyle," vol. ii., King Leogaire is stated to have begun his reign A.D. 426 and to have ended it A.D. 470, thus giving him a rule of 44 years. See pp. 64, 69.

¹⁸ The "Annales Inisfalenses," edited from the Bodleian MS. Rawlinson, No. 503, state, that St. Patrick commenced his mission A.D. CCCXXXII., in the fourth year of King Leagaire meice Neill's reign. See Dr. Charles O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," toms ii., p. i. In an addition to the "Annales Ultonienses," found among

the Clarendon MSS., No. 4795, Bibl. Harl., it is stated, that the illustrious future missionary arrived in Ireland in the twelfth year of this king's reign. See *ibid.*, toms iv., p. i.

¹⁹ Dr. Charles O'Connor, who supplies the hiatus in the "Annals of Tighernach," assigns to A.D. 452 a great battle fought by King Laogaire against the Leinstermen. See *ibid.*, toms ii., p. 109.

²⁰ Yet the "Annales Buellani," or "Annals of Boyle," state that, at A.D. 460, a fierce war was waged by Laogaire Mac Neill, and again at A.D. 465, that the Leinstermen fought against him at Atha-dara or the "ford of the oaks," in which the monarch was made a prisoner, but afterwards ransomed, he swearing by the sun and wind, that he should send them a number of oxen. See Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," toms ii., p. 2.

²¹ His accession to the throne is placed at A.D. 457 in O'Mahony's Keating's "History of Ireland," book i., chap. vii., p. 418.

²² The date given for this event is A.D. 477 by Keating. See *ibid.*, p. 420. The Four Masters have A.D. 479.

Christianity.²³ Some battles are on record during the rule of this king, who was killed by a flash of lightning, A.D. 503, after holding the sovereignty of Ireland for twenty-five years.²⁴

During the course of these foregoing public events, Enna or Endeus Kinnsealach, descended from Cathair Mor,²⁵ had founded the tribe and district of Ui-Kinnsealach, in South Leinster, to which he gave name.²⁶ After the father's death, his son Crimthann took possession of this inheritance, and afterwards, it is thought, he was king over the whole of Leinster. This warrior dynast²⁷ joined in a confederacy with Lugaid²⁸ son to the monarch Leaghaire, Fiachra, Muircheartach Mac Earca, and Fearghus Cербhell. The Leinstermen were led by Crimthann, and the Dal-Araidhe²⁹ by their Dynast Fiachra. Different versions of their proceedings are given; however, it is generally allowed, that the supreme monarch, Oilioll Molt, either gave or was obliged to accept battle at Ocha, which is said to have been near The-moria or Tara. This celebrated engagement took place, according to some accounts, A.D. 478,³⁰ while others defer it to A.D. 482³¹ or 483.³² Crimthann

²³ "The Annals of the Four Masters" tell us that St. Patrick died, A.D. 493, in the fifteenth year of Lughaidh's reign, and that he was buried at Down. See Dr. O'Donovan's edition, vol. i., pp. 154 to 159, with accompanying notes.

²⁴ See the Author's "Catechism of Irish History," Lesson v., pp. 33 to 37, and Lesson vi., pp. 39 to 42.

²⁵ Gilla-mo-dudius, a historical writer of deserved authority, says, that none of the Leinster kings, after Cathair More, were enumerated among the monarchs over Ireland. Gilla-mo-dudius wrote an esteemed tract, "On the Christian Monarchs of Ireland," extending from A.D. 431 to A.D. 1143, where his history ends. In the "Journal of the Royal Historical and Archaeological Association of Ireland," there is an interesting tract, translated and edited by J. O'Beirne Crowe, A.B., and No. ii. among his series, "Ancient Lake Legends of Ireland." It is intitled: "The Visio of Cathair Mor, King of Leinster, and afterwards Monarch of Ireland, foreboding the origin of Loch Garman (Wexford Haven)." See vol. ii. Fourth Series, No. 9, pp. 26 to 49. This is edited from three different copies, taken respectively from the Books of Lemster, Lecan and Ballymore.

²⁶ See the Genealogies, which form Part iii. of O'Mahony's Keating's "History of Ireland," chap. x., pp. 693 to 697.

²⁷ There was a "Catalogue of the Kings of Ireland," by an anonymous author, to be found in O'Malchonrian's book. This was in Colgan's possession, and it thus gives the names of Oilioll's three principal opponents, without making mention of Crimthann or Lugaid. It states, that after Oilioll Molt, King of Ireland, and the son of Dathy, son to Fiach, son of Eochaid Macmeadon, had reigned twenty years, he was killed by Murchertach, Fergus Kerbhheoil, and by Fiach Lonn, the son of Caelbad, King of

Dalaradia. In the Acts of St. Kieran, however, this victory is attributed to Crimthann. See Colgan's "Acta Sanctorum Hiberniae," v. Martii. Vita S. Kierani, cap. xix., p. 460.

²⁸ Gilla-mo-dudius ascribes this victory and carnage to Lugaid, son to Laogaire, the immediate successor of Oilioll in the sovereignty of Ireland.

²⁹ "St. Beg mac De" or "Beccus, son of Dea," a celebrated Irish prophet, died in the year 557. In a certain fragment of a work he wrote, "On the Kings of Ireland," and which is cited in the "Annals of the Four Masters," at A.D. 478, regarding this battle, the English translation runs:—

"The great battle of Ocha was fought
In which many battalions were cut off,
Against Oilioll Molt, son of Nathi,
Who was defeated by the Dal-Araide."
See O'Donovan's edition, vol. i., pp. 150, 151, and n. (t), *ibid.*

³⁰ See Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., pp. 148 to 151, with accompanying notes. The "Annales Inis-falenses" place it at this year. See Dr. Charles O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus ii., pp. 3, 4.

³¹ In the "Annales Utomenses," at A.D. 482, the battle of Ocha is placed, and in the following year 483 we have an account of the "jugatio" or murder of Crimthann, son of Euna Censelach, son to Bresal Belac, King of Leinster. But, as it doubtful regarding the date for both events, it is again stated, after noting the first war at Granearad, at A.D. 485, that it was probably there Crimthann received his death-wound. See *ibid.*, tomus iv., p. 7.

³² Ussher places it at this year. See "Britannicarum Ecclesiarum Antiquitates," cap. xvii., p. 490, and at "Index Chronologicus," A.D. CCCCLXXXIII.

is related to have killed Oilioll Molt in this battle.³³ Moreover, in the Acts of St. Kieran,³⁴ it would appear to be stated, that this Crimthann obtained supreme sovereignty over the country after the fight of Ocha.³⁵ Doubtless, his power was great, and his influence was respected by the supreme monarch who succeeded; but, Crimthann himself does not seem to have aspired to the sovereignty of Ireland. He survived this battle of Ocha, as we might infer, only one year; for, it is said, he received a mortal wound in the battle of Granard, fought in the year 478,³⁶ yet, most strangely, the very same authority defers his death to 480.³⁷ Perhaps, he was instrumental in aiding St. Brigid to found her nunnery and church at Kildare, while he was chief ruler over the Leinster province.³⁸ His daughter Ethnea, surnamed Huathach, is said to have been married to the religious Engus, Prince of Munster, who had been baptized by St. Patrick.

When the illustrious lady reached the Leinster province, its chiefs and people welcomed her with the liveliest demonstrations of respect and rejoicing. She sought a spot, but slightly elevated over the surrounding extensive "plain of the Liffey,"³⁹ where the ground was gently undulating and fertile; and, it is said to have been anciently styled, *Druim Criadh*, or "the ridge of clay."⁴¹ At this time, a large oak tree—a favourite with our saint, and blessed by her—grew upon the spot. Its branches spread around, and it must have been a remarkable natural feature of the landscape.⁴² This

³³ This is stated, in the old Irish tract, called "*Borumba-Laighean*." It must be observed, also, that as Crimthann was present at Ocha battle, the "*Annals of the Four Masters*" fall into an error, when they state under A.D. 465, that Crimthann, son of Enla-Censelach, King of Leinster, was killed by the son of his own daughter, i.e., Eochaidh Guineach, [one] of the *Uí-Bairrche*. Again, "*The Annals of Clonmacnoise*" record, that Crimthann was killed at the battle of Ard-corann. Yet the "*Annales Inisfalenses*" place his death at A.D. ccccxxx., and afterwards note the "*Belium Ardcorauid*" at cccxcvii. See Dr. Charles O'Connor's "*Reium Hibernicarum Scriptores*," toms ii., pp. 4, 5. Again, the "*Annals of Ulster*" place the battle of Arda Corann or Mount Corann, and the death of Lugdach, son of Laegaire, at A.D. 500 or 507. See *ibid.*, toms iv., p. 11.

³⁴ See Colgan's "*Acta Sanctorum Hiberniae*," v. Martii. Vita S. Kierani, cap. xix., p. 460.

³⁵ Dubtach O'Lugair, a disciple of St. Patrick, who is said to have been present, and an eye-witness of this battle, in a little work, which he wrote on the Acts of this same Crimthann, and which Colgan had in his possession, bears similar testimony.

³⁶ According to the "*Annals of Inis-fallen*," which, strangely enough, make two kings of Leinster fall in this battle. One is named Finchad, and the other Crimthann Censelach, who killed Echad, and received himself a mortal wound. Perhaps, the meaning is, that both were kings or dynasts in Leinster; or that their supreme power alternated at different times. Some writers state, according to the same authority, that Meice Eirce

was victor in this battle, while others have Compre as victor. See Dr. O'Connor's "*Reium Hibernicarum Scriptores*," toms ii., p. 4.

³⁷ See *ibid.* Perhaps he lingered on for two years after being wounded.

³⁸ This Crimthann, who was present at the battle of Ocha, in A.D. 478, or according to other accounts in the years 482 or 483, might have been buried at or in Kildare Monastery, which is supposed to have been founded about, if not before, such era. And this passage also strengthens the proof that Crimthann was not killed in A.D. 465. See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," nn. 8, 9, 10, p. 365. Likewise, O'Donovan's "*Annals of the Four Masters*," vol. i., pp. 146, 147, n. (r), *ibid.* And pp. 148 to 151, nn. (d, e, f), *ibid.*

³⁹ See Colgan's "*Acta Sanctorum Hiberniae*," v. Martii. Vita S. Kierani, cap. xix., p. 460.

⁴⁰ In Irish called, *maḡ Uíphí*. The river flows through a level country in Kildare.

⁴¹ See "Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy," vol. ix., First Series. W. M. Hennessy's paper "On the Curragh of Kildare," p. 349.

⁴² In one of his many fictions, Dempster asserts, that Kildare derived its name from a St. Daria, the mother of St. Ursula, who brought certain relics to Ireland. See "*Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Scotorum*," lib. iv. Colgan remarks, that before Dempster's time, no writer ever asserted these relics were brought to Ireland, or that Kildare derived its name from them. See "*Trias Thaumaturga*," Tertia Vita S. Brigide, n. 23, p. 543.

site—now very much denuded of oak⁴³—was chosen by St. Brigid for her projected conventual establishment. The local proprietor of this soil and people living in the neighbourhood soon helped to provide a habitation for their future patroness and for her religious sisters. It has been asserted, the first church built there was constructed with wattles;⁴⁴ and, owing to the circumstance of its having nestled under or near the large spreading tree, it got the name Kildare,⁴⁵ or “the cell of the oak.”⁴⁶ When the author of St. Brigid’s Fourth Life lived, the roots, or part of the trunk, belonging to this venerable tree, remained.⁴⁷ The adjoining plain of the Curragh is traditionally held to have been St. Brigid’s pasture ground,⁴⁸ to which she never prevented the neighbouring people from sending their cattle.⁴⁹ This is thought to have been the origin of what still constitutes the popular right of commonage. Various legendary stories connect St. Brigid and her nuns with its former proprietorship; while, these are stated to have been engaged in the pastoral occupation of tending herds and flocks on its plains. Portions of the surface had probably been subjected to tillage, and this tract of land afforded means for enabling the community to procure a subsistence.⁵⁰ The Round Tower at Kildare and the adjoining ruins probably represent the exact site of St. Brigid’s early conventual establishment and of the church connected with it. The round tower is considered to be one of the finest specimens of its class, as well as one of the most highly ornamented in Ireland.⁵¹ The castellated top of the tower is modern. It is said there are sundry vestiges of ancient work about the site of Kildare, but that these are so incorporated with the buildings of Christian times, it is now difficult to distinguish them.⁵² At what particular period St. Brigid’s establishment was

⁴³ In Miss Harriet Martineau’s “Letters from Ireland,” the intelligent authoress, lamenting the want of wood cultivation in the island, alludes to the fine oaks, elms, ash and beech, on the properties of Lord Downes and of the Duke of Leinster, in the great plain of Kildare. See Letter vii. How Ireland is to get back its woods, p. 51. London: 1852. 8vo.

⁴⁴ In Professor O’Looney’s Irish Life of St. Brigid, pp. 33, 34, it is said, that while one hundred horse-load of wattles passed through Kildare, when Bishop Mel and Brigid were there, she sent four of her virgins to ask those wattles as a gift from Ailill, son of Dunlaing. These he gave her, and it was of them the great house of Sancta Brigida in Kildare was made.

⁴⁵ The derivation of Kildare county is from Chille-dara or “the wood of oaks,” according to Thomas James Rawson’s “Statistical Survey of the County of Kildare,” Introduction, p. i. He contends, it was anciently called Caëlan or Galen, *i.e.*, “the woody country,” being formerly almost one continuous wood, “the decay of which produced the great extent of bogs, which cover so much of the country at this day, and by the quantity of timber, with which they abound, bear incontestable marks of their origin.” See *ibid.*, p. ii.

⁴⁶ “The very oak under which she delighted to pray has given a name to the place.” Watkinson’s “Survey of the South of Ireland,” Letter ix., p. 92.

⁴⁷ The same writer tells us, such was the veneration in which it was held, that no one dared to cut it with an iron instrument, although many persons were accustomed to remove portions of it with their hands. These portions, however, were preserved as relics. And, owing to St. Brigid’s blessing, it pleased the Almighty to accomplish miracles, through the possession of these ligneous souvenirs. See Colgan’s “Trias Thaumaturga.” Quarta Vita S. Brigidae, lib. ii., cap. iii., p. 550.

⁴⁸ In Professor O’Looney’s Irish Life of St. Brigid, she is represented as being with her sheep, on the occasion when Neidh was first introduced to her notice, pp. 31, 32, and again as herding her sheep, when a thief stole seven of them from her, pp. 41, 42.

⁴⁹ See an interesting paper on “The Curragh of Kildare,” by William M. Hennessy, M.R.I.A., read February 26th, 1866, before the Royal Irish Academy. “Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy,” vol. ix., First Series, pp. 343 to 355.

⁵⁰ This statement is inferred, from the circumstance of her employing reapers, and tending sheep. See Dr. Lanigan’s “Ecclesiastical History of Ireland,” vol. i., chap. viii., § x., and nn. 120, 124, pp. 406, 408.

⁵¹ A representation of its door-way is given in Marcus Keane’s “Towers and Temples of Ancient Ireland,” p. 257.

⁵² “An ancient cross stands in the churchyard, and fragments of a second; but, they

founded there, has furnished a subject for discordant opinions.⁵³ From what has been already stated, it would seem to be not altogether improbable, that it had an earlier origin, than most historians have very generally assumed. She may have commenced her buildings not very many years after A.D. 470. Sir James Ware⁵⁴ and Harris,⁵⁵ O'Halloran,⁵⁶ and Haverty⁵⁷ refer the foundation of her nunnery at Kildare to about the year 480. If we are to credit what appears to be a purely legendary account, when St. Brigid brought Bishop Mel with her to draw out the plan of her city, Ailill, son of Dunlaing, was king over Leinster. It is also stated, that he fed the builders and paid their rightful wages.⁵⁸ Colgan was of opinion, that her convent might have been before or about the year 483. Archdall writes, that her nunnery was founded here before A.D. 484.⁵⁹ About the latter year, John D'Alton states,⁶⁰ St. Brigid founded both the nunnery and monastery at Kildare. However, the first institute had undoubtedly the precedence of several years over the latter establishment. The year 484 is the date given for St. Brigid's establishment at Kildare, by William M. Hennessy,⁶¹ and by Thomas James Rawson.⁶² Dr. Lanigan assigns it to about A.D. 487,⁶³ or at least to before the year 490.⁶⁴ He says, that if we are to believe what is said about St. Brigid having foretold to Illand, King of North Leinster,⁶⁵ that he should be victorious in his battles, one of which was that in which Aengus, King of Cashel, was killed, the house at Kildare must have been established before A.D. 490. For, she is spoken of as already settled there, and that was the year in which Aengus fell.

The nunnery of Kildare, at first humble in size and pretensions,⁶⁶ and poorly endowed, in a great measure had been supported by eleemosynary contributions, brought by people living in the neighbourhood. But, by degrees, its reputation and the fame of its holy foundress became better established. Many pious ladies desired admission to this house, which, in a short time, became inconveniently crowded.⁶⁷ Soon there was a need for

are not very interesting specimens."—*Ibid.*, p. 421.

⁵³ See "Trias Thaumaturga," *Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ*, n. 10, p. 505.

⁵⁴ See Ware, "De Hibernia, et Antiquitatibus ejus, Disquisitiones," cap. xxvi., p. 146.

⁵⁵ See Harris' Ware, vol. ii., "Antiquities of Ireland," chap. xxxviii., p. 269. "There our saint is ranked among the canonesses of St. Augustine's order.

⁵⁶ "St. Bridget founded her famous monastery in Kildare, A.D. 480, for which she formed particular rules, and which was the head of her order."—O'Halloran's "General History of Ireland," vol. ii., chap. vi., p. 45.

⁵⁷ See "The History of Ireland, Ancient and Modern," chap. ix., p. 79.

⁵⁸ Thus runs the story in Professor O'Looney's *Irish Life of St. Brigid*. As a reward the holy abbess said the race of Ailill, son of Dunlaing, should have the sovereignty for ever."—pp. 33, 34.

⁵⁹ See "Monasticon Hibernicum," p. 323.

⁶⁰ See his article in "The Irish Penny Magazine," vol. i., No. 35. Illustrations of Irish Topography, No. xxxv., p. 274. A spirited wood engraving of the Round Tower and Priory, from a sketch by F. R.

Lewis, precedes this account of Kildare by Mr. D'Alton.

⁶¹ See "Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy," vol. ix. First Series. Paper "On the Curragh of Kildare," p. 349.

⁶² See "Statistical Survey of the County of Kildare," Introduction, p. x.

⁶³ This is inferred by him, considering that she had been in Munster, probably about the year 484, and had spent some time afterwards in Connaught, before she founded Kildare.

⁶⁴ See "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. viii., sec. x., p. 405.

⁶⁵ See n. 116, p. 407, *ibid.*

⁶⁶ Dr. Lanigan justly observes, that in the Fourth Life of our saint, book ii., chap. 3, a distinction is made between the first cell, which had been assigned her, immediately on arriving at Kildare, and the great monastery, which she afterwards found it necessary to build, in the same place. See "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. viii., sec. x., and n. 126, pp. 406, 408.

⁶⁷ See the statement regarding a vast number of her spiritual daughters contained in Father Hugh Ward's "Dissertatio Historica de Patria S. Rumoldi," sec. 10, p. 186. Edited by Father Thomas O'Sheerin, O.S.F.

enlarging the original buildings.⁶⁸ This concourse of devout women was not confined to our saint's native province; but, as has been remarked,⁶⁹ persons of both sexes came in great numbers, from all the provinces of Ireland to her monastery.⁷⁰ To those strangers arriving on temporary visits, she was accustomed to exercise the most liberal hospitality; especially towards church dignitaries and religious, who came to confer with her on matters of religious concern. Numbers of persons, in the higher walks of life, sought her advice, and felt honoured by her notice. These individuals never applied for the favour of her prayers, without obtaining a compliance with their requests. Having, in due course of time laid foundations for a large monastery, she proceeded with the work of its erection; in which undertaking, we may suppose, she met the willing co-operation and assistance of the Leinster king and neighbouring people, who loved and revered this noble virgin for her extraordinary virtues and merits. When completed, this *cœnobium* furnished accommodation to several pious females, living under her rule. Afterwards, it became the parent nunnery of many houses, already established by her, and subsequently built throughout our island.⁷¹ It would seem, that soon after the erection of her first monastery at Kildare, Crimthann, King of Leinster, died, and obtained the rites of sepulture in or near it.⁷²

Numbers of infirm and poor flocked to Kildare, seeking relief from their various necessities; and many anecdotes are related, regarding the charities of St. Brigid, especially towards this forlorn class of persons. With the course of time, several houses began to appear around her religious establishment, as it became necessary to provide for the necessities of those, who came from a distance, or, who were brought from more immediate districts, to assist at the pious exercises and public celebrations of her conventual institute. By degrees, from being merely a village, Kildare became a very considerable town; and, at length, its habitations extended in number and size, so that it ranked as a city, at a period somewhat later.⁷³ St. Brigid traced out a line of demarkation, likewise, around the city, within which boundary refuge was to be obtained, by any fugitive; and, his claim to protection was consequently allowed, by all those, who respected the ordinances and memory of their illus-

⁶⁸ See Rev. S. Baring-Gould's "Lives of the Saints," vol. ii., February 1st, p. 17.

⁶⁹ By Cogitosus.

⁷⁰ Le Comte de Montalembert observes, "D'innombrables couvents de femmes font remonter leur origine à l'abbesse de Kildare."—"Les Moines d'Occident," tome ii., liv. ix., chap. i., p. 463.

⁷¹ Such had been the reputation of St. Brigid for eminent sanctity, that Abbot Johannes de Bruxella or Mauburnus Livriacensis, in "Venatorio Canonicorum Regularium," tells us, that a great number of monasteries, and about thirteen thousand nuns, flourished under this holy superior's rule. So likewise, Benedictus Hæftenus cites this authority, "Disquisition. Monasticarum," lib. i., tract 6, disqu. 3. Colgan thinks we must here understand, that if our saint presided over so many nuns, she must have governed them, not in one house, but in different monasteries, spread throughout Ireland, she being superior over all that observed the Rule, which she is said to have written. Hence, it must have happened,

that she was called *Hiberniæ Domina*, as we find her styled in the Fifth Life (cap. iii.) And in the Rythm of St. Columba, composed in praise of her, she is called *Regina*. See "Trias Thaumaturga." Anagraphæ seu Epilogus Magnalium Sanctæ Brigide, sec. xlvii., p. 639.

⁷² See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Quarta Vita S. Brigide. "Et ipse moriens sepultus est apud S. Brigidam in suo monasterio," lib. ii., cap. xii., p. 552. Such is the statement of the author—supposed to be Animosus—and he was well acquainted with the topography, history and traditions of Kildare.

⁷³ "The reputation of her sanctity, and of her power of working miracles, made Kildare so much frequented, that the many buildings erected about the nunnery, during her life formed a town; which in time became so considerable as to be the place of the Cathedral and of the Episcopal See."—Warner's "History of Ireland," vol. i., book vii., p. 321.

trious civic foundress.⁷⁴ It is also remarked, that Kildare was the metropolitan see of Leinster, at two different periods. In the first instance, while St. Brigid lived, in that city; yet, afterwards during the time of Brandubh, King of Leinster, and about the year 578, the archiepiscopate is said to have been transferred to Ferns.⁷⁵ It is uncertain, when it had been removed from the latter place; but, it is supposed to be sufficiently established as a fact, that its withdrawal from Ferns did not occur until after St. Moling's death,⁷⁶ in the year 696.⁷⁷ Again, it is assumed, that this dignity had been restored to Kildare, before A.D. 1097, according to testimonies derived from our national Annals.⁷⁸ It has been inferred,⁷⁹ likewise, that the author of St. Brigid's Fourth Life must have flourished, while Kildare was a metropolitan see—not, however, at the first, but during the latter period. For, he adopts a common opinion, that the bodies of Saints Brigid, Columkille and Patrick were deposited in a common tomb, at Down, in Ulster.⁸⁰

Soon did the people living around her convent begin to experience the protection afforded by Brigid's presence among them. On the eve of a certain solemnity, while she lived in the "Cell of the Oak,"⁸¹ a certain young maiden, who appears to have been her *protégée*, brought an offering for her patroness. On presenting this gift, the maiden remarked, that she should be obliged to return home immediately, to take charge of her parents' house and flocks. Her father and mother desired to spend that holy vigil at Kildare. The abbess told their daughter to remain, and that her parents should come after her, while the Almighty would protect their temporal substance. According to St. Brigid's prediction, the maiden's parents followed her, and together all the family celebrated this festival.⁸² However, certain thieves, taking advantage of their absence, came in the middle of the night and stole away their cattle. These they drove towards the Liffey. This river was found to have been so greatly swollen, that the water flowed over its banks. The robbers laboured in vain, during a great part of the night, to urge the terrified cattle through this flood. Then, taking off their garments, which with other effects they tied with cords to the horns of the cattle, those free-

⁷⁴ See Cogitosus, "Vita S. Brigidæ," cap. xiv.

⁷⁵ For such statements, Colgan refers to Cogitosus, in his Prologue to the Life of St. Brigid; also to chap. 30 of the same Life; and to his own affixed notes 1, 18; to Ussher in his "Primordia Ecclesiarum Britannicarum," cap. xvii., p. 965; and to the author of St. Brigid's Fourth Life, lib. ii., cap. 3.

⁷⁶ It appears, from the Life of St. Moling, whose festival occurs at the 17th of June, that this saint had been constituted Archbishop of Leinster, in the see of Ferns, by Brandubh, son of Eathach, King of Leinster.

⁷⁷ According to the "Annals of the Four Masters," St. Maedhog, first bishop of Ferns, died A.D. 624; St. Dachu Luachra, Abbot of Ferns, died A.D. 652; Tuenog, Abbot of Ferns, died 602; Maeldoghar, Bishop of Ferns, died 676; Dirraith, Bishop of Ferns, died 690; and St. Moling Luachra, Bishop of Ferns, died 696. See O'Donovan's Edition, vol. i., pp. 246 to 249, 264, 265, 272, 273, 284, 285, 294, 295, 298, 299.

⁷⁸ At 1097, we read, that Maelbrighde

Mac-an-tsair Ua Brochain, a learned doctor, Bishop of Kildare and of Leinster, died. And, at the year 1110, departed "Feardomnach, the most distinguished of the senior juriconsults, [and] lector of Cill dara." See O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. ii., pp. 954, 955, 988, 989. This latter appears to have been successor to the former in the see of Kildare; for, in Ussher's "Veterum Epistolarum Hibernicarum Sylloge," epist. 34, we find the name Ferdomnachus Episcopus Lageniensium subscribed to an epistle, written by the people of Waterford to Anslem, Archbishop of Canterbury. See pp. 91 to 93.

⁷⁹ By Colgan.

⁸⁰ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. xxx., xcix., pp. 554, 562, 563, and nn. 13, 14, pp. 565, 566, *ibid.*

⁸¹ This is the English nomenclature of the Latinized Kildara, and Cill Dara, in Irish. *Ceall* or *Kill* signifies "a cell," and *Dara*, "the oak," or its genitive case "of the oak."

⁸² See Rev. S. Baring-Gould's "Lives of the Saints," vol. ii., February 1st, p. 19.

booters intended to swim across the river, when the animals should be urged into its waters. The cattle directed their course towards St. Brigid's monastery, instead of that place, whither it had been intended to drive them.⁸³ The robbers followed after hoping to secure their prey. To the great confusion of these thieves, at day-break their guilt was manifested to many, who knew them personally. They made an humble confession of their sins, however, in Kildare, at the instance of St. Brigid.⁸⁴ The owners of the herd drove their cattle homewards, and thus, according to our saint's prophecy, their substance was preserved; while both the perpetrators of and sufferers from an intended injury acknowledged the interposition of Divine Providence, in such a remarkable incident.⁸⁵

Again, on the eve of a festival, a girl brought alms to St. Brigid. Delivering her gift, she said, it would be necessary to return towards her home, as her foster-father, an old and a paralytic man, had been left alone, nor had he any person to care the house or milk his cows. Brigid counselled her to remain there, however, for that night. Her visitor did so, and returned home on the following day, after having received Holy Eucharist. The cows and calves were found feeding apart in the fields, nor did the former seem to suffer in the least degree, as a consequence of their not having been milked. The old man acknowledged, likewise, that during the night his foster-daughter dwelt with our saint, the cattle continued to feed on their pasturage, while he remained awake the whole time since her departure.⁸⁶ This did not seem to extend beyond the interval of a single hour. It was a mystery, only known to the Almighty, who had thus miraculously disposed the result.⁸⁷

On a particular day, certain insolent and idle ruffians approached our saint. Wearing diabolical badges on their heads, they intended the death of a particular person. These miscreants asked—it is probable in mockery—a blessing from Brigid, and she, in her turn, requested them to put away their emblems. This, however, they refused to do. Seeing the form of badge adopted, our pious abbess was shocked; nevertheless, she marked them with a sign of the cross, not for the purpose of blessing them, but to counteract those designs entertained against their fellow-creatures. The ruffians departed with their brutal instincts aroused. Finding a poor man on their way, they attacked, murdered, and afterwards, as they thought, beheaded him. However, this turned out to be their phantasy, for that man escaped unhurt and through the midst of his enemies until he reached his own house. After a close investigation, these persecutors found neither his head, nor body, nor any traces of blood. Wherefore they said to each other: "A

⁸³ This account is contained in Professor O'Looney's *Irish Life of St. Brigid*, pp. 27, 28.

⁸⁴ The foregoing narrative is very circumstantially detailed in Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "*La Santità Prodigiosa*." *Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese*. Libro Quarto, pp. 275 to 279.

⁸⁵ See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*." *Vita Quarta S. Brigide*, lib. ii., cap. iv., pp. 550, 551. *Vita Tertia S. Brigide*, cap. xlvii., pp. 531, 532, *ibid.* *Sexta Vita S. Brigide*, sect. xxxvi., p. 589, *ibid.* It is likely enough, from the similarity of most circumstances narrated, that the foregoing narrative is only a different version of what is related in our saint's acts, by the authors of her First and Second Lives. See *Prima*

Vita S. Brigide, sec. 27, p. 516. *Secunda Vita S. Brigide*, cap. xvii., p. 520, *ibid.*

⁸⁶ When relating this occurrence, in his usual manner, Abbate D. Giacomo Certani compares the paralytic to those Northern people, mentioned by Olaus, lib. ii., cap. 14, and whose eyes are accommodated to see throughout the night. See "*La Santità Prodigiosa*." *Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese*. Libro Quarto, pp. 279, 280.

⁸⁷ See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*." *Quarta Vita S. Brigide*, lib. ii., cap. v., p. 551. Also, *Vita Tertia S. Brigide*, cap. xlviii., p. 552, *ibid.* In the Metrical Life, we are told, that the sun seemed to shine without cessation, during the whole time of this girl's absence from home. See *Sexta Vita S. Brigide*, sect. xxxvii., p. 590.

miracle hath taken place, through the providence of God, and St. Brigid's merits, for we have not killed this man, although the contrary seemed to be the case." For a long time, the celebrity of this circumstance was noised about through that part of the country. Those vagabonds afterwards laid aside their emblems, and united in praising the Almighty, while magnifying St. Brigid's extraordinary prerogatives.⁸³ The foregoing events, as related,⁸⁹ apparently occurred before St. Brigid took her journey into Munster with Bishop Erc of Slane,⁹⁰ and therefore, we may deem it sufficiently probable, she had been living at Kildare, antecedent to this excursion.

The social relations of men were often disturbed by violence and treachery at that early period. A chieftain, who lived in the plain of the Liffey, came towards our saint, asking her blessing. This the holy virgin specially bestowed on him. With great joy, the chief returned to his castle. But during the night, a daring and hostile man entered the fort, while its occupants were asleep. Taking a light from its candlestick,⁸⁴ he sought the slumbering chieftain. He was found with a sword, laid on the pillow, beside him. Seizing this sword of the chieftain, his enemy plunged it with great force three several times, as he thought, into the owner's heart, and afterwards he fled. The castle inmates aroused soon discovered what had taken place. They sent forth loud cries and lamentations, supposing their chief had been slain. The latter, however, seemed to awaken as it were from sleep, and it was found the wound he received was not of a dangerous character. He consoled his friends by saying: "Cease your lamentations, for St. Brigid's blessing, which I obtained to-day, hath preserved me from this great danger." The chieftain, to manifest his gratitude for that miraculous escape, visited St. Brigid, thanking her and offering her valuable presents, on the following day. Our saint established peace, afterwards, between the chief and that enemy, who sought his life, as also among their posterity. This too was continued for an indefinite period.⁸⁵ Thus her mediation, through God's blessing, was both effective and lasting. Can we doubt, therefore, as her protection over her people was so powerful on earth, that it will be less exercised in heaven, on behalf of those, who devoutly invoke her vigilant advocacy? Too frequently, alas! do we forget the powerful assistance our great national saints can render us before the throne of God.

⁸³ See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," *Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ*, lib. ii., cap. xl., p. 556. From the manner in which this same occurrence is related, in our saint's Third Life, it would seem, that these diabolical emblems subjected the bearers to certain unchristian engagements or incantations. The signs, borne by those vagrants, in all probability, represented obscene or monstrous figures, typifying certain heathenish superstitions. See *Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ*, cap. lxx., and n. 41, pp. 535, 544, *ibid.* I rather think this is the miracle alluded to, in St. Brigid's First Life, section xxxiii., and in her Second Life, cap. xxiii. Colgan refers these latter accounts to the performance of a miracle, somewhat similar in details.

⁸⁹ In the Third and Fourth Lives of the saint.

⁹⁰ Erc "was consecrated by St. Patrick,

and died A.D. 514."—Sir William Robert Wilde's "*Beauties of the Boyne, and its Tributary, the Blackwater*," chap. vii., p. 175.

⁸⁴ In these, and like incidental notices, we have some idea given regarding the domestic economy of our ancestors, at least, at the period, in which those documents relating to ancient usages were composed.

⁸⁵ See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," *Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ*, lib. ii., cap. xli., p. 556. Our saint's Third Life states, that the chief was accompanied by some women—probably members of his family—and a retinue, when he visited St. Brigid. It would seem, that the castle in which he slept was not his own, as it is said to have been situated on the road to his own domicile. See *Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ*, cap. lxx., p. 535, *ibid.*

CHAPTER VII.

ST. BRIGID'S INTIMACY WITH ST. PATRICK—ARMAGH—FOUNDATION OF ST. BRIGID THERE—HER MIRACLES—VISION REGARDING ST. PATRICK'S LAST RESTING-PLACE—HER SPIRIT OF SUBLIME RECOLLECTION AND HER GREAT CHARITY—SHE DESIRES THE INTRODUCTION OF THE ROMAN RITE FOR IRELAND.

ALTHOUGH some doubts have been expressed, that St. Brigid could have taken a very distinguished part in Irish Church affairs, during the lifetime of our venerable Apostle ; yet, to us, it seems perfectly reconcileable, not only with our early narratives, but with received chronology, that the glorious daughter of Erin might have had interviews with her illustrious director, both before and after the time of her foundation at Kildare. To determine exactly dates for the following written incidents is, however, a matter of great difficulty. We must endeavour conjecturally to place them in their order of occurrence, so far as probabilities will allow us to continue. Perhaps, the arrangement, with better lights of view, might admit of various alterations or adaptations. After certain miraculous occurrences, related in her acts, took place—the date or locality unnoted—it is said our saint went towards the northern part of Ireland, accompanied by St. Patrick.¹ On a certain day, while the great Irish Apostle in the plain of Lemhuin² preached God's holy word from a hill³ to the people there, at a place called Finnabhair,⁴ or "the white field," St. Brigid slept. She was probably very young at this time. After his sermon had been concluded,⁵ St. Patrick asked her why she had fallen asleep while the sacred word of God was announced.⁶ Then the humble virgin, on her knees, asked his pardon. She said : "O father, forgive me ; O most pious Lord, spare me, for during this hour, I have had a vision." The illustrious missionary desired her to tell what she had seen. Whereupon, the devout virgin announced : "I, your servant, have beheld four ploughs, ploughing the whole of Ireland, while sowers were scattering seed.⁷ This latter immediately sprung up and began to ripen, when rivulets of fresh milk filled the furrows, while the sowers themselves were clothed in white garments. After this, I saw others plough, and those who ploughed appeared black.⁸ They destroyed, with their plough-shares, the growing

CHAPTER VII.—¹ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Tertia Vita S. Brigide, cap. lviii., p. 533. Quarta Vita S. Brigide, lib. ii., cap. xxvii., pp. 553, 554.

² The fort of Augher and the village of Ballygawley are in it. Clogher lay on its western and the church of Errigle-Keeroge on its northern boundary. Its other name, Clossach, is frequently mentioned in O'Mellan's Irish "Journal of the Wars of 1641 ;" in Colton's "Visitation," p. 126 ; in the "Book of Rights," p. 152 ; in the "Irish Topographical Poems" of O'Dugan and O'Huidhrin, p. xxi., n. (119). See Miss M. F. Cusack's "Life of St. Patrick, Apostle of Ireland," p. 451, n. 2.

³ So the Seventh Life of St. Patrick states.

⁴ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Joceline's or Sexta Vita S. Patricii, cap. xevi., pp. 86, 87, and n. 105, p. 113. This place was situated in the ancient territory of Liemania, sometimes called Magh-Lemna, or Clossach, by others. See *ibid.*, Septima Vita S. Patricii, pars. iii., cap. iv., pp. 149,

150, and n. 11, p. 184.

⁵ The Acts of St. Patrick relate, that this sermon lasted three days and three nights, at the hill of Finnabhair at Lemhuin. It was in the county of Tyrone and diocese of Clogher. The River Blackwater ran through it. Finnabhair is now corruptly called Finnermore, a townland in the parish and barony of Clogher. See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Tyrone," Sheets 58, 64.

⁶ To Brigid, it is said, the time of the sermon did not seem to be more than one hour.

⁷ In the Sixth Metrical Life of St. Brigid, it is stated, the white sowers came from the East.

⁸ In her Sixth Metrical Life, in Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," St. Brigid is made to say :—

"Conspexi populos septem de parte trionis,
Nigris cum bovis venientes vultibus
atris."

—Sexta Vita S. Brigide, sec. lxxv., p. 595.

corn; and, they sowed tares, which filled the furrows."⁹ The Irish Apostle then said to our saint: "O holy virgin, you have beheld a true and wonderful vision. This is its interpretation. We are the good ploughers, who, with the shares of the four Gospels, cultivate human hearts, and sow God's words, while those rivers, containing the milk of Christian faith, proceed from our labours. But, towards the end of this world, bad teachers shall preach to depraved generations, who will receive them."¹⁰ Those teachers¹¹ shall destroy our instructions, and shall seduce nearly the whole human race.¹² Brigid also had a vision regarding the two sons of Eochaidh.¹³ son of Crimthann,¹⁴ at the same place.¹⁵ The elder of these, named Bressal, was represented by the figure of a large stone, wasting away under falling showers; while, the younger, Carbre, surnamed Damhairgid, was denoted by a smaller stone, which increased, and sent forth bright sparks, as the rain fell.¹⁶ St. Patrick interpreted this to mean, that the rain represented the shower of celestial grace, falling in vain on the unbeliever Bressal, while, its dews, descending on the believer Carbre,¹⁷ signified an increase to him of blessings for the future.¹ Hereupon, those who were then present, with St. Patrick and St. Brigid, praised Almighty God.¹⁹ A synod had been convened at this place.²⁰ The degeneracy of Christian feeling and practice, during subsequent times, as also the efforts of heretical and false teachers to pervert the

¹ In the Acts of St. Patrick, we find the following additional particulars described in her vision:—"And after that, I saw spotted and motley-coloured oxen, then wild and black animals. After these I saw sheep and swine and wolves and dogs contending with one another." See Rev. S. Baring-Gould's "Lives of the Saints," vol. ii., February 1, p. 21.

¹⁰ St. Patrick describes the evil teachers as—

"Pastores cupili, qui plus sua lucra sequuntur,
Non frumenta satis, sed lilia subdere sulcis
Curant," &c.

--See Vita Sexta S. Brigidæ, sec. lxx., p. 395. Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." This metrical account was supplied from a MS. in the library of his Eminence Cardinal Antonio Barberini, p. 1002, being wanting in the Monte Casino MS.

¹¹ They are called *deceivers* and *hypocrites* in Professor O'Looney's Irish Life of St. Brigid, pp. 29, 30.

¹² The Rev. S. Baring-Gould, a clergyman of the Anglican Church, calls the foregoing a remarkable prophecy regarding "the miserable apostasy of the so-called Reformation."—"Lives of the Saints," vol. ii., February 1, p. 21.

¹³ Eochaidh was prince of Oirgallia. Thus, Aubrey de Vere alludes to him, in the poem, "Saint Patrick and King Eochaidh":—

"Eochaidh, son of Cruimthier, reigned, a king
Northward in Clochar."
—"Legends of St. Patrick," p. 149.

¹⁴ Crimthann was son to Tieg, son of Deadal, son to Rochar, son of Colla Dachrioch, according to the "Sanctilogic Genealogy," chap. xiii.

¹⁵ I saw subsequently two stones, one little and the other big. A drop was shed on each of them. The little stone increased at the 'drop,' and silvery sparks burst from it. The large stone withered, moreover." These words of Brigid, St. Patrick interpreted to mean Cairpre Damhairgit, who believed and was blessed with his seed, and Bressal, who refused to believe, when a malediction was pronounced against him. See Miss Mary F. Cusack's "Life of St. Patrick, Apostle of Ireland," p. 452.

¹⁶ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Septima Vita S. Patricii, pars. iii., cap. vi., and n. 12, pp. 150, 184.

¹⁷ Among the posterity of Carbre, blessed by St. Patrick, we find enumerated there, St. Endaeus of Aran, St. Fanchea, St. Teganus, St. Darenia, and St. Lochina, sisters to St. Endaeus, St. Beg Mac De, with many other saints. See Colgan's "Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ," xxi. Martii, Appendix ad Vitam S. Endæi, cap. iv., pp. 713, 714.

¹⁸ Only the writer of St. Brigid's Sixth Life mentions this vision of the saint in her Act. See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Vita Sexta S. Brigidæ, sec. lxxi., and n. 17, pp. 595, 598.

¹⁹ See *ibid.*, Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. xxvii., pp. 553, 554. Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. lvii., p. 533, *ibid.*

²⁰ According to some accounts, St. Patrick is said to have held nearly sixty synods in Ireland. See Villanueva's "Sancti Patricii, Ibernorum Apostoli, Synodi, Canonones, Opuscula," &c., p. 7, 8.

minds and principles of the faithful in Ireland,²¹ have been popularly believed to furnish the correct interpretation for this remarkable Brigantine vision.

It is probable, Lemhuin and Finnabhair are the places alluded to, where St. Patrick and St. Brigid, with their religious, are said to have been assembled at a time the holy Apostle of Ireland did not cease giving instructions to the people, for three whole days and three nights.²² The sun continued shining, as we are told ; however, during this protracted sermon, the auditors supposed, that not more than an hour had elapsed. One man only had a knowledge regarding what length of time had been spent in this place. On approaching, he asked the holy Bishop, why he had remained there for so long an interval. The Apostle asked him what time had elapsed, and was then told a duration, equal to three days and as many nights. Then said the holy father : "For forty days and nights, we should have remained here, had not a stranger warned us about our delay, nor should we have experienced fatigue nor hunger, through the Divine clemency." Afterwards, St. Patrick and St. Brigid returned to their respective districts.²³ Those are not specified ; but, it may be, St. Patrick proceeded on his missionary career through Ulster, while Brigid returned to her home or convent in Meath or Leinster.²⁴

It is related, that Brigid visited Armagh, most probably after she had established her parent house at Kildare. She always desired the wise counsel of St. Patrick.²⁵ It may not be unlikely, this journey was undertaken at the special request of the Irish Apostle himself. He intended Armagh to be the seat of ecclesiastical rule ; and, here he is said to have built, not alone his cathedral church,²⁶ but likewise, several other religious houses.²⁷ What could be more desirable, than founding a holy institute, where his fervent female converts could find a happy retreat and a career of Christian usefulness ? Who could be chosen more capable of teaching nuns, both by word and example, than the zealous and energetic Abbess of Kildare ?²⁸ If we are to believe a modern compilation, St. Patrick founded Temple Brigid in this city of Armagh.²⁹ It seems more likely, that the Regles Brighde, or St. Bride's Church, if founded during his lifetime, had been also the joint concern of St. Brigid, to accommodate some religious daughters, belonging to her order. Long after her decease, the coarbs of the Regles Brighde,³⁰ are men-

²¹ See the foregoing narrative produced in Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "*La Santità Prodigiosa, Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese.*" Libro Quarto, pp. 323 to 326.

²² See Abbate Giacomo Certani's "*La Santità Prodigiosa, Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese.*" Libro Quarto, pp. 326, 327.

²³ See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga,*" Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. xxxiii. p. 555. In the Third Life of our saint, this sermon was preached, it is stated, at the request of St. Brigid. See Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. lxiii., p. 534. *Ibid.*

²⁴ The foregoing incidents are probably referable to St. Brigid's earliest interviews with St. Patrick.

²⁵ See "The Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. vii., pp. 87, 88.

²⁶ James Stuart, A.B., who has published "Historical Memoirs of the City of Armagh," states, that St. Patrick built a cathedral and some other religious edifices there, A.D. 445 ; that he held a synod there, A.D. 448 ; that he resigned the bishopric of

this place, A.D. 455, to St. Binen ; and that he died at Saul or Sabhal, A.D. 493. See chap. i., pp. 82, 84, 85.

²⁷ An inexact historical compiler affirms, that St. Patrick founded an abbey at Armagh for regular Canons of St. Augustine's order, in 445 or 457. See Sir Charles Coote's "Statistical Survey of the County of Armagh," Appendix, p. 29.

²⁸ We are informed, that "she was invited to come and form establishments in various districts."—Rev. M. J. Brennan's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," chap. iii., p. 51.

²⁹ See Sir Charles Coote's "Statistical Survey of the County of Armagh," Appendix, p. 30.

³⁰ In Irish, *Regles Bpugaoe*. This little conventual church was outside the rath. Its situation is marked on the Map of the City of Armagh, constructed on J. Roque's Map of 1760, and R. Levingstone's Survey of 1767, prefixed to the Rev. Wm. Reeves' "Ancient Churches of Armagh," sec. v.,

tioned in our annals.³¹ Now St. Brigid's shares its honours with a paddock.³² From the expression *coarb*,³³ or abbatial successor, we may conclude that, though small, it was a religious house which might have traced back its origin to the era of its reputed founder.³⁴ In 1179, the Regles Brighde and the Teampull-na-Fearta³⁵ escaped a wide-spread conflagration,³⁶ which consumed the greater part of Armagh.³⁷ In 1189, however, Armagh was burned from St. Brigid's cross to the Regles Brighde.³⁸ The occupants of the nunnery here were possibly of St. Brigid's order, and observants of her rule, from the earliest period.³⁹ Two townlands belonging to it, at one time, paid a rental of four shillings a year.⁴⁰ Afterwards, these endowments seem to have been absorbed in some more powerful interest; for, at the period of the suppression of religious houses, its sole possessions were the building and the surrounding premises, which occupied about one acre.⁴¹ At the time of the dissolution⁴² it was a nunnery, and possibly a cell of Templefertagh; for, in inquisitions and patents, both are coupled, and they have changed hands in company ever since.⁴³ The precincts of Templebreed occupy an irregular space, situated to the south-east of the Protestant cathedral, at Armagh, and having frontage in the middle, at the south side of Castle-street.⁴⁴ The old Catholic chapel stands on the south-west bound, and the site of Templebreed lies about thirty yards north-east of the near end of the chapel.⁴⁵ An ancient cemetery adjoined the nunnery.⁴⁶ The historian of Armagh correctly identifies Teampull na Fearta with the Dobbin holding;⁴⁷ yet, strange to say, elsewhere, he professes his inability to determine its position.⁴⁸ Like

p. 25. Printed for the Author, Lusk: MDCCCLX, small 8vo.

³¹ The "Annals of Ulster" and "Annals of the Four Masters" record at A.D. 1085, the death of Gormgeal Loighseach. See Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus iii., p. 648, and tomus iv., p. 350. In the former Annals, the Latinized rendering is "Vicaria Ecclesie S. Brigidie in Ardmacha, sapiens intelligentia et pietate." In the "Annals of the Four Masters," "Gormgalus Lagisensis Vicarius Ecclesie Brigidie in Ardmacha, sapiens scientia et religione."

³² See Rev. William Reeves' "Ancient Churches of Armagh," p. 3.

³³ The word *coarb* is applied to the successor or representative of the patron saint, or original founder of a monastery, priory, or any ecclesiastical establishment, or to the successor of a bishop. See Owen Connellan's and Philip MacDermott's "Annals of Ireland, translated from the original Irish of the Four Masters," n. 2, p. 1.

³⁴ See Rev. Dr. Reeves' "Ancient Churches of Armagh," sec. v., p. 25.

³⁵ This is represented as having been the present Scotch-street, supposed by Dr. Reeves to have been called Templefertagh-street in the time of King Charles II. See *ibid.*, sec. i., p. 11.

³⁶ See Rev. Robert King's "Memoir introductory to the early History of the Primacy of Armagh," p. 111.

³⁷ Probably on account of their position outside the rath, and the densely-occupied portion of the town.

³⁸ See Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. iii., pp. 84, 85.

³⁹ See Rev. William Reeves' "Ancient Churches of Armagh," sec. i., p. 10.

⁴⁰ According to Primate Dowdall's Register of the See of Armagh.

⁴¹ An inquisition of 1612, finds that this was a nunnery. Ultonia Inq. Armagh, No. 3, James I.

⁴² Then it was occupied by a singer, or "cantator," who resided in said monastery, place, or house, called Templebreed.

⁴³ Both lots, known as the two Abbey Courts, or the Earl of Anglesey's Liberty, were assigned by lease in 1790, and this was converted into fee by the late Leonard Dobbin, Esq.

⁴⁴ The nunnery enclosure extended backwards down the slope, south and south-east, to near, but not touching, Thomas-street.

⁴⁵ On the Castle-street frontage of St. Brigid's ground stood the old castellated house which gave name to the street. It was anciently called Port-Rath or Rath-Armagh, and occasionally Rathene. See Stuart's "Historical Memoir of the City of Armagh," chap. v., p. 144.

⁴⁶ See the "Dublin Penny Journal," for notice of an ancient bronze seal belonging to a former Dean of Armagh, vol. ii., p. 112. This communication of the late John Corry, the truest antiquary Armagh ever produced, is accompanied by an illustration. The seal was found on the site of Temple Brigid.

⁴⁷ See "Historical Memoirs of the City of Armagh," chap. xxvi., pp. 511, 512, 514.

⁴⁸ See *ibid.*, chap. i., pp. 83, 87, and in the Appendices vi. and vii. Stuart conjectures, that it was at an old abbey, used as a cemetery in the early part of the last cen-

many other cathedral cities, Armagh sprung up and extended around its minster church. It likewise grew by degrees into beauty of design and appearance.⁴⁹ Incomparably fine and picturesque views of it are furnished



City of Armagh, from the East.

at every point of approach ; hills and valleys and rushing streams give variety and interest to each of its suburbs.

The ready resources of true charity, as exercised on behalf of our neighbour, are ever versatile, and applicable towards objects and conditions, which call forth their exercise by cloistered religious. One day, a poor leper came to our saint, entreating permission to have his garments washed at her establishment. It is probable, that some public provision had been there made. Brigid compassionately assented to the leper's request, and when told by the afflicted pauper, that he had no other garments for a change, while what he wore should be washed and dried, our holy abbess directed one of her nuns to present him with her second habit, which she was not obliged to wear. Having a very natural objection to give her clothes to a man, labouring under so loathsome a disease, that nun could hardly bear such a proposal. She was immediately struck with leprosy,⁵⁰ for her disobedience, and she continued in this state for the lapse of an hour. Then, indeed, she repented on account of her refusal. Through the prayers of St. Brigid, however, she was soon cleansed from this infectious disease.⁵¹

tury, and that it was situated within the Protestant Primate's demesne. See p. 598.

⁴⁹ The annexed view, from a photograph by Frederick W. Mares, Dublin, was drawn on the wood by William F. Wakeman, and engraved by George A. Hanlon. On a high hill to the right is the new Catholic cathedral, with its double flanking towers and spires. The Protestant cathedral, with its square tower, occupies a high hill in the

centre of the city.

⁵⁰ The Sixth Life of our saint says :—

“Virgineamque cutem percussit candida lepra.”

—Colgan's “*Trias Thaumaturga*,” *Sexta Vita S. Brigidæ*, sec. lxiii., p. 596.

⁵¹ The leprosy of cold climates seems to be a local disease of the cutis, its vessels

One of the other nuns, with more charity, had already presented the poor man with a garment, whilst all the community acknowledged the justice of God's judgment on their now penitent sister. When the poor leper had resumed his own attire, the holy abbess procured for him, likewise, the blessing of a release from his miserable condition. Her sisters gave thanks to God, on witnessing these manifestations of His Almighty power. The holy abbess and her nuns dwelt in a particular cell, in that part of the country, where the foregoing occurrences took place. One night, during Lenten time, eight daring thieves came to steal four horses, which belonged to the community. A nun, who remained awake at that time, announced to our saint this robbery which had been perpetrated. The abbess said: "Be it so; I already know it, but there will be found others, more powerful than we are, who may retaliate." On departing with their prey, those robbers went towards the house of a peasant or farmer, from whom they took forty measures of corn. These were put on the four horses and on their own shoulders. Afterwards, they proceeded, as they thought, to their homes. Yet, the Almighty had decreed, that the thieves should retrace their course towards that granary belonging to the nuns. Having deposited their booty, they retired to rest in a corner of the barn. On the following morning, the persons, who had experienced a loss of their corn, setting out on the tracks of those thieves and of the previously-stolen horses, came in chase to St. Brigid's dwelling-place. They declared their reason for coming, and explained about certain indications, which led them to suppose, they had followed in a right direction. They also requested our abbess to give them whatever information she could furnish regarding this matter. The holy virgin then went to that granary, where she found the robbers sleeping. Having awakened them, she asked why they had dared to bring their booty thither, when they replied, in fear and amazement, that they had been under an impression they returned to and slept in their own homes.⁵² Afterwards, St. Brigid sent a message to St. Patrick, who was not far distant from that place, with a request that he would come and release those robbers. The holy prelate immediately came to our saint. Having ransomed them, they repented, and sought to atone for their crimes, by offering that corn they had taken to St. Brigid and to her nuns, being convinced, such restitution should be acceptable to God.⁵³ By the occurrence of this miracle, St. Brigid's fame was greatly diffused, through this particular district of country.⁵⁴ While St. Brigid, with some of her nuns, was one day seated near Armagh city, two men approached, bearing water in an uncovered wooden vessel.⁵⁵ On coming towards the holy abbess, they entreated her to bless this water. With their request she complied, and she also blessed themselves, at the

and glands; but, it is much more virulent and contagious in warm climates. See Dr. Robert Thomas' "Modern Practice of Physic," &c. Article, *Lepra* or *Leprosy*, pp. 729, 730. London: 1834. 8vo. Tenth edition.

⁵² See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," *Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ*, lib. ii., cap. xxviii., xxix., p. 554. In another of our saint's lives, it is said, that a deficiency of corn existed at the time of this robbery, that the grain taken had been winnowed, and intended for seed, and that the thieves entered, not a barn, but a small hut, to sleep there, after this robbery had been perpetrated.

See *Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ*, cap. lix., p. 533. *Ibid.*

⁵³ We are not informed, whether our saint received this offering, which she could only have accepted rightfully, with consent of the real owner of the corn stolen.

⁵⁴ It is probable, the unfinished portion of our saint's Sixth Life, as found in the *Barbarini MS.*, had reference also to this miracle. See *Vita Sexta S. Brigidæ*, sec. lxi., p. 596. *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ See Abbate Certani's "*La Santità Prodigirosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese*." *Libro Quinto*, pp. 340, 341.

same time. Departing from her, it happened, that vessel containing water fell on its side, and not only did it remain unbroken, but not even one drop of its contents spilled through the aperture.⁵⁶ This remarkable circumstance was attributed to the efficacy of St. Brigid's prayers. When St. Patrick had been informed regarding such an occurrence, he ordered a part of the water contained in that vessel to be divided among particular churches about Armagh,⁵⁷ and to be used in the Eucharistic sacrifice.⁵⁸ Another portion he desired should be sprinkled on the fields, to make them productive.⁵⁹ His orders were obeyed, and many, who had been benefited by this distribution, gave thanks to God and to his glorious servant, St. Brigid.⁶⁰

A certain wealthy and good nobleman lived in the plain of Macha.⁶¹ He suffered greatly from disease and a pestilence, which baffled the skill of physicians. At last he sent to St. Brigid, requesting a visit from her; and, while approaching the house, which she saw at a distance, our holy virgin declared, that from whatever quarter the wind blew, it should bring calamity and disease on the master of that dwelling.⁶² When this was told the nobleman, he was surprised, and declared he did not know why he should incur such a judgment, as he had done evil to no person. Then his herd replied, by stating, it had been rumoured, that all wayfarers without exception were in the habit of cursing this nobleman, because he had allowed his husbandmen to enclose certain fields, with hedges,⁶³ which had the effect of making an adjoining highway impassable, owing to their thorny obstructions. When St. Brigid heard of this, she declared it was the cause of his misfortune. Wherefore, that nobleman gave orders to restore the highway to its former unincumbered state. Afterwards, all passengers bestowed their blessings on him. He was also relieved from his infirmities, through the prayers of St. Brigid, to whom, and to the Almighty, he offered humble acknowledgments.⁶⁴

To the pious abbess, among other gifts, was accorded the spirit of prophecy.⁶⁵ We are told, while St. Patrick, on a certain day, preached the

⁵⁶ In Professor O'Looney's Irish Life of St. Brigid, it is said to have rolled from the door of the Rath to Loehlaplain, pp. 29, 30.

⁵⁷ And throughout Airthiria (Orior) is added in Professor O'Looney's MS. *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ "Ut ad Eucharistiam sanguinis Christi mitteretur," &c., are the words used in our saint's Third and Fourth Lives. They show how early in Ireland was the practice of mingling some drops of water with wine used at Mass, thus according with the present Roman rite.

⁵⁹ We are told, moreover, that it cured every disease and distemper that was in the country. Professor O'Looney's Irish Life of St. Brigid, pp. 29, 30.

⁶⁰ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. xxxii., pp. 554, 555. Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. lxii., p. 534. *Ibid.*

⁶¹ In one reading, Colgan found "in campo *Mancho*, which he amends in the following comment, "*rectius Macha*." This was a plain extending round Armagh, called in Irish, *Magh, Macha*, n. 34, p. 543. This plain now—if it can be so called—presents charmingly diversified sylvan and pastoral prospects, with delightful rolling surfaces,

depressions and eminences, highly cultivated and improved by art.

⁶² This account, with his usual classical illustrations, is also to be found elaborated in Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "*La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese*." Libro Quinto, pp. 334 to 338.

⁶³ This passage indicates early Irish agricultural improvements, in fencing landed property. These probably, in many instances, should favourably compare with the present state of landed proprietors' efforts in Ireland. Much more should have been done to trim hedges and secure fields in an ornamental manner. By planting trees more generally and by building commodious and handsome dwellings for farmers and cottiers, the natural features of our landscapes might be rendered far more picturesque, while social order and happiness should be increased.

⁶⁴ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. xxxi., p. 554. Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. lxii., p. 534. *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Bishop De Burgo's "*Officia Propria Sanctorum Hiberniæ*." In Festo S. Brigidæ Officium. Lect. vi., p. 13.

word of God, in the province of Ulster, and while the pearl of Ireland⁶⁶ formed one of a numerous concourse of persons present, the whole multitude saw a cloud of surpassing brightness descending from the heavens towards the earth.⁶⁷ This luminous meteor rested over a place, adjoining that in which the congregation had been assembled. Afterwards, this bright meteor drifted towards the citadel or Dun of Leathglass.⁶⁸ This remarkable Dun is still a prominent object near Downpatrick.⁶⁹ Having continued there for a considerable time, it finally disappeared. The congregation pre-

⁶⁶ Thus is St. Brigid poetically styled by Jocelyn, who relates these incidents. See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Sexta Vita S. Patricii, cap. clxxxviii., clxxxix., p. 107.

⁶⁷ The Abbate D. Giacomo Certani thus writes:—"Staua egli non lungi alla sua Canonica Saballense discorrendo delle bellezze del Paradiso, alle quali di già s'approssimaua, quando si vide vn Globogrande di luminosissima luce fermarsi sul cimitero, que staua poco lungi alla Città di Duno."—"La Santità Prodigiola. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Quarto, p. 328.

⁶⁸ "Ubi sepultus est ipse Sanctus Patricius, Beata Brigida et relique Beatissimi Abbatiss Columbe post multos annos collocatae in sepulchro," will be found inserted between brackets, in the Fourth Life of St. Brigid, where an account of these events is given. The site of the citadel here mentioned was known as Dun da leth-glas, by the ancient inhabitants of our island, or as contracted into Dun, now Anglicized Down. In Latin it is called *Dunum*. It is now a city and an episcopal see, in the eastern part of Ulster. At a period long subsequent to their several deaths, the relics of Saints Patrick, Brigid, and Columkille were preserved in Down. This incidental passage—already quoted from the Fourth Life of our saint—shows that the writer of this treatise must have written it, subsequent to A.D. 823, when, according to Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," "Blathmac, son of Flann, received the crown of martyrdom, for he was killed by the foreigners at I Coluim-Cille," vol. i., pp. 436, 437. At that date, St. Columkille's relics were kept at Iona, off Albanian Scotia's coast, as Walafrid Strabo, a contemporaneous writer, relates, in his account of St. Blathmac's martyrdom, in these lines:—

"Et reliquis rabida sociis feritate preemptis,
Ad sanctum venere patrem, pretiosa metallā
Redere cogentes, quois sancta Columbæ
Ossa jacent; quam quippe suis de sedibus arcam
Tollentes tumulo terra posuere cavato
Cespitē sub denso, gnari jam pestis ini-
quæ."

At the time of St. Blathmaic's martyrdom,

according to authors worthy of credit, the whole of Britain, and especially the Hebrides, suffered from the frequent incursions of Danes and other Pagans, and for nearly two hundred years subsequently Dublin had been occupied by the Northmen, A.D. 840, while they made frequent inroads into other parts of our island, especially upon Leinster, burning and devastating various places where they came. Kildare is mentioned, as having been spoiled by them, A.D. 835, while Kethernus, prior in this city, with many others, had been put to death, A.D. 843. Wherefore, Colgan thinks it fair to conjecture, although he could not pronounce with certainty, that St. Brigid's sacred relics had been transferred from Kildare, while those of St. Columkille had been removed from Iona Island to Down, before or about the middle of the ninth century. This he considers a more probable opinion, because no other period for this translation can be pointed to as more opportune, and because, at that time, it is not a little remarkable, that one and the same abbot presided over the monasteries of Kildare and Iona, while it is probable, he conceived a desire of having those sacred treasures, which had been committed to his charge, removed to a safer place, owing to the frequently-recurring ravages of infidels. The Ulster province was then considered more secure than any other part of Ireland, as Niall Cuille, King of Ireland, was stationed there, with his forces. At the year 803, in Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," it is recorded, that "Ceallach, son of Ailill, Abbot of Cill-dara, and the Abbot of Ia, died in Pietland," vol. i., pp. 500, 501. He appears to have succeeded Sedulius, Abbot of Kildare, who died in 828, since we read of no other Abbot of Kildare that lived there as an intermedary. This he undertook to prove in Appendix V. See "Trias Thaumaturga," Vita Tertia S. Brigide, n. 30, p. 543. Also, Vita Quarta S. Brigide, nn. 13, 14, pp. 505, 506, *ibid.* Also, Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., pp. 460, 461, and nn. (f, g), pp. 452, 453, and n. (p), pp. 466, 467, with pp. 442, 443.

⁶⁹ The ancient Dun Keltair at this place is composed of three great earthen ramparts, with as many intervening trenches. These were covered with a growth of furze, briars,

sent would not dare to inquire, from their venerated Apostle, the meaning of this portent; but, they applied for a solution of it, from the holy virgin, Brigid. She told them to ask their common father, St. Patrick, for an explanation. The latter replied to her: "You and I are equals, therefore explain this mystery to the people."⁷⁰ St. Brigid then spoke to the assembly; she told them, that apparition indicated St. Patrick's spirit, which went, as it were, before to visit the place where his body should be interred after his death.⁷¹ "For," said she, "where this meteor first rested near us, there shall the body of our holy patron lie unburied for some days,⁷² and thence shall it be brought, and be interred in Leathglaisse Dun,⁷³ where it shall remain to the day of judgment."⁷⁴ Holy Patrick then requested our saint to make with her own hands that shroud, in which his body should be wrapped after death, and he expressed a desire to arise from the grave, clothed with it, to receive his eternal reward. This request our holy virgin promised should be complied with, and she also predicted to St. Patrick, that he with herself and the celebrated St. Columkille, another great Irish apostle, not then born, should arise for judgment, from this same tomb.⁷⁵ The body of Ireland's illustrious Apostle was afterwards wrapped in that shroud then promised him by St. Brigid. On hearing this colloquy and prediction, the crowd assembled praised Almighty God.⁷⁶

Subsequently, as we are told, having obtained permission from the holy Archbishop Patrick for a return to her own part of the country, St. Brigid travelled over a plain called Breagh, within the Meathian territory. While she dwelt there at a certain cell, it would seem the wife, probably of Fergus,⁷⁷ the son of Conall Crimthann, who was son to Niall, King of Ireland,⁷⁸

sloe and hawthorn bushes, when visited by the writer in May, 1874. The whole is surrounded with marshy meadows, reclaimed from the waters of Lough Strangford.

⁷⁰ See "The Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. vii., p. 88.

⁷¹ In a note, on this passage, Colgan observes, the meaning does not appear to be, that St. Patrick's soul, not yet departed from his body, actually came to the place of his future interment, but that the meteor represented it, and the place for its future burial. See "Trias Thaumaturga," Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, n. 32, p. 543.

⁷² See *ibid.* Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, n. 15, p. 566.

⁷³ At this present time, in the small and greatly crowded cemetery of Downpatrick, beside the old cathedral, a hole has been opened over one of the graves, which is supposed by the people to have been the spot, where St. Patrick's body had been interred. Under this impression, the Catholics of the town and neighbourhood frequently remove small quantities of earth. Even pilgrims from the most distant parts of the world obtain portions, which they carry away as *souvenirs* of Ireland's great Apostle.

⁷⁴ The author of St. Patrick's Fourth Life appears to insinuate, in this particular place, what is asserted by Probus, in his Life of St. Patrick, lib. ii., and also by

Joceline, cap. 189, viz., that St. Patrick died in the monastery of Saul, and that his body afterwards had been interred in the city of Down. Joceline also adds, cap. 193, that the Irish Apostle's body remained twelve days unburied at the former place, before it was brought to Down, on account of a contest that took place between the Armagh and Down people, who respectively contended for the possession of his remains.

⁷⁵ See *ibid.*, Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. xxx., p. 554. Also, Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. lx., pp. 533, 534. This latter chapter concludes the account regarding this linen shroud by an observation, "in loco constat." On this passage, Colgan has a note, where it is observed, that the author of the Third Life must have flourished at a very early period; for, the linen shroud in question does not seem to have been in existence, for several ages, previous to the seventeenth century. *Ibid.*, n. 33, p. 543.

⁷⁶ To these foregoing circumstances, some allusion seems to be made, and with a sufficient amount of poetical licence, in Vita Sexta S. Brigidæ, secs. xlv., xlviii., pp. 592, 593. *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ This son to King Conall, who is said to have dwelt in the plain of Breagh, and whose posterity had been addicted to violence and bloodshed, during a period they ruled over the kingdom, can be no other than Fergus, surnamed Kerrbheoil.

⁷⁸ Niall the Great had two sons, both of

visited her, to entreat her intercession. The noble-born woman, in question, brought a silver vessel, as a gift for our saint. Brigid sent one of her nuns to wait upon that distinguished visitor, who stood without the door. For some cause, the holy abbess herself did not wish to appear.⁷² The nun soon returned, asking why her superioress would not see the queen and pray to God for her, that thus she might obtain the object desired by the royal visitor, and more especially, as the holy virgin had often asked for like favours, on behalf of peasants' wives. The saint of God replied, that with few exceptions, the poor and rustics serve Almighty God, and pray to Him; whilst, only in few instances, is it found, that the children of kings are not malicious, sons of blood, and libertines. However, the queen appears to have obtained the favour she sought, through the intervention of our holy abbess. To her prayers is attributed the birth of Diernit,⁸⁰ son to Fergus,⁸¹ and afterwards supreme Monarch of Ireland.⁸² In granting her request, however, our saint told the nun, that the queen's posterity must needs be addicted to deeds of bloodshed,⁸³ and must incur malediction, even although they should reign for a lapse of years.⁸⁴ The event corresponded with our saint's prediction.⁸⁵

This illustrious abbess did not take her mind or her attention from our Lord, for the space of one hour at any time. She was constantly speaking of Him, and she was ever thinking of Him, as is evident from her own life, and also from the life of St. Brenainn, Bishop of Cluain-fearta.⁸⁶ She was very hospitable, likewise, and exceedingly charitable towards guests and needy people.⁸⁷ Animated with this kindly and generous spirit towards her neighbour, she loved God to such a degree, that her mind was continually intent on His Divine perfections, and elevated by holy contemplation. One

whom were called Conall or Conallt; but, to distinguish them, one was named Conall Crimthann, and the other Conall Gulban. In the time of St. Brigid, Conall Crimthann, with his progeny, ruled over the extensive territories of Breagh and Meath. Before St. Brigid's birth or the arrival of St. Patrick in Ireland, Conall Gulban acquired ample possessions in Ulster. From him, the district, called Tir-Connell, derived its name.

⁷² This account is also very fully related in Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "*La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese.*" Libro Quinto, pp. 538 to 340.

⁸⁰ This Diernit had three sons, Aidus Slane, Colman, surnamed the Great, and Colman, the Less. The sons and posterity of these princes, contending for the sovereignty of Meath and of Ireland, engaged in devastating wars. In such intestine contests, the kings themselves were frequently killed; as for instance, Suibhne, son to Colman the Less, was cut off by Aidus Slane; and Conall, son to the same Aidus, was slain by Ænguss, son of Colman the Great; Conall, son of the afore-said Suibhne, was put to death by the same Aidus Slane; while Moelunius and Colchus, two sons of Ænguss, son to Colman the Great, were killed by Diernit, son to Aidus Slane.

⁸¹ In the present case, we must suppose Conall Crimthann's son alluded to, as well

because Fergus, son of the last-named prince, then ruled over Breagh territory, while the sons of Conall Gulban reigned in Ultonia; as also, because a son to this Fergus was the famous Diernit, King of Ireland.

⁸² When the writers of St. Brigid's Acts call the posterity of a child, born through her prayers, *bloody*, they seem to have had reference to these and like disastrous issues. See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, n. 36. pp. 543, 544.

⁸³ From the race of both Conalls issued many kings, not only over those provinces, which have been already alluded to, but who even were monarchs over all Ireland; and, it may be observed, on account of many wars waged by them, in acquiring and defending their territories, they deserved to be called men of violence.

⁸⁴ See L. Tachet de Barneval's "*Histoire Légendaire de l'Irlande*," chap. vi., p. 57.

⁸⁵ See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. xxxiv., p. 555. Also, Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. lxiv., p. 534.

⁸⁶ See "*Acta Sancti Brendani*." Edited by Right Rev. Patrick F. Moran, D.D., Bishop of Ossory. Vita S. Brendani, cap. xvii., p. 17.

⁸⁷ See "*The Martyrology of Donegal*." Edited by Rev. Drs. Todd and Reeves, pp. 34, 35.

day, a pious man came to that place,⁸⁸ where Brigid was accustomed to offer her private devotions, when he found her hands extended towards heaven, in prayer.⁸⁹ Our saint was so entranced in God's holy presence, that she seemed undisturbed, in the least degree, by shouts of certain neighbouring villagers, both men and women. These were engaged in driving away some calves from their dams. On seeing St. Brigid's attention thus wholly absorbed in the Divine presence, her devout visitor was not willing to disturb the course of her meditations. After the lapse of an hour, however, he returned, and said to her: "O Saint of God, have you not heard great outcries raised in the hamlet?" She answered in the negative. Her interrogator then said: "What, therefore, hath become of thy hearing?" St. Brigid replied: "As God is my witness, at the time you speak of, I heard and beheld Masses celebrated in the city of Rome,⁹⁰ and at the tombs of the Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul."⁹¹ I very much desire, likewise, that the whole Roman ritual and liturgy may be brought to me."⁹² Afterwards, St. Brigid sent prudent men to Rome,⁹³ that thence these might bring the same masses and ecclesiastical rules.⁹⁴ At Placentia⁹⁵ and elsewhere, she is said to have saved her messengers by miracles⁹⁶ from impending death. The following legendary account, regarding this mission, is found in a commentary,

⁸⁸ It is assumed to have been in Kildare, by the Abbate Certani, although it may have been at some other place.

⁸⁹ This narrative is very fully set forth in Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Sesto, pp. 472 to 479.

⁹⁰ Colgan remarks, that her words could have been verified in a double manner: *First*, either by supposing St. Brigid to have been miraculously present, in the two distant cities of Rome and of Kildare—if that be the place designated—at one and the same time; or, *secondly*, by remaining, in one place only, she could have seen in spirit what occurred, in the other distant city. He adds, that either mode is possible, and that other instances are to be found, as in St. Anthony of Padua's Acts, which bear a resemblance to what is here related. See "Trias Thaumaturga," Tertia Vita S. Brigidæ, n. 54, p. 544.

⁹¹ The author of her metrical acts states, that she was not present at Rome bodily, but only saw by a mental illumination what took place in that city. He adds:—

"Officium sanctum placuit sibi semper habendum,
Unde sacerdotes Romam transmisit ad urbem,
Sacra adferre nova et quodcumque audiverat illic,
Virginibus cupiens hæc tradere lege perenni.
Libros compositos, cantumque et munera multa
Misit Apostolicus Brigidæ, concessit habenda
Tradidit illa suis, discendi vertit in usum,"
—Sexta Vita S. Brigidæ, sec. lvi. p. 594.
Ibid.

⁹² The meaning of the Latin words, in our saint's lives, seems to indicate, that St. Brigid desired to conform entirely to the rites, ceremonies and constitutions of the Roman Church; wherefore, the Ritual of Rome and the Roman order bear such a signification.

⁹³ Colgan says, that in an Irish Life of St. Brigid, at chapter 50, and in an old MS., called by our antiquaries, "The Book of Hymns," in a commentary to a certain canticle, composed in praise of St. Brigid, and in commentaries, affixed to the Martyrology of Marianus O'Gorman, at the 1st of February, there are various particulars given, regarding the legation of St. Brigid.

⁹⁴ See *ibid.*, Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. xiv., p. 552. Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. xci., pp. 538, 539, *ibid.* In the latter life, to the account contained in the text, this following sentence is added:—"Item dixit post aliquantum tempus Brigidæ ad illos viros; Ego sentio quod quidam commutaverunt in Roma missas postquam venistis ab ea. Exite iterum. Et illi exierunt et detulerunt ut invenerunt."

⁹⁵ This was an ancient city of Italy. In the first century of the Christian era, Silius Italicus alludes to it, in this hexameter line:

"Certavit Mutinæ quassata Placentia bello."

—"Panicorum," lib. viii., v. 593. It is now called Piacenza, on the River Trebia, not far from the Po. A very interesting description of it may be found, in Rev. John Chetwode Eustace's "Classical Tour through Italy, An. MDCCCLII.," vol. i., chap. vi., pp. 237 to 241.

⁹⁶ These Colgan did not think necessary to be related, in his own notes. See "Trias Thaumaturga," n. 55.

affixed to St. Aengus' "Metrical Festilogv," at the 1st of February. On a certain day, as she could not undertake the journey herself, St. Brigid sent seven of her disciples to Rome,⁹⁷ that they might bring from thence the Ordo of St. Peter, or the Roman Rite. But, on their return home, they entirely forget what they had then learned. To whom St. Brigid addressed these words: "The Son of the Virgin knows, that however great your diligence had been, it is altogether useless." Again, she despatched seven other disciples, and with a like result. A third time, she sent other messengers, and joined with them a certain blind *protège* of her own. The Almighty had endowed this blind man with the singular faculty of retaining permanently in his recollection, whatsoever he heard. Being overtaken by a storm in the Iccian⁹⁸ or Tyrhene⁹⁹ sea, they cast anchor. Afterwards, being unable to raise it, the crew cast lots among themselves, to determine who should commit himself to the deep to loose its fastenings. Their lot fell upon the blind man already mentioned. On diving downwards, he appeared no more, until other sailors, driven by the same storm, cast anchor in this place. When they wound it upwards again, they observed this blind man ascending with their anchor, and bearing with him the Ecclesiastical Rite or Ordo, and a bell, afterwards called, *Cloc an mic daill*, or "bell of the blind son." At a time this legend was in vogue, it was believed, St. Brigid's family had still possession of this bell,¹⁰⁰ and that they used a Ritual, called the "Ordo Placentinus."¹⁰¹ Quaint though the form of this legend may be, yet it probably shadows the substance of a conviction, that St. Brigid, like her beloved teacher St. Patrick, clung with fidelity and affection to the rites and practices of the Roman Church, the true fountain and centre of Christian union.

CHAPTER VIII.

ILLAND, THE WARRIOR PRINCE OF LEINSTER—ST. BRIGID VISITS HER FATHER, DUBTACH, AND PROTECTS HIS FAMILY—FAVOURS ACCORDED TO THE HOLY ABBESS—SHE VISITS KING ILLAND AND BLESSES HIM—THE VICTORIES OF THIS DYNAST OVER HIS ENEMIES—THE BORUMHA LAIGHEAN—WARS THROUGHOUT IRELAND DURING ST. BRIGID'S LIFETIME—DEATH OF KING ILLAND—VICTORY OBTAINED AFTER HIS DEATH BY THE LAGENIANS, THROUGH THE SPECIAL PROTECTION OF ST. BRIGID.

AGAIN must we regard St. Brigid as having returned to Leinster, where the chief actions of her religious life took place. Soon after the death of Crimthann,¹

⁹⁷Very numerous views of this city by Piranesi are engraved in R. Venuti's "Accurata e Succinta Descrizione Topografica e Istoria di Roma Moderna," published in four 4to vols. Roma, A.D. 1760.

⁹⁸The Iccius Portus of Ptolemy is supposed to be Calais in Picardy; so that the sea between that port of France and Dover is usually distinguished as the "Iccium Mare."

⁹⁹This was called by the ancients indifferently "Tuscum Mare, vel Tyrrhenum, quod et Infernum." It lies on the western shore of Italy. See Wilkinson's "Atlas Classica." Map 24. Italia Antiqua.

¹⁰⁰The Abbatte Certani says:—"Si conseruò lunghissimo tempo, e forse ancora si

conserua quel libro col campanello nel Monasterio Kildariense chiamandosi da tutti Cloc-an-Mic-Daill, cioè Campana del figlio cieco."—"La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Sesto, p. 478.

¹⁰¹The account adds that Placentia was a city near the Iccian, or more correctly the Tyrrhenian Sea, and that there St. Brigid was venerated. See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Appendix Secunda ad Acta S. Brigide, cap. xlv., p. 608.

CHAPTER VIII.—¹This warlike prince seems to have chiefly resided in Southern Leinster, for we are told, that he warred with and subdued the Northern Leinstermen. After the death of Oilíoll Molt, he

the son of Enna Kinsellagh, while Finneadh,² and afterwards his son Fraech,³ ruled in that territory, the star of Iolland or Illand⁴ appears to have been in the ascendancy, throughout the province. This enterprising hero was the son of Dunlaing,⁵ who preceded him in the government, at least of its northern division. Illand and his brother Ailill⁶ received baptism at the hands of St. Patrick.⁷ After St. Brigid had taken possession of Kildare, as may be inferred from accounts left us in her acts, that religious daughter paid a visit to the house of her father, Dubtach, after a long interval of absence from her parents.⁸ Her father and all her relatives greatly rejoiced at her arrival. No mention is made of her mother as then living.⁹ Dubtach earnestly desired her to remain that night under his roof. With this request she complied. During her sleep, an angel sent from God appeared to her. Then awaking, she heard these words addressed to her: "Arise immediately, and arouse your father, with his whole family, and your religious daughters, now sleeping; for, with an intention of murdering your father and his household, an enemy approaches. But, the Lord will prevent such intention, on your account. Depart instantly from this house, for the foe will soon set it on fire." Our saint obeyed this portentous mandate, and warning the inmates, these fled. On approaching, their enemy was greatly disappointed, not finding any of the family present. Dubtach and others, on seeing the house blazing at a distance, cried out: "O holy Brigid, thy blessing hath preserved us this night from impending death. We are now conscious of all those wonderful things predicted concerning thee." Our saint replied: "Not only on this night, but so long as you live, blood shall not be shed within your dwelling." This prediction proved true on a subsequent occasion, for when a certain man intended to strike a woman there, his hand became stiff as he tried to extend it. Nor could he draw it back, until he had abandoned that wicked intention.¹⁰

The following day, one of her spiritual daughters said to our saint: "I pray, that the Angel of the Lord may always assist you, as he has done

was even regarded as King of Ireland for a time, if we are to credit a statement contained in the *Vita S. Kierani*, cap. xix., p. 460. See Colgan's "*Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ*," v. Martii.

² At the battle of Graine or Grane, in the north of Kildare, this lord of Hy-Kinnsellach fell, A.D. 480, according to Dr. O'Donovan's "*Annals of the Four Masters*," vol. i., pp. 150, 151. Eochaidh Mac Coirpre was the victor, in this battle, which was among the Lagenians themselves, A.D. 484, according to the "*Chronicum Scotorum*," edited by William M. Hennessy, pp. 30, 31.

³ He fell, however, in the second battle of Graine, fought A.D. 492, Eochaidh, son of Coirpre, being the victor. See "*Chronicum Scotorum*," edited by William M. Hennessy, pp. 32, 33.

⁴ He is regarded as the fifth Christian king of Leinster. This would appear from a Catalogue of Kings, belonging to that province. According to that catalogue, and other authorities, he reigned 30 years. Thus his death is found recorded: "The age of Christ 506. The third year of Muirchearnach. Illann, son of Dunlaing, King of Leinster, died." See O'Donovan's "*Annals of the Four Masters*," vol. i., pp. 164, 165.

Also, Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," *Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ*, n. 5, p. 564.

⁵ Hence, he is usually called Illand, Mac Dunlaing, or Illand, son of Dunlaing, in the Irish Annals. He seems to have commenced his rule over Leinster, about A.D. 486.

⁶ Both brothers were probably very young men, when St. Patrick came to their father, Dunlaing, then living on the Dun, at Naas.

⁷ When the Irish Apostle visited Naas, on his way to Munster. See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," *Tertia Vita S. Patricii*, cap. lviii., p. 25 and n. 52, p. 32. Also *Septima Vita S. Patricii*, Pars iii., cap. xvi., p. 151. Also, Miss Mary F. Cusack's "*Life of St. Patrick, Apostle of Ireland*." The Irish Tripartite Life, translated by William M. Hennessy, part iii., p. 458.

⁸ The following account is given, at great length, in Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "*La Santità Prodigiola. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese*." *Libro Sesto*, pp. 456 to 463.

⁹ See "The Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. v., p. 58.

¹⁰ The foregoing accounts are also substantially contained in the *Vita Sexta S. Brigide*, sec. liii., pp. 593, 594. "*Trias Thaumaturga*."

during the past night, by the liberation of yourself, your father and his family." To whom the spouse of Christ returned for answer:—"Not only during this night, but in every age, I shall have the Lord's assistance, in all things, through the ministry of His angels."¹¹ For daily do I experience a great joy of spirit, while I hear, through Divine inspiration, holy songs,¹² spiritual canticles, and strains of heavenly organs.¹³ I am also able to hear every day those sacred Masses, which are offered in honour of the Almighty, in distant parts of the world, in like manner, as if I were present at their celebration;¹⁴ while, the angels of God present my prayers to Heaven day and night. Wherever I am, the Lord always hears me, as I will show by the two following incidents.¹⁵ On a particular occasion, a certain woman, who was a leper and infirm, asked me to bring her water, and to perform some other charitable offices, in her necessities. Whereupon, I blessed the vessel, which was filled with water, and presented it, telling her to place that vessel between herself and the wall, so that no other person should be able to touch it, until her return. But, in my presence, the Angel of the Lord blessed that water, and it was turned into whatever kind of liquid that leper desired; thus, it had the taste of honey, when this was wished for, and again the taste of wine, of beer, of milk, or of any other liquid, that infirm woman especially required. Again, when I was a little girl, I fashioned an altar-stone in honour of my God, yet with child like intent. Then, an Angel of the Almighty, in my presence, perforated the stone at its four angles, and placed at each of them four wooden feet.¹⁶ That you may glorify our Lord Jesus Christ, I have mentioned, O daughter, these two interpositions of my Angel Guardian. Thus, the grace of God hath always continued with me."¹⁷

Already had the saintly daughter secured the respect of her dynast sovereign and protector Illand,¹⁸ son of Dunlaing. During this visit of the Brigid, her father Dubtach said to her: "O pious maid, go to our king, and ask him to give me as a valuable and perpetual gift, that sword which he lent me for a time."¹⁹ In compliance with the request of her father, the dutiful Brigid set out on a visit to the Leinster king, who then dwelt in the plain of the Liffey.²⁰ When our saint rested before the gate of the regal city,

¹¹ See "The Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. v., pp. 59, 60.

¹² In the *Vita Sexta S. Brigidæ*, sec. li., p. 593, "*Trias Thaumaturga*," we have the following lines:—

"*Organa dulcisono resonant cælestia cantu.
Hoc pueri pariter cantantes, hoc seniores,
Angelici populi respondent, Alleluia.*"

¹³ The invention of organs dates to a remote antiquity, and to a period long antecedent to the Christian era. Bellarmine states, that organs were used in Church services, about the year 600, as Platina relates from the Pontifical. When Pope Vitalian reformed Roman Church music, he introduced organs as instruments for accompaniment. Other authors refer their introduction in Church services to a later period. See the "*Encyclopædia Britannica*," vol. xiii., pp. 485 to 489. Dublin edition.

¹⁴ The Abbate D. Giacomo Certani has it: "Mercè dell' Angelo mio assisto giornalmente à quanti sacrificii s'offrono a Dio nella Catolica chiesa. Ascolto, e veggo le Messe, che si celebrano in Roma, e in qua-

lunque parte del Cattolico Mondo."—"La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese," Libro Sesto, p. 404.

¹⁵ The visit to Connaught—without any very good warrant, however—is placed by the Irish Priest's "*Life of St. Brigid*," after this visit to Dubtach. See chap. v., p. 60.

¹⁶ See Rev. S. Baring-Gould's "*Lives of the Saints*," vol. ii. February i., p. 17.

¹⁷ See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," *Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ*, lib. ii., cap. vi., vii., viii., ix., p. 551. Nearly the same accounts are contained in the *Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ*, cap. lxxxvii., lxxxviii., lxxxix., p. 538, *ibid.*

¹⁸ In Professor O'Looney's *Irish Life of St. Brigid*, pp. 30, 31, the King of Leinster, to whom the holy abbess went, is called Ailill, son of Dunlaing. Perhaps, he and his brother held a joint sovereignty over Leinster, or what seems more likely, Ailill may have preceded Illand in his term of rule.

¹⁹ See Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "*La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese*," Libro Sesto, pp. 405 to 407.

²⁰ Most probably at Naas, where there

with her virgins, one of the king's servants came to her. He said, "If you release me from my bondage to the king, both I and my family shall become your servants for ever, while myself, my posterity and kindred shall likewise make profession of Christianity." The holy virgin said, she should prefer his request before the monarch, into whose presence she was soon conducted. The king then asked the holy virgin what had been her object in seeking this interview. She replied, her father desired to possess that sword, which had been lent to him, as a perpetual gift, whilst on her own part, she petitioned the king to manumit or transfer to herself the slave and his family. Then said the king: "You require from me a most precious sword, O saint, but what better favour will you accord me, should I grant both of these boons?" The holy virgin asked him, what he should think about obtaining eternal life, and of having kings in his line, to the end of time. The king then told her, he did not desire that life, of which he had yet no experience, nor did he care for the prosperity of those children, who were destined to succeed him. But, he asked for two other favours. These were, that he should enjoy a long life, in this world, which he loved, and that he should be a conqueror, in all his wars.²¹ He told Brigid, that a great war was then pending, between the people of Leinster and the race of Cuinn. The holy abbess assured him, that both those desires should be obtained, when she returned home, with those favours she asked for granted to her. Before leaving, she imparted her blessing to the king.²²

Shortly afterwards, Illand with a small army, entered the territories of his enemies, who belonged to the posterity of Cuind.²³ Having reached the plain of Breagh,²⁴ he was there met by a well-appointed force. When he saw the number of men drawn out to meet him, the King of Leinster called aloud to his soldiers: "Stand firm, and invoke St. Brigid's assistance, for she will redeem her promises." With cries that reached the heavens, his whole band called out the holy virgin's name, and immediately commenced their onset of battle. The King of Leinster had a glorious vision of holy Brigid, preceding him in the field, and holding a staff in her right hand, while a pillar of glittering flame reached from her head towards heaven.²⁵ A sudden panic seized on the Neill forces. They immediately fled. The King of Leinster and his victorious army gave thanks to God and to St. Brigid. To her patronage they mainly attributed the glory of this day.²⁶ This great victory over the northern forces was the prelude to other famous achievements. Illand is said to have fought thirty battles in Ireland, and eight²⁷ or nine²⁸ in Britain. In all of these conflicts, he proved victorious. A belief entertained, regarding his invincible prowess, caused several

was formerly a seat of the kings of Leinster. See "The Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland," vol iii., p. 3.

²¹ See Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese," Libro Sesto, pp. 467 to 470.

²² Some of the foregoing incidents are briefly related in Professor O'Looney's Irish Life of St. Brigid, pp. 31, 32.

²³ These seem to have been the O'Cuinns or O'Quins of Munter Gillagan. These were distributed among the baronies of Ardagh, Moydow, and Shrule, in the county of Longford. Although dispossessed by the O'Farrells in the fifteenth century, their posterity are yet numerous in that locality. See "The Topographical Poems of John

O'Dubhagain and Giolla na naomh O'Huidhrin." Edited by Dr. John O'Donovan, n. 272, pp. xxxvii., xxxviii.

²⁴ Probably the plain, known as Magh Breacraighe, comprising the northern part of Moygoish barony, in the county of Westmeath, and extending into the county of Longford. See *ibid.*, n. 273, p. xxxviii.

²⁵ See Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese," Libro Sesto, pp. 470, 471.

²⁶ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. x., xi., p. 551. Tertia Vita S. Brigidæ, cap. xc., p. 539.

²⁷ According to the Fourth Life.

²⁸ According to the Third Life.

kings to court his alliance with large gifts. During these wars and rumours of wars, St. Brigid and her nuns, at Kildare, appear not to have been disturbed, in the least, so far as the even current of a religious life passed on; nor do we hear of hostile clamour awakening that repose, so grateful to their holy inmates, around the precincts of her privileged cloisters.

The Borumha Laighean or "Leinster cow-tribute"²⁹ was a fruitful source of warfare between the sovereigns of Ireland and the men of Leinster, not only before, but during and long after the lifetime of St. Brigid.³⁰ From this irritating cause, probably originated most of those petty wars, carried on with such frequent and obstinate persistence for so many centuries.³¹ The renowned warrior King of Ireland, Tuathal Teachtmhar,³² who is said to have fought no less than 133 battles in the different provinces, reigned thirty years,³³ during the close of the first, and he was slain after the commencement of the second century.³⁴ A.D. 106,³⁵ He is related to have imposed the degrading and oppressive Borumha, or cow tribute, on the Leinster people.³⁶ During the reign of King Cormac,³⁷ son of Art, about A.D. 241, is recorded a great outrage, perpetrated or permitted by Dunlang, son to Enna Niadh, King of Leinster. He appears to have assaulted the royal seat at Tara, and on the western slope of the hill, at Claenfearta,³⁸ where the apartments for females had been erected,³⁹ thirty royal maidens,⁴⁰ with three hundred women servants, had been massacred. This happened on Saman's day.⁴¹ To avenge this cowardly and cruel act,⁴² King Cormac executed, at the same time, twelve of the Leinster chiefs, who were thought or proved to be guilty of it, while he increased the Leinster tribute, which already was so very onerous. Yet, this annual exaction was impolitic, as it

²⁹ There is a very curious Irish tract, intitled, "Borumha Laighean," on the original imposition and final remittance of this impost, preserved in the Book of Lecan. Another copy of it may be found in a vellum manuscript, classed H, 2, 18, in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin. A copy had been prepared for publication by the Irish Archaeological Society, but it has not yet issued from the press.

³⁰ See Townsend Young's "History of Ireland," chap. i., pp. 15, 16.

³¹ See "Three Fragments, copied from ancient sources," by Dubhaltach Mac Firisigh. Edited by Dr. O'Donovan's, pp. 32 to 35.

³² See an account of his reign in L'Abbé Ma-Geoghegan's "Histoire de l'Irlande, Ancienne et Moderne," tome i., part i., chap. vi., pp. 126 to 130.

³³ Beginning A.D. 76, according to Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., pp. 98, 99.

³⁴ See a very interesting account regarding the imposition of the Leinster cow-tribute, during the reign of this monarch, in O'Mahony's Keating's "History of Ireland," book i., part i., chap. vii., pp. 297 to 306.

³⁵ According to Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., pp. 98 to 101.

³⁶ This was done on account of an act of treachery, perpetrated by a king of Leinster towards the two daughters of the monarch Tuathal. In revenge, he devastated Lein-

ster, and when the people of that province had submitted to him, he exacted "the following *Fine* or *Boroimhe*, viz., 600 Cows, 600 Hogs, 600 Sheep, 600 Ounces of Silver, 600 Mantles, and 600 Tun of Iron, Yearly; which was paid during the Reigns of 40 Kings successively thereafter."—MacCurtin's "Brief Discourse in Vindication of the Antiquity of Ireland," part i., pp. 92, 93.

³⁷ See a very full account of events chronicled under this monarch's reign in O'Mahony's Keating's "History of Ireland," book i., part i., chap. vii., pp. 328 to 360.

³⁸ The exact position of this site will be found on the admirable map, which illustrates "Monuments of Tara Hill restored from Ancient Documents." See "Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy," vol. xviii. Antiquities, sec. iii. "On the History and Antiquities of Tara Hill." By George Petrie, Esq., R.H.A., M.R.I.A., p. 152. This most erudite paper was read 24th of April, and 8th and 22nd of May, 1837.

³⁹ In the "Dinnseanchus," where the two Claenfearts are placed to the west of Rath Grainne, it is stated, that the virgins were slaughtered in the Southern Claenfeart. See *ibid.*, p. 142.

⁴⁰ It has been supposed, these were vestal virgins. See *ibid.*, p. 218.

⁴¹ See *ibid.*, p. 151.

⁴² Cuan O'Lochain, an ancient poet, records *Claoimpevea na claoen cangní*, which is Englished "The Claenfers of the treacherous covenant." See *ibid.*, p. 144.

was unjust; for, constituted as Ireland had then been, not alone difficulties were experienced in distributing the assessment, but in collecting it, at stated intervals. Still, the Leinstermen were protected from the depredations of their southern adversaries, the Munstermen,⁴³ by Cairbre Liffeachair,⁴⁴ the son of King Cormac. The tanists and people of Leinster do not seem to have been sufficiently powerful to resist effectively the Ard-righs of the kingdom, until after the introduction of Christianity into Ireland,⁴⁵ when, under the leadership of the renowned Crimthann Kinsellagh, dynast of South Leinster, and of Illand, the enterprising and valiant dynast of Northern Leinster, the Lagenians began to cope with the last Pagan monarch, Laeghaire.⁴⁶ The latter potentate appears to have been tenacious of his prerogatives; for, during his term of rule, he inflicted a great defeat on the Lagenians, towards the middle of the fifth century. The very year in which it has been supposed St. Brigid was born,⁴⁷ viz. A.D. 456, Leinster is said to have been devastated. Other writers place this raid at an earlier period. Such reverse seems to have been retrieved, about A.D. 460, at the battle of Athdara,⁴⁸ fought by the Leinstermen, against Laogaire.⁴⁹ The place is said to have been in Kildare County.⁵⁰ This defeat of the monarch Laoighaire is referred to A.D. 457,⁵¹ 458,⁵² 459, 461,⁵³ or 465,⁵⁴ by other authorities.⁵⁵ It is said, that Cremthann was leader of the Lagenians.⁵⁶ While some accounts refer the death of King Laeghaire⁵⁷ to A.D. 458,⁵⁸ other writers place it at A.D. 461, or 462,⁵⁹ or 464,⁶⁰ while another annalist has it, so late as 470.⁶¹ The "Annals of Ulster" refer to A.D. 464, the first war of Airdacorann, which was carried on by the Lagenians,⁶² while the battle of Ard-Corann⁶³ is

⁴³ See Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., pp. 118, 119.

⁴⁴ The events of his reign are set forth in O'Flaherty's "Ogygia," Pars. iii., cap. lxx., lxxi., lxxii., pp. 341 to 357.

⁴⁵ In the following *resumé* of wars, noted throughout the subsequent epoch, it is often difficult to determine the special causes that gave rise to them. Yet, it will be seen, for the most part, these battles were fought either on the northern parts of Leinster, or within the territories of Meath. The most vengeful and inveterate raids were between the Hy-Nialls or Leith Cuinn people, and the Lagenians or Leinstermen. It must be observed, if our Irish kings and toparchs advised or accepted war—unlike some modern statesmen—they were obliged personally to assume the post of danger as commanders-in-chief, when their clansmen were called to the field of slaughter.

⁴⁶ See the events of his reign chronicled in Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., pp. 128 to 145.

⁴⁷ According to the "Annals of Inisfallen."

⁴⁸ On the River Barrow. See Haverty's "History of Ireland, Ancient and Modern," chap. ix., p. 74.

⁴⁹ See Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus ii. "Annales Inisfalenses," p. 3.

⁵⁰ See L'Abbé Ma-Geoghegan's "Histoire d'Irlande," tome i., part ii., chap. ii., p. 263.

⁵¹ See Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., pp. 142, 143.

⁵² The "Annales Ultonienses" place the battle of Cath Atha Dara at this year or at A.D. 459. See Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus iv., p. 4.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ See "Annales Buelliani," or "Annals of Boyle," p. 2, tomus ii. Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores."

⁵⁵ The "Chronicum Scotorum" has this event at A.D. 459. See W. M. Hennessy's edition, pp. 26, 27.

⁵⁶ The "Ulster Annals" make a third entry of this battle, at A.D. 461, where they add, we must suppose regarding the Leinstermen, "quibus Cremthann tunc pre-erat."

⁵⁷ At Greallach Daiphil, on the side of Cais in Magh Liffé, according to the "Chronicum Scotorum," edited by William M. Hennessy, pp. 26, 27.

⁵⁸ See Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., pp. 144, 145.

⁵⁹ The "Annals of Ulster" have this event at either year, 461 and 462, while the place is called Greallagh Griaifil, near or beyond the territory of Cassie, in the plain of the Liffey. See Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus iv., p. 4.

⁶⁰ The "Annals of Inisfallen" state, that at A.D. 464, the death of Laogire Mac Neill took place at Grallach-da-ball, between two hills, called Hibernia and Albania. See *ibid.*, tomus ii., p. 3.

⁶¹ See the "Annals of Boyle," at A.D. 470, p. 3, *ibid.*

⁶² See Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus iv., p. 5.

⁶³ This place has not been identified.

assigned to A.D. 467, by the "Annals of Inisfallen."⁶⁴ In the year 464,⁶⁵ or 468,⁶⁶ the Leinstermen were again in arms, against the supreme monarch. The "Annals of Inisfallen" refer, however, to A.D. 471,⁶⁷ that war of Dumai Achir,⁶⁸ according to the book of Cuanac, which was carried on against Oilill Molt, King of Ireland.⁶⁹ Illand, the Prince of North Leinster, was victor in this engagement.⁷⁰ The boxing-battle of Bri-Ele, supposed to have taken place at the hill of Croghan, in the King's County, does not appear to have been a very formidable encounter. Probably it was only a pugilistic contest, between certain selected champions of Leinster and Meath. The monarch, Oilill Molt, seems to have been present, either as a combatant, or as a spectator. Its occurrence is variably referred to A.D. 468,⁷¹ 473, 475, 471,⁷² or 481.⁷³ The Irish poet, Gilda Modud of Ardbraccan, states, that after Oilill-Molt had passed twenty years of a victorious life,⁷⁴ Lugad the Strong, and the son of Laogaire, slew him by a most lamentable action.⁷⁵ This occurred at the battle of Ocha,⁷⁶ to which allusion has been already made. Under another form of name, we meet with an account, at the year 477,⁷⁷ regarding this battle of Uchbad, which was fought against the Lagenians, by Crimthann, or by Fiachra *garrulo*, or "the garrulous," son to Coelban, son of Cruinnius, from Dalaradia.⁷⁸ At the year 478,⁷⁹ or at 483,⁸⁰ we have an account regarding the murder of Crimthann, son to Enna Censelach, son to Breasal Belac, King of Leinster. This seems to be confounded with

⁶⁴ See *ibid.*, tomus ii., p. 3.

⁶⁵ See Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., pp. 140, 147.

⁶⁶ According to the "Annals of Ulster."

⁶⁷ See Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus ii., p. 3.

⁶⁸ In English, Aichir's or Heber's Mount: this place has not been identified. See Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., n. (l), p. 146.

⁶⁹ See Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus iv. "Annales Ultoniensis" p. 5. The "Annals of Ulster" have an entry at A.D. 474, and again at A.D. 476, as if the true date for this battle of Duma Achir were a matter of doubt. See *ibid.*, p. 6.

⁷⁰ "The Annals of Inisfallen." *Ibid.*, tomus ii., p. 3.

⁷¹ According to Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., pp. 148, 149, and nn. (u, w), *ibid.*

⁷² The "Annals of Ulster" have it entered at each of these three years, as if there were different authorities for each statement. See Dr. Charles O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus iv., p. 6.

⁷³ The "Annals of Boyle" enter it at this date. See *ibid.*, tomus ii., p. 3.

⁷⁴ MacCurtin states, that his reign commenced A.D. 453 and ended 473. See "A Brief Discourse in Vindication of the Antiquity of Ireland," part ii., pp. 155, 156.

⁷⁵ See Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus i. Prologomina, pars i., pp. cxlix., clxvii.

⁷⁶ This is supposed to have been fought in Meath, and not far from Tara. Lughaidh,

son of Laoighaire, too young at the time of his father's death to contest the succession, seems to have obtained the crown by forming a strong confederacy of provincial kings and toparchs. See Haverly's "History of Ireland," chap. ix., p. 75.

⁷⁷ See the "Annals of Inisfallen." Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus ii., pp. 3, 4.

⁷⁸ In the "Annals of Ulster," a notice of this battle of Ocha is entered, under A.D. 482, and again under A.D. 483, in that old translation, found in the Clarendon MS., tom. 49. There we read: "482. *Bellum Oche, in quo cecidit Ailill Molt manu Lugh mic Laogaire, et Moriarti mic Ercia. A Concobaro filio Nessa usque ad Cormac filium Art anni 208. A Cormac usque ad hoc bellum 206, ut Cuana scripsit.*" And again: "483. *Inguatio Crimthain, mac Enna Censelaich, Regis Lagenie, mic Bressail Bealaich, mic Cathair moir, Et hoc anno the battle [called] Cath Ocha, secundum alios, by Lugad and by Murtagh mac Ercia, and by Fergus Cervail, mac Connell Crimthain, and by Fiachra Lon, the King of Dal-Araide.*"

⁷⁹ According to the "Annals of Inisfallen," which have this statement. A.D. 478. The war of Granaird. Finchad, King of Leinster fell. According to some, Meice Eirce was the conqueror, but others state Coirpre was the victor. See Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus ii., p. 4.

⁸⁰ This is the year assigned by O'Flaherty for the accession of Lugad, the son of Laogaire, to the sovereignty of Ireland. See "Ogygia," pars iii., cap. xciii., p. 430. Other accounts differ as to date.

the following entry. At the year 485, we find a record concerning the first war of Granearad, in which Cairpre Mac Neill—the ninth hostage—was victor. There fell Finchath, the son of Erc, according to some writers, while he was a victor, in the opinion of others.⁸¹ Again, this same first war of Graine is entered a third time, at A.D. 486,⁸² in the Ulster Annals. During this contest, Crimthan Censalach received a deadly wound.⁸³ There he is said to have slain Echadh. Notwithstanding, the “Annals of Inisfallen,” while recording such events at 478, still defer, to the year 480, the death of Crimthan Censalach.⁸⁴ He probably lingered two years, and as an effect of his wounds death then ensued.⁸⁵ In A.D. 485, the war of Sratha-Conaill was waged. Fiach Mac Finchada, King of Leinster, fell in this engagement, while Eochu Mac Corpri was victor.⁸⁶ Yet, this historical episode is deferred to A.D. 494, by the annalist Tigernach.⁸⁷ The Pagan brother of King Leaghaire, who is called Cairbre, son to Niall of the Nine Hostages, fought and won the battle of Tailteen,⁸⁸ in East Meath,⁸⁹ against the Lagenians. Some accounts have this battle at A.D. 491, while other writers enter it, at A.D. 494⁹⁰ or 495. In conjunction with his brother Ailill, Eochaidh Guineach,⁹¹ and Muirheartach Mac Earca,⁹² Illand gave battle to Ængus, son of Natfraich, and the first Christian King of Munster.⁹³ This was the religious prince who had been baptized by St. Patrick,⁹⁴ at Cashel. The locality of this decisive engagement was in the plain of Magh-Fea, four miles east of Leighlin, and within the county of Carlow. The spot, formerly called Cell-osnada, or Ceann-Losnada, is now named Kelliston. Mr. O'Donovan says, that there exists among the old natives of the place a most curious and remarkably vivid tradition of this battle, which explains the Irish name of the place denoting “church of the groans;” and which it received, according to this tradition, from the lamentations of the Munster women, after the loss of their husbands and brothers in the battle.⁹⁵ On the 8th of the October Ides, A.D. 489,⁹⁶ the King of Munster⁹⁷ and his queen, Eithne Huathach,⁹⁸

⁸¹ See the “Annals of Ulster.” Dr. O’Conor’s “*Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores*,” tomus iv., p. 7.

⁸² See *ibid.*

⁸³ At Granaird or Graine.

⁸⁴ See *ibid.*, tomus ii., p. 4.

⁸⁵ The battle of Graine or Granard is said to have been fought among the Leinstermen themselves. See Dr. O’Donovan’s “Annals of the Four Masters,” vol. i., pp. 150, 151.

⁸⁶ See Dr. O’Conor’s “*Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores*,” tomus ii. *Annales Inisfalenses*, p. 4.

⁸⁷ Where he enters, *Cath Sratha*. (*Prælium Srathense*.) See *ibid.*, p. 124.

⁸⁸ A.D. 491, according to the “*Chronicum Scotorum*,” pp. 32, 33, and Dr. O’Donovan’s “Annals of the Four Masters,” vol. i., pp. 154, 155. The “Annals of Ulster” place it at A.D. 494, or 495.

⁸⁹ See *ibid.*, n. (p).

⁹⁰ The “Annals of Tigernach,” at A.D. 494, enter *Cath Tailteen*. See Dr. O’Conor’s “*Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores*,” tomus ii. *Tigernachi Annales*, p. 125.

⁹¹ This word is interpreted “vulnerator,” or the “wounder,” by Dr. O’Conor, in his

edition of the “Annals of Tigernach,” at A.D. 490.

⁹² He is called “*Alliachensis Rex*,” or “King of Aileach,” in *Tigernachi Annales*, pp. 123, 124. See Dr. O’Conor’s “*Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores*,” tomus ii.

⁹³ See Miss M. F. Cusack’s “*Illustrated History of Ireland*,” chap. ix., p. 130.

⁹⁴ This narrative is to be found in *Petrus de Natalibus*, lib. iii., cap. 204, and in the *Life of St. Patrick*, by Joceline, cap. lxxiv.

⁹⁵ This, however, though a very natural turn for tradition to have given it, is not the true form of the name; for, it appears, from an ancient historical tale, preserved in “*Leabhar-na-h-Uidhri*,” that it was first written *Ceann-Losnada*, which is also the form of the name given in the “Annals of Ulster.” In the latter annals, a notice of this battle is thus entered, “A.D. 489. *Bellum Cinn Losnado, ubi cecidit Ængus, filius Natfraich, righ Mumhan, ut Cuana scripsit*.” See Dr. O’Donovan’s work, vol. i., n. (n), p. 152.

⁹⁶ In Dr. O’Conor’s “*Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores*,” the Annals of Inisfallen have the Battle of Killoosnat, at A.D. cccclxxxiv. See tomus ii., p. 4. The Four Masters and the Annals of Ulster—the latter quote Cuana as authority—place “Bel-

fell in this engagement.⁹⁹ According to one account, the chief enemy of Ængus¹⁰⁰ is said to have been Illand.¹⁰¹ A different narrative has it, that Ailill was the cause of this slaughter,¹⁰² while some other statements aver,¹⁰³ that Muirchertach Mac Earca, afterwards monarch of Ireland, slew Ængus at this battle of Kill-Osnaidh.¹⁰⁴ His death appears to have excited much sympathy and sorrow;¹⁰⁵ for, personally, he was amiable and respected.¹⁰⁶ Such does not seem to have been the case, in reference to his wife; who, probably, was over-haughty, and revengeful or ambitious,¹⁰⁷ as she is represented to have been intriguing and unscrupulous. She thus obtained an undesirable surname, "the hateful."¹⁰⁸ St. Kieran, the patron saint of Ossory, is said to have predicted the untimely death of both herself and her husband on the same day.¹⁰⁹

The battle of Sleamhain,¹¹⁰ in Westmeath,¹¹¹ was fought A.D. 492, by Cairbre, already mentioned, against the Lagenians. ¹¹²The "Chronicum Scotorum" states, however, that Eochaidh, son of Coirpre, was here the victor. Tighernach dates this event at A.D. 497,¹¹³ while the "Ulster Annals" have it A.D. 498.¹¹⁴

lum Cinnlosnado at 489, or according to others at 490. See "Annales Ultonienses," tomus iv., p. 8, *ibid.* Again, the "Annals of Tighernach" place the battle of Cilloshad at A.D. 490. See *ibid.*, tomus ii., pp. 123, 124.

⁹⁹ According to the "Annals of the Four Masters," of this celebrated battle it was said:—

"Died the branch, the spreading tree of gold,
Aenghus the laudable, son of Nadfraech,
His prosperity was cut off by Illann,
In the battle of Cell-Osnadhia the foul,"

—O'Donovan's edition, vol. i., pp. 152, 153.

⁹⁸ She was sister of Crimthann, King of Hy-Kinsellagh.

⁹⁹ See O'Mahony's Keating's "History of Ireland," book ii., part ii., chap. i., p. 421.

¹⁰⁰ His daughter Uctdelb or Ughdelve was the wife of Oilild Molt, supreme Monarch of Ireland.

¹⁰¹ The reader is referred to a statement in a previous note, as also to the account given by the ancient writer of St. Kieran's Acts. See Colgan's "Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ," V. Martii. Vita S. Kierani, cap. xix., p. 460. Brogan, the Devout, has given a similar narrative in his tract "On the heroic Actions of the Leinster Kings."

¹⁰² Such is the account of Dubtach O'Lu-gair.

¹⁰³ Johannes Dubaganus, and two other anonymous authors, in a "Catalogue of the Kings of Munster."

¹⁰⁴ Colgan says, that all these varying accounts can be reconciled, in the account of Ængus's death, noticed under A.D. 489, in the "Annals of the Four Masters;" as those persons there named were participants in the battle fought against the King of Munster.

¹⁰⁵ The old writer of St. Kieran's Acts alludes to this event in the following words: "et hæc cedes maxima abusio erat."

¹⁰⁶ Regarding his death, the following translation of an Irish poem states:—

"A branch of the great spreading tree
died—
Ængus the praiseworthy, son of Nath-
fraech;
His head was left with Iollann,
In the battle of foul Cill-Osnaigh."

—"Chronicum Scotorum." William M. Hennessy's translation, p. 31.

¹⁰⁷ The ancient writer of the Life of St. Kieran, whose acts will be found at the 5th of March, tells us that Ængus and his queen were killed, in consequence of a prophecy of St. Kieran, fulfilled at the battle of Ceall-Osnaidh.

¹⁰⁸ See William M. Hennessy's "Chronicum Scotorum," pp. 30, 31.

¹⁰⁹ See Colgan's "Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ," V. Martii. Vita S. Kierani, cap. xix., p. 460.

¹¹⁰ While Dr. O'Donovan states, that in Meath and Ulster, the word *pleamhain* means "slimy" or "slippery," and "land bearing elms;" Dr. Joyce seems to derive it from *sleibhin* (slayveen), the diminutive of *sliabh*, and applied to a little hill. See "The Origin and History of Irish Names of Places," part iv., chap. i., p. 367.

¹¹¹ Sleamhain, modernized, Slewem, or Slane, is now represented by the townlands, Slanebeg and Slanemore, in the parish of Dysart, baronies of Moycashel and Magheradernon. See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Westmeath," Sheet 18.

¹¹² See Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., pp. 154, 155 and n. (q).

¹¹³ See Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores." The "Annals of Tighernach" have at A.D. 497, *Cath Sleamna mroe*. Tomus ii., p. 125.

¹¹⁴ See *ibid.*, tomus iv., "Annales Ultonienses," p. 9.

Again, Eocha, son of Cairbre, was victorious¹¹⁵ over Fiach Mac Finnchada, a king of Leinster, who fell in the second battle of Granaiert, or Graine,¹¹⁶ A.D. 494, or 496.¹¹⁷ The battle of Innimore, or Inde Mor, in the territory of Congabhla, was fought against the Leinstermen, and their leader Illann, son of Dunlaing. Murchheartach Mac Earc was victorious. This engagement took place, according to some accounts, in 492¹¹⁸ or 497,¹¹⁹ while certain writers have it entered at A.D. 499,¹²⁰ and others at A.D. 500.¹²¹ Tigernach records the battle of Innimor at A.D. 503.¹²² During the reign of Lugaidh, Ard-Righ,¹²³ the war of Saegre or Saeghais was carried on A.D. 494, according to the "Annals of Inisfallen,"¹²⁴ while those of Tigernach¹²⁵ place that event at the year 500. The "Annals of the Four Masters" register this battle of Seaghais, at A.D. 499, which is said to correspond with A.D. 504.¹²⁶ Muirheartach Mac Earc became a guarantee between Duach Teangumha,¹²⁷ King of Connaught, and his brother Eochaidh Tirmcharna. The latter was foster-father and uncle to Duiseach. She was wife to Muirheartach, and daughter to Duach Teangumha.¹²⁸ She is said to have instigated her husband to avenge a wrong done by her father, who had taken Eochaidh a prisoner, and contrary to his agreement with Muirheartach. Accordingly, four engagements seem to have been fought between the Hy-Nials and the Connaughtmen, in all of which the latter were defeated.¹²⁹ The battles of Dealga, of Mucramha and Tuaim Drubha were followed up by the battle of Segsa against "Duach of the Brass Tongue."¹³⁰ Here Duach, who succeeded Oilill Molt, after the battle of Ocha, fell.¹³¹ The "Annals of Ulster"

¹¹⁵ This is probably, what the "Annals of Tigernach" call at A.D. 495, the *Cath Canaichte Spaine*. See Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," toms ii., p. 125. They also state, that Fraoch was killed here by Eochais.

¹¹⁶ See l'Abbé Ma-Geoghegan's "Histoire de l'Irlande, Ancienne et Moderne," tome i., part ii., chap. ii., p. 271. Ma-Geoghegan calls this king "Fraoch, fils de Fionchad."

¹¹⁷ According to the "Annals of Ulster." See Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," toms iv., p. 9.

¹¹⁸ The "Annals of Inisfallen" assign it to A.D. 492.

¹¹⁹ See Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," toms ii. "Annales Inisfalenses," p. 4. Also, toms iv., "Annales Ultonienses," p. 9. give the latter date.

¹²⁰ Thus a manuscript copy of the "Annals of Clonmacnoise," cod. cl., according to O'Flaherty.

¹²¹ See "Chronicum Scotorum," edited by William M. Hennessy, pp. 34, 35, and n. 8.

¹²² See Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," toms ii. Tigernachi Annales, p. 127.

¹²³ See O'Mahony's Keating's "History of Ireland," book ii., part ii., chap. i., p. 422.

¹²⁴ See Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," toms ii. Annales Inisfalenses, p. 4.

¹²⁵ See *ibid.* Tigernachi Annales, pp. 125, 126.

¹²⁶ See Dr. O'Donovan's edition, vol. i., pp. 160 to 163.

¹²⁷ He was otherwise called Duach Galach, *i.e.*, the Valourous.

¹²⁸ In Irish his name is written Duach Tengauma.

¹²⁹ See l'Abbé Ma-Geoghegan's "Histoire de l'Irlande, Ancienne et Moderne." Seconde Partie, chap. ii., p. 271.

¹³⁰ Dr. O'Connor thinks he was so called because of his using the warlike trumpet—"Ære ciere viros, Martemque accendere cantu."

¹³¹ Regarding this battle, Cenfaelad, an ancient poet, sang :

Cath Seghra bean do mnab foorthair,
no boi cru deas d'ar cruairigh,
la Duirich, ingin Duach
Cath Dealca, cath muerpama acur cath
Tuama Drubha,
la cath Seagha, hi tpoorthair Duach Tean-
gumha.

Thus rendered into English by Dr. O'Donovan —

"The battle of Seaghais; a certain woman caused it; red blood was over lances, By Duiseach, daughter of Duach. The battle of Dealga, the battle of Mucramha, and the battle of Tuaim-Drubha,

With the battle of Seaghais, wherein fell Duach Teangumha."—See "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., pp. 162, 163.

enter the battle of Seaga—as they write it—at A.D. 501.¹³² Seghais was an old name for the Curliu Hills,¹³³ near Boyle, on the confines of the counties of Sligo and Roscommon.¹³⁴

It would seem, that soon after the death of St. Patrick, about A.D. 493,¹³⁵ the great fort at Dun-da-leathghlas,¹³⁶ or Downpatrick, had been assaulted by some hostile force. Tighernach places this siege at A.D. 496.¹³⁷ Cairbre, the son of Niall, fought at Ceann-Ailbhe or Cnoc-Ailbhe, against the Leinsterman, A.D. 494.¹³⁸ This was probably the name of a hill in Magh-Ailbhe, in the north of Kildare county.¹³⁹ Tighernach has this engagement of Cindailbe at A.D. 499.¹⁴⁰ The battle of “the White Hill” is noted in the “Annals of Ulster,” at A.D. 500.¹⁴¹ It is called the battle of Kinailbe, in the “Annals of Clonmacnoise,” and it is entered, under the year 501.¹⁴² The battle at Droma Loch Muidhe, or “the hill of Loughbuy,”¹⁴³ was fought against the O’Neills by the Leinstermen.¹⁴⁴ The latter were here victorious,¹⁴⁵ after a very sanguinary engagement.¹⁴⁶ This encounter, called “the battle of Druim-Lough-maighe,” by the Four Masters,¹⁴⁷ took place, A.D. 496, or 500,¹⁴⁸ or 502, according to the “Annals of Ulster.”¹⁴⁹ This place was denominated Magh-Muirthemne,¹⁵⁰ situated in the territory of Conaille, the level portion of Louth county.¹⁵¹ In 503,¹⁵² or 504,¹⁵³ the battle of Mannen¹⁵⁴

¹³² See Dr. O’Conor’s “*Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores*,” tomus iv. *Annales Ultonienses*, p. 10.

¹³³ These are partly situated in the Barony of Boyle, county of Roscommon, and partly in the baronies of Corran and Coolavin, county of Sligo. These mountains appear from the town of Boyle, “rising from the opposite side of a valley at the distance of about a mile; their height is not considerable; and, as every part of their surface is applicable to tillage, pasturage, or planting, houses may be observed gathering far up their sides.” John D’Alton’s “*History of Ireland and Annals of Boyle*,” vol. i., p. 9.

¹³⁴ See O’Mahony’s Keating’s “*History of Ireland*,” book ii., part i., chap. i., p. 422, n. 67.

¹³⁵ See William M. Hennessy’s “*Chronicum Scotorum*,” pp. 32, 33.

¹³⁶ The Anglicized form of this name is stated to be “the dun or fort of the two broken locks or fetters.” See Dr. O’Donovan’s “*Annals of the Four Masters*,” vol. i., n. (e), p. 158.

¹³⁷ It is entered as *Expugnatio Dūin-leath-glaise*. See Dr. O’Conor’s “*Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores*,” tomus ii. *Tigernachi Annales*, p. 125.

¹³⁸ See Dr. O’Donovan’s “*Annals of the Four Masters*,” vol. i., pp. 158, 159.

¹³⁹ See *ibid.*, n. (g).

¹⁴⁰ See Dr. O’Conor’s “*Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores*,” “*Tigernachi Annales*,” p. 125, tomus ii.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, tomus iv. *Annales Ultonienses*, p. 10.

¹⁴² At A.D. 496, it is entered in William M. Hennessy’s “*Chronicum Scotorum*,” pp. 34, 35.

¹⁴³ Anglicized, “the yellow lake.” It is

difficult to ascertain its locality in Louth under either denomination.

¹⁴⁴ See Dr. O’Conor’s “*Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores*,” tomus iv. *Annales Ultonienses*, pp. 9, 10.

¹⁴⁵ The “*Chronicum Scotorum*” places the battle of Druim Lochmaighe at A.D. 499, pp. 34, 35.

¹⁴⁶ See l’Abbé Ma-Geoghegan’s “*Histoire de l’Irlande*,” tome i. *Seconde Partie*, chap. ii., p. 271.

¹⁴⁷ See Dr. O’Donovan’s edition, vol. i., pp. 160, 161.

¹⁴⁸ See O’Mahony’s Keating’s “*History of Ireland*,” book ii., part i., chap. i., n. 68, p. 422.

¹⁴⁹ See Dr. O’Conor’s “*Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores*,” tomus iv., p. 10.

¹⁵⁰ It is stated, that the forests of this district were cut down A.M. 2859, before pestilence destroyed the adventurers, whom Nemediis had led to invade Ireland. This etymon is Anglicized “the Plain of the Sea.” See “*The History of Dundalk, and its Environs*,” by John D’Alton and J. R. O’Flanagan, chap. i., p. 1.

¹⁵¹ This territory was also called Machaire Oirghiall, and the ancient inhabitants were designated Conaille Muirtheimhne. See Dr. O’Donovan’s “*Leabhar na g-Ceart, or the Book of Rights*,” n. (s), p. 22.

¹⁵² See “*Annales Ultonienses*.” Dr. O’Conor’s “*Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores*,” tomus iv., p. 11.

¹⁵³ See “*Tigernachi Annales*,” *ibid.*, p. 127. This writer has it *Cath Manann*.

¹⁵⁴ There was a Mannin-Lough, otherwise called Loch-na-n Airedh, in the ancient territory of Ciarraige-Locha-na-nairneadh, which comprised about the southern half of Costello Barony, in the county of Mayo.

was fought by Aedan, son of Gauran. This was probably some invasion of the Isle of Man,¹⁵⁵ with the particulars of which we are now uninformed.¹⁵⁶

The war of Ardacorann or Ardacoraind¹⁵⁷ is noticed at A.D. 497,¹⁵⁸ 506, 507, and 510.¹⁵⁹ Tighernach notes it at A.D. 508.¹⁶⁰ Next, according to the "Annals of Inisfallen," the war of Fremaind Midi took place A.D. 499.¹⁶¹ The "Chronicum Scotorum," has A.D. 505.¹⁶² But the "Annals of Tighernach" mention it as the battle of Fernmaigh Midi—more correctly Freamhainn¹⁶³—fought against the Berradian Offelians,¹⁶⁴ A.D. 508.¹⁶⁵ At the year 509, however, the "Annals of Ulster" notice it, in the following manner. Failgi Berraide or Falgeus Berradensis was conqueror in the war of Fremonn, now Frewin,¹⁶⁶ fought against Fiach, son of Neill.¹⁶⁷ Yet, the tide of victory soon turned against the Offlians.¹⁶⁸ The "Annals of Inisfallen" refer to A.D. 504,¹⁶⁹ the battle of Dromderg, or the "Red Hill,"¹⁷⁰ which was fought against them. The "Chronicum Scotorum" enters it at A.D. 512. Fiach Mac Neill was the conqueror, in this engagement, over the Hy-failge. At A.D. 515, or 516, the date for this encounter has been entered in the "Annals of Ulster."¹⁷¹ The plains of Meath were harrassed by the Lagenians, after this battle,¹⁷² according to one account; although, others state,¹⁷³ the result of this conflict enabled Fiach to wrest the plains of Midhe from the Lagenians,¹⁷⁴ whose champion Failbge Berraide appears to have been.

The foregoing accounts are sufficient to satisfy us, that the land of Eire was "a trembling sod,"¹⁷⁵ during the lifetime of St. Brigid. It is said, that

See Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. ii., n. (l), p. 1115, and Index Locorum, pp. 81, 90.

¹⁵⁵ The Manann of our Annals is the present Isle of Man. See *ibid.*, vol. ii., n. (m), p. 878.

¹⁵⁶ See this battle noted in Rev. James Johnstone's "Antiquitates Celto-Normanicae," p. 57.

¹⁵⁷ Not identified.

¹⁵⁸ See Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores." Annales Inisfalenses, p. 5, tomus ii.

¹⁵⁹ In the usual doubtful style, the "Annals of Ulster" enter it, under each of the three foregoing dates, tomus iv., p. 11, *ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ He styles it *Cath Ard-acorainn*. *Ibid.*, tomus ii., p. 127.

¹⁶¹ See *ibid.*, tomus ii., p. 5.

¹⁶² See William M. Hennessy's edition, pp. 36, 37.

¹⁶³ In Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," this battle in Meath is noticed at A.D. 501. Keating places the site of it in the ancient territory of Teabtha. It is now known as Frewin, a lofty hill rising over the western shore of Lough Owel, in the townland of Wattstown, parish of Portomon, barony of Corkaree, and county of Westmeath. See vol. i., n. (w), p. 89, and pp. 162, 163.

¹⁶⁴ *Ros Failghe*, or "Ros of the Rings," was ancestor of the Ui Failghe, of whom O'Conchobhair Failghe (O'Connor Faly) and O'Diomasagha (O'Dempsey) of Clann Maeiliaghra (Clanmalier), and O'Duinn (O'Dunne) of Iregan, were the most distin-

guished families, after the establishment of surnames. See Dr. O'Donovan's "Leabhar na g-Ceart, or Book of Rights," n. (b), p. 193.

¹⁶⁵ Called, *Cath Fernmaigh Midi* in "Tigernachi Annales." Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus ii., p. 127.

¹⁶⁶ The "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Westmeath" do not give this historic site, where it ought to be noted, on Sheet 11.

¹⁶⁷ See Dr. O'Connor's *Rer. Hib. Scrip.*, tomus iv. "Annales Ultonienses," p. 11.

¹⁶⁸ In Sir Charles Coote's "Statistical Survey of the King's County," we have the following ridiculous account about the derivation of their territory: "Hy Falgia is derived from Hy Bealgia, that is the country of the worshippers of Beal."—Introduction, p. 1.

¹⁶⁹ See Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus ii. *Annales Inisfalenses*, p. 5.

¹⁷⁰ The "Annals of Ulster" term it the "war of Dromaderge." Perhaps, the Red Hills, near Kildare, might be identified with the site.

¹⁷¹ These records continue to state, that Caennfael said, the battle in the red hills was a vindictive revenge of the heart after seven years. See *ibid.*, tomus iv., p. 12.

¹⁷² According to Caennfael. See *ibid.*

¹⁷³ See William M. Hennessy's "Chronicum Scotorum," pp. 38, 39.

¹⁷⁴ So states Cendiaeladh, as found in his poem. *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ An expressive term in our Annals, when alluding to the prevalence of domestic

Illann died A.D. 506, that he ruled thirty, and that he lived 120 years. The latter account is probably an exaggeration. Even after death—deferred to A.D. 524¹⁷⁶ in one account—his name was a terror [to his enemies. The Hy-Nials then collected a large army, which invaded the territories of Leinster.¹⁷⁷ Cucorb is said to have led the Lagenians to a signal victory,¹⁷⁸ which was obtained at Fionnabhair or Fennor,¹⁷⁹ near Kildare, A.D. 506.¹⁸⁰ Other accounts have it at a later period.¹⁸¹ The spirit of their buried hero survived in the souls of his former companions-in-arms,¹⁸² and the voice of fame seemed to speak from the very grave, where his remains were mouldering in their kindred dust. The people of the Leinster province, having assembled in council, resolved on removing the mortal remains of their king from his tomb. The ghastly corpse had a magic force, second only to his living presence among them.¹⁸³ Driven in a chariot towards their enemies, the Leinster people met them, at a place called Luachair,¹⁸⁴ and fought around the dead body of Illand,¹⁸⁵ until they routed Neill's posterity with great slaughter.¹⁸⁶ The success of their arms was attributed by the Leinstermen to the exposition of their former king's dead body, and to the special protection of St. Brigid,¹⁸⁷ which gave them confidence and courage.¹⁸⁸ Thus was the name and influence of our illustrious abbess mighty with the mightiest; and her protection was obtained by those kings and people, who had fostered her great religious foundation, whenever public and private occasions called for her prayers and intercession.

wars, at various periods.

¹⁷⁶ See William M. Hennessy's "Chronicon Scotorum," pp. 40, 41.

¹⁷⁷ See Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Sesto, pp. 471, 472.

¹⁷⁸ This battle obtained by the Leinstermen, under Cucorb's leadership, took place A.D. 506, the thirtieth year of Illand's reign, according to the "Catalogue of the Kings of Leinster." See, Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," n. 53, p. 544.

¹⁷⁹ Such is Dr. O'Donovan's identification.

¹⁸⁰ See Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., pp. 164, 165.

¹⁸¹ See William M. Hennessy's "Chronicon Scotorum," pp. 40, 41.

¹⁸² "Their souls are kindled at the battles of old; at the actions of other times. Their eyes are flames of fire. They roll in search of the foes of the land. Their mighty hands are on their swords. Lightning pours from their sides of steel. . . . Bright are the chiefs of battle, in the armour of their fathers."—James Macpherson's "Poems of Ossian." Fingal, book i.

¹⁸³ Such an incident, as the present one, might well have inspired "the Bard of Erin," when he wrote these magnificent lyric lines:—

"And it cries, from the grave where the
hero lies deep,
'Though the day of your chieftain for
ever hath set,
O leave not his sword thus inglorious to
sleep—

It hath victory's life in it yet!'"—
Moore's "Irish Melodies."

¹⁸⁴ Luachair means a "Rushy Place," but although there are countless places, bearing this name in Leinster, Dr. O'Donovan had never been able to identify the exact site of this battle.

¹⁸⁵ "While thus aloft the hero's corse
they bear,
Behind them rages all the storm of
war.
Confusion, tumult, horror, o'er the
throng

Of men, steeds, chariots, urg'd the
rout along."—Pope's Homer's
"Iliad," book vii., ll. 821 to 824.

¹⁸⁶ An account, concerning this miracle, is also given in the "Annals of the Four Masters," at A.D. 506, as follows: "The battle of Luachair [was fought] by Cucorb against the Ui-Neill, of which was said:

The fierce battle of Luachair, over head,
Bright saw, no vain vision;
The bloody battle of Fionnabhair was noble,
about the body of Illann after his
death."

—See O'Donovan's edition, vol. i., pp. 164, 165, and nn. (z, a).

¹⁸⁷ See, Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. x., xi., xii., xiii., pp. 551, 552. This account is abbreviated in the Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. xc., p. 538, *ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ Vita Sexta S. Brigidæ, sect. liv., lv., p. 594. *ibid.*, where the saint is said to have promised Illand a succession of victories, it is related, that the brother of the king, on

CHAPTER IX.

DIFFERENT PLACES CALLED KILBRIDE, ON THE EASTERN AND SOUTH-EASTERN COAST OF ANCIENT LEINSTER, WHERE THE HOLY ABBESS MAY HAVE LIVED—ST. BRIGID AND ST. SENAN—ST. BRIGID RESTORES A Cripple—AN INSANE MAN—VARIOUS MIRACLES WHICH WERE WROUGHT THROUGH HER MERITS—SHE PREVENTS BLOODSHED BETWEEN CONALL AND CAIRBRE—SHE SAVES CONALL FROM HIS ENEMIES.

ST. BRIGID seems to have founded some religious establishment, near the Irish Sea, and on the western side of the ancient kingdom of Leinster. There are several places called after her, in corresponding situations; but, it is difficult now to determine if any one of them be identical with it. Having for a western boundary a pretty streamlet, which joins the Bray river,¹ and which divides it from Kilcrouney, there is a townland of Kilbride, in the northern part of Wicklow county.² It lies within the parish of Bray,³ a short distance west of the town, in the barony of Rathdown, and very convenient to the sea. No trace of a ruined church, however, can now be discovered there; although, it seems likely one formerly existed, and which had been dedicated to our St. Brigid, from whom the townland probably derived its denomination. Besides this, there is a townland and parish of Kilbride⁴ in the barony of Lower Talbotstown. A small stream passes the village of Kilbride, and this is soon poured into the upper waters of the River Liffey. Yet, no ruin can be traced on the site of the townland, which appears to have been named after our St. Brigid.⁵ Again, there is a Kilbride townland and village in the parish of Dunganstown⁶—certainly not its ancient name—in

hearing her words, conceived a great desire to obtain a like favour, to become a servant of St. Brigid, and to receive baptism. According to the metrical account, the following reply was made by our saint:

“Hæctibi credenti præstabit magna potestas,
Tempora longa prius, cum hoc regno vita
futura,
Et tua progenies post te tua regna tenebit,
Donec ad extremum, veniet post terminus
ævi.”

These promises of the saint are likewise said to have been fulfilled; and Colgan, in a lengthened note, postfixed to this passage, gives a long list of the kings of Leinster, belonging to Ailill's race, extracted from our Annals, and tending to establish the truth of such prophecy. See *ibid.*, n. 12, p. 598.

CHAPTER IX.—The Bray River issues from the romantic lough of the same name, and runs about eight miles eastward—but so as to describe the segment of a circle with the convexity southward—to the sea, one-fourth of a mile below the bridge, at the town of Bray. It has most of its course in the Wicklow half-barony of Rathdown; but, over a short distance above its embouchure, it runs on the boundary between the counties of Dublin and Wicklow. “Though brief in

length, it abounds in attractions, and identifies itself with the curiosities of Glencree, the wonders of the deep, dark, bosky ravine of Dargle, the exulting beauties of the demesne of Powerscourt, and the several amenities of the town of Bray.”—“Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland, vol. i., p. 277.”

² See “Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Wicklow.” Sheets, 4, 7, 8.

³ In the Dinnsenchus there is a legendary account, that Bray was so called from Brea, son of Seanboth, one of Parthalon's followers, who first introduced single combat into Ireland. See Dr. P. W. Joyce's “Origin and History of Irish Names of Places,” part iv., chap. i., p. 377. Might the valley, in which Kilbride is situated, have been called Magh-Breagh, so frequently mentioned in the Lives of St. Brigid?

⁴ This parish is represented on the “Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Wicklow.” Sheets, 1, 2, 5, 6.

⁵ Still in this parish, there are two old burial grounds and several raths. See Lewis' “Topographical Dictionary of Ireland,” vol. ii. p. 56. One of these ruins is not far from the Catholic church of Kilbride, and surrounded by a graveyard. The ruined walls now scarcely rise above the earth.

⁶ In Daniel Augustus Beaufort's “Me-

the barony of Arklow.⁷ The townland and village are somewhat removed from the sea, which they overlook. Not far from the town of Arklow, are the townland and parish of Kilbride,⁸ in the barony of Arklow.⁹ The old church here seems, however, to have been dedicated to a St. Bride, different from the holy Abbess of Kildare. The church is near the sea-shore, and it commands a fine view of the sea, and the town of Arklow.¹⁰

A short distance from Clondalkin, in the townland and in the parish of Kilbride,¹¹ barony of Newcastle, and county of Dublin,¹² are the ruins of an old castle and an ancient church, which occupy a slight elevation and which are picturesquely situated. The graveyard enclosure is nearly circular, and it adjoins a road, near Castle Bagot demesne.¹³ Kilbride old church is within some short distance of the Dublin and Naas road, nearly mid-way



Kilbride, Co. Dublin.

between Clondalkin and Rathcoole. In summer time, the graves in Kilbride churchyard are almost smothered with nettles: and, few tombstones are now there, while only a portion of the ancient church remains.¹⁴ The choir-arch gives evidence of its being antique; while, excepting the arching stones, which were carefully dressed, the other building stones are mostly small. The church, even when complete, seems to have been exceedingly

moir of a Map of Ireland," this parish is set down as a rectory in the diocese of Dublin. See Index, p. 28. The present Catholic church stands on the site of the ancient one, and is surrounded by the old graveyard. Such is the traditional information given to the writer by Rev. James Doyle, D.D., of St. Michan's church, Dublin, who has a thorough local knowledge of the neighbourhood.

⁷ See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Wicklow." Sheet 31.

⁸ These are shown in the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Wicklow." Sheets 40, 41.

⁹ The Parish extends along the left side of the Ovoca river to the sea. See "Parlia-

mentary Gazetteer of Ireland," vol ii., p. 398.

¹⁰ See Lewis's "Topographical Dictionary of Ireland," vol. ii., p. 55.

¹¹ This parish is a chapelry, and part of the benefice of Clondalkin. See "The Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland," vol. ii., p. 367.

¹² See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Dublin." Sheet 21.

¹³ On Kilmactalway townland. Near Castle Bagot House are the ruins of another old church, within a graveyard, not far removed from Kilbride. See *ibid.*

¹⁴ The accompanying engraving by George A. Hanlon, Dublin, is from a drawing, taken on the spot, by Mr. John O'C.

small; yet, the walls were of great thickness. Around the choir-arch,¹⁵ the face of its wall is now much broken. A few ivy-tendrils creep up along the sides of this ruin. From the site, a splendid view of the Dublin mountains and of the Liffy valley may be obtained. This church appears to have taken its name from our St. Brigid; still, it is doubtful enough, that she founded it, or that she there resided, at any particular period of her life. Although, in the city and county of Dublin, several churches and religious houses had been dedicated to St. Brigid, probably at epochs long subsequent to her decease; yet, we could not presume to assert, that she ever founded or resided at any of those places during that interval, when she lived in the eastern and maritime part of Leinster.

In the county of Wexford, there is a Kilbride townland,¹⁶ quite near the sea-shore, in the parish of Kiltennell,¹⁷ and barony of Ballaghkeene. No trace of a ruined church is there to be found.¹⁸ Besides this, on Kilbride townland,¹⁹ removed some miles from the sea-shore, in the parish of Ballyhuskard,²⁰ and barony of Ballaghkeene, an old church and a graveyard are yet to be seen. There is a Kilbride townland,²¹ not far from Duncannon Fort,²² and near the sea, in the united parishes of St. James and Dunbrody, barony of Shelburne. No trace of a ruin can be discovered there, on the Ordnance Survey Maps. Still, we may fairly infer, that in times remote, the great Patroness of Ireland had churches, chapels, or convents, dedicated to her memory, in nearly all the foregoing townlands and parishes. A knowledge of these facts, however, will hardly help us to determine the exact place of her maritime abode.

While St. Brigid lived in her convent, beside the Irish Sea, she is said to have prepared vestments²³ for the holy Bishop Senan. He then lived in an island,²⁴ which was situated at an opening towards the ocean, in the western part of Ireland.²⁵ A wide expanse of water surrounded that island, and it lay at a long distance from Brigid's religious establishment. Just opposite the town of Kilrush, and now constituted a portion of that parish, Scatterry Island²⁶ and its famous ruins²⁷ may be seen far out into the waters of the spreading Shannon.²⁸ The vestments to be used in offering up the Holy

Robinson, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.

¹⁵ A great number of old ruined churches in Ireland had been distinguished by similar choir-arches.

¹⁶ See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Wexford." Sheet 12.

¹⁷ This parish is also called Kilbride. See Lewis' "Topographical Dictionary of Ireland," vol. ii., pp. 212, 213.

¹⁸ The Owenvarra, which flows through Courtown demesne, falls into the sea, at the bay of Kilbride. See J. N. Brewer's "Beauties of Ireland," vol. i., p. 389.

¹⁹ See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Wexford." Sheets 26, 27. The church and graveyard are to be found on Sheet 26.

²⁰ See an account of it in "The Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland," vol. i., p. 173.

²¹ See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Wexford." Sheet 44.

²² See an account of this spot in J. N. Brewer's "Beauties of Ireland," vol. i., pp.

371, 372.

²³ These are called "missalia indumenta," in St. Brigid's Fourth Life.

²⁴ To this island, formerly called Inis Cathuigh, and at present Scatterry Island, allusion is frequently made in the Acts of St. Senan, which will be found at the 8th of March.

²⁵ The accompanying engraving, by George A. Hanlon, Dublin, is from a sketch taken near the scene by William F. Wakeman, who afterwards transferred it to the wood.

²⁶ "It is also called Holy Isle: and on the festival of the saint it is resorted to by crowds of pilgrims."—"The Tourists' Illustrated Handbook for Ireland," p. 134.

²⁷ These are depicted on the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Clare." Sheet 67.

²⁸ A smaller island, called Inishbeg, lies nearer to the Clare side, and a little to the north-east of Scatterry. See *ibid.*

²⁹ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Tertia Vita S. Brigidæ, cap. cxv., pp. 540, 541. Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ, lib. ii. cap.

Sacrifice of the Mass were placed in a chest. This, it is said, was floated out on the sea. St. Brigid fully confided in Heavenly guidance, that it should reach St. Senan. Her confidence was not misplaced; for, the legend states, this chest was wafted round the Irish coast towards that part of the island, where St. Senan lived. This happened through a special direction of Providence, and the box went over sea-courses, which skilled mariners could only pass with great difficulty, and in well-appointed vessels. St. Senan had a revelation concerning this gift he was to expect. On that particular day, when the chest floated near his island, Senan said to his monks: "Go to the sea, and bring me whatever you shall find upon it." His brethren found the chest, and brought it, as required, to St. Senan.²⁹ The latter told them, it



Scattery Island, and Mouth of the Shannon.

was a gift sent by St. Brigid, and he gave thanks to God, while invoking a blessing on the holy virgin.³⁰ However, a doubt has been thrown on the credibility of this legend³¹—capable of being resolved from a very marvellous story into a narrative divested of everything incredible³²—so far as it relates to our St. Brigid. Although the learned Ussher inferred³³—probably from reading this account—that St. Senan had been established³⁴ at Iniscathy, before the death of Kildare's holy Abbess; yet, it is more likely he

lxxxi. p. 561.

³⁰ A somewhat similar miracle is related in the Acts of St. Senan, Abbot of Iniscathy; but there, the vestments prepared for him were made by a St. Brigid, the daughter of Conchraicius, of the Mactail family, and whose cell was at a place called Clan-in-fidi, near the banks of the River Shannon. See Colgan's "*Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ*," viii. Martii, Secunda Vita, sive Supplementum Vitæ S. Senani, ex Hibernico transumptum, cap. xxxix., p. 536, *recte* 532.

³¹ See Dr. Lanigan's *Ecclesiastical History*

of Ireland, vol. i., chap. ix., sec. iv., n. 65, pp. 449, 450.

³² As for example, the vestments, packed in a chest, might have been shipped in the ordinary way, and have been consigned to St. Senan, whom they safely reached.

³³ See "*Britannicarum Ecclesiarum Antiquitates*," cap. xvii., pp. 454, 488.

³⁴ Abbate D. Giacomo Certani—who relates this legend—makes St. Senan preside over an imaginary body of Canons Regular. See "*La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese*." Libro Sesto, pp. 544

did not settle there until some time after her death.³⁵ Hence, it seems probable, that the present narrative has been taken from the acts of another St. Brigid,³⁶ and transferred incorrectly to the lives—not, however, the earliest ones—of Ireland's illustrious patroness.

Like the great Apostle of the Gentiles, regarding herself as subject to human infirmities, the blessed Abbess felt for the infirm.³⁷ On a certain occasion, while Brigid was sitting at the door of a monastery, in which she resided, she saw a man at the bank of an adjoining river.³⁸ He was bearing a burden, and, as he walked along, his body seemed curved.³⁹ Pitying his condition, the compassionate superioress said to those around her, that all should go to the man and help to bear his load. Coming towards him, St. Brigid said: "Let us bear your burden, for it causes you to stoop greatly." The man replied, however, that the weight of his load did not cause his curvature, but an old malady, which had troubled him during his earlier days. Enquiring about the name of this virgin, who accosted him, he was told she was the holy Brigid. Thereupon, he replied; "I give thanks to God, that I have found her whom I have sought."⁴⁰ Then, he addressed our abbess, asking her to pray to the Almighty for him, that his bodily defect might be removed. This pious lady told him to enter a hospice, where he should rest for the night, and afterwards, that he should obtain his request. During that night, our Saint importuned the Almighty on his behalf.⁴¹ The following morning, she said to the man; "Go to the river,⁴² and, in the name of Jesus Christ, wash yourself, praying to God, and I promise, that you shall be able to hold your neck erect. Until I desire you to do so, take care not to depart from that place." Obeying the holy virgin's injunctions, that man, who had been curved for eighteen years, was miraculously restored.⁴³ Afterwards, as in duty bound, he gave heartfelt thanks to God and to St. Brigid.⁴⁴

On a particular day, the holy woman met an insane person, running from one place to another. In his paroxysms of frenzy, this maniac caused great annoyance to all that crossed his path. When our Saint saw him, she addressed him in these words: "O man, announce to me the words of Christ Jesus, our Lord."⁴⁵ Although the companions of St. Brigid feared very much the result; yet, they had great confidence in the holy Virgin's gifts of grace. The frenzied man at once became collected in his thoughts. He then said to the saintly abbess: "O holy Brigid, I obey thee. Love God, and all will love thee; honour God, and all will honour thee; fear God, and all will fear

to 546.

³⁵ See Dr. Lanigan's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. ix., sec. iv., n. 65, pp. 449, 450.

³⁶ Supposed by Colgan, to have been St. Brigid of Cluain-fidhe, whose life is to be found, at the 30th of September.

³⁷ See ii. Corinthians, xi. 29, 30.

³⁸ This circumstance shows the place could not have been Kildare.

³⁹ Abbate D. Giacomo Certani imagines, that St. Brigid was then engaged superintending some operatives, who were building a church or monastic establishment for her. See "La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Quarto, p. 309.

⁴⁰ See *ibid.* p. 310.

⁴¹ See *ibid.* p. 311.

⁴² Certani thinks, that like the baths at

Baiano, in Campania, there may have been some natural curative properties in its waters, while the Abbess had her own part in the working of this miracle. See *ibid.* pp. 312, 313.

⁴³ In the supplement for use of the Irish clergy, postfixed to "Breviarium Romanum," Pars Hiemalis, we read, "leprosus sepius mundavit, et variis languoribus aegrotantibus sanitatem suis precibus impetravit."—Die i. Februarii. Officium S. Brigide. Noct. ii., Lect. vi.

⁴⁴ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Quarta S. Brigide, lib. ii., cap. xxvi., p. 553. See also. Vita Tertia S. Brigide, cap. lvi., p. 533, *ibid.* Vita Sexta S. Brigide, sec. lix., p. 594 *ibid.*

⁴⁵ See Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida

thee."⁴⁶ When he had spoken these words, he fled away, with loud outcries.⁴⁷

One rainy day, after serving as a shepherdess, St. Brigid had returned to her cell, her garments being saturated with rain.⁴⁸ After a while, the sun began to shine, and one of its rays penetrating the wall of this cell, appeared to our saint as a line,⁴⁹ for holding clothes.⁵⁰ On this she placed her moist garments.⁵¹ At the time, a certain wise and pious man preached God's holy word, while the Saint's attention was so entirely engaged by his precepts of instruction, that totally forgetful of all earthly concerns, midnight found her in the same entranced attitude.⁵² To this unusual period the sun's rays remained within her cell,⁵³ while the garments of our holy abbess hung thereon, until a certain inmate of the house reminded her respecting that error of visual sense.⁵⁴ This miracle is alluded to in various offices of St. Brigid.⁵⁵ In some of her lives, it is added, that certain persons, journeying by night through the Liffey plains, related how they saw these rays brightening the whole campaign, until those arrived, in the middle of the night, at St. Brigid's cell. Then, all gave thanks to God, and admired all the miraculous manifestations of Brigid's sanctity.⁵⁶

In honour of a certain great festival, the holy Abbess had prepared a sumptuous banquet. Yet, before the time for its intended consumption had arrived, she distributed the viands among some poor visitors. The nuns of our Saint's monastery regretted this occurrence, as many persons were expected to come, on occasion of their solemnity. Brigid prayed to the Lord that night; and, it so happened, a rich inhabitant, living within that district, had been conveying in waggons certain viands,⁵⁷ which were provided for the king.⁵⁸ Having lost the way, however, it yet chanced, that rich neighbour came directly to the gate of St. Brigid's monastery. Concerning this circumstance, God's devoted servant, being preternaturally admonished, went out to meet him, and to enquire about his destination. The fortuitous visitor was inspired to offer the whole of his store to the Abbess, and he told her,

Ibernese." Libro Quinto, pp. 341 to 343.

⁴⁶ The Rev. S. Baring-Gould, who, in his account of St. Brigid, relates the foregoing incident, also adds: "Was there ever a better sermon preached in fewer words?"—"Lives of the Saints," vol. ii. February 1st, p. 20.

⁴⁷ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ. Lib. ii., cap. xxxv., p. 555. Also, Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. lxx., p. 534.

⁴⁸ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. xv., p. 552. In the First Metrical Life, we are told, she returned from tending her sheep. This duty had caused the rain to drench her garments. *Ibid.* Vita Prima S. Brigidæ, sec. 17, p. 516.

⁴⁹ In the Second Life, this same occupation is assigned as a cause for her exposure to the shower; but, it is there stated, that through a defect of vision, she saw not a line, but a tree, taking the form of a sunbeam.—*Ibid.* Vita Secunda S. Brigidæ, cap. vii., p. 519.

⁵⁰ The legends in several cases—as in the present instance—give us an insight regarding many domestic usages of our ancestors.

⁵¹ See Camerarius, "De Statu Hominis Veteris simul ac nove Ecclesiæ, et Sanctis Regni Scotiæ," lib. i., cap. iii., sec. ii., p. 140.

⁵² See Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiola." Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese," Libro Sesto, pp. 479, 480.

⁵³ See Rev. S. Baring-Gould's "Lives of the Saints," vol. ii. February i., p. 19.

⁵⁴ The account in the Third Life exactly coincides with that recorded in the text. See "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. xcii., p. 539. This miracle is related, likewise, in the Fifth Life, with a greater amount of amplification, *ibid.* Vita Quinta S. Brigidæ, cap. xliii., pp. 577, 578. See, also, Vita Sexta S. Brigidæ, sec. vii., p. 583, *ibid.*

⁵⁵ Petrus de Natalibus has a similar account. See also De Burgo's "Officia Propria Sanctorum Hiberniæ. i. Februarii, Officium S. Brigidæ, Noct. ii., Lect. v., p. 12.

⁵⁶ See, "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. xciii., p. 539. Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. xvi., p. 552.

⁵⁷ And, as we are informed, these were furnished to celebrate that festival.

⁵⁸ Probably the King of Leinster. His

it was a Providential circumstance, that he had thus strayed, although in a well-known country. He promised, likewise, to prepare some other provisions for his lord, the king. Receiving an account of what had happened, the latter transferred that villager, with all his family, to serve God and the holy virgin, Brigid, as a perpetual vassal, living on her own property. The king, moreover, sent another waggon, loaded with provisions, for the use of our saint, on occasion of this great solemnity, so that she was fully enabled to supply the wants of all her guests.⁵⁹ The holy abbess thus realized, even in a material way, the force of these Gospel words, that for religious fidelity she should receive an hundred fold.⁶⁰ A certain queen,⁶¹ among other valuable presents to St. Brigid, had presented her with an ornamental silver chain.⁶² Having received our Saint's blessing, that queen returned home, while Brigid's nuns, taking the chain from the hands of their abbess, deposited it among their church treasures. Yet, as the holy abbess was accustomed to distribute all her possessions to the poor, a destitute person coming to her received the aforesaid chain.⁶³ Our saint took it from her church valuables, as she had nothing else to bestow. Brigid's nuns, on learning this, said to their superioress, "O mother, owing to your generosity, we lose whatever God gives us through charitable Christians; for, you leave us nothing, since you bestow all upon the poor." To evade their remonstrances, our Saint said: "My daughters, whilst I remain in the church, go and seek your chain,⁶⁴ which, perhaps, you will find." Obeying her commands, they found a chain, exactly resembling the one which had been given away. Then they presented it to St. Brigid, asking her pardon. The holy abbess replied: "Give earthly things to God: He will return you earthly and heavenly favours."⁶⁵ The nuns ever afterwards preserved that chain,⁶⁶ as a standing memorial of the extraordinary charity characterizing their holy superioress. A certain leper, belonging to the race of Neill,⁶⁷ coming to St.

name or district, however, is not recorded, in St. Brigid's ancient Lives; although, Abbate D. Giacomo Certani—who chronicles these incidents—makes all this occur at Kildare, without any apparent authority. See "La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Quarto, pp. 280 to 283.

⁵⁹ See "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. xvii., p. 552. Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. xlix., p. 532, *ibid.* Vita Sexta S. Brigidæ, sec. xli., pp. 590, 591, *ibid.*

⁶⁰ St. Luke, vi. 38.

⁶¹ Her name or place of residence is not given, in St. Brigid's Latin Lives. But, in Professor O'Looney's Irish Life of the Saint, she is called the Queen of Crimthan, son of Enna Cennsellach, King of Leinster. See pp. 35, 36. From this we may probably draw an inference, that St. Brigid was then living somewhere in the east or south-east of Leinster.

⁶² It is said to have had the figure of a man attached to one of its ends.

⁶³ Almost daily are objects of ancient Irish art and ornament among "the finds" of our rural population; and, several most interesting specimens have found their place in our museums. These furnish the most

conclusive evidences of our early civilization.

⁶⁴ The Abbate D. Giacomo Certani, relating these occurrences, without any seeming warrant, but the promptings of his own bright Italian imagination, converts the "chain of silver" in St. Brigid's ancient Lives into "Collana d'oro," or "a golden necklace." See "La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Quarto, pp. 283 to 287.

⁶⁵ See "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. xviii., p. 552. Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. l., p. 532, *ibid.* Vita Sexta S. Brigidæ, sec. xlii., p. 591. *ibid.*

⁶⁶ In the Metrical Acts, we have following minute description of this ornament:

"Vertice cui summo fuerat formata figura
Humani capitis: subtilis lucet imago
Filis argenti preciosa, ac textilis hamis
Spherula in alternis fulvis præfulgida
gemmis."

From the foregoing minute description, this chain must have been elaborately and richly fashioned.

⁶⁷ This leper appears to have belonged to the territory of Meath, which is usually

Brigid, asked her for a cow and calf, which the abbess directed her herdsman to give. He enquired from our saint, what sort of a cow and calf he should select. She told him to choose the best out of their herd.⁶⁸ Then the herdsman and the leper selected those of prime shape and condition. Yet, they found it a matter of great difficulty to separate the calf from a particular cow belonging to the herd, although that cow was not its dam. This was told to the saint by the poor leper, when Brigid desired one of her servants,⁶⁹ then engaged at cooking,⁷⁰ to go and assist him in driving home those animals. Her servant enquired, who had been left to cook, when our abbess said, he should return to take charge of that work, within a very short time. The man did as he had been desired, and, with the leper, he accomplished a journey usually occupying of two days, but he effected it within an hour. Their destination was towards the north, and to a place, called Brigh-Chobthuigh Chaoil.⁷¹ It escapes our present power of identification. On returning to St. Brigid, her servant found the flesh-meat in the cauldron, but not yet cooked. These miraculous events are accorded to St. Brigid's merits. All, to whom they became known, were greatly edified.⁷²

A certain king, accompanied by a large retinue, came to celebrate the feast of Pentecost, where St. Brigid lived.⁷³ He spent the eve of this festival with her. On the following morning, having heard Mass, he set out, with his horsemen and chariots, for his own castle. When this day's solemnities had been celebrated, according to custom, our pious abbess superintended those tables that were set for the abundant refection of rich and poor. But, among the number of her guests, an insolent or a demented leper,⁷⁴ through some whimsical impulse, refused to partake of food, if he did not first obtain a spear⁷⁵ which belonged to the king. The leper was asked, why he had not demanded it, on the previous day; while, at the same time, all who were present pressed him to eat. They could not, however, procure his compliance. The leper remarked, it was only on the present occasion he desired that gift. The compassionate abbess could not bring herself to partake of food, while that leper was fasting. She immediately despatched messengers on horseback after the king, to ask his spear as a gift. These set out, and overtook the dynast, as he was crossing the ford of a small stream. There they preferred our saint's request.⁷⁶ The king joyfully presented his spear to them, with the remark, that he would give up all his

called in St. Brigid's Lives, "*regio nepotum Neill*," that is, of the Southern O'Neills. The Northern O'Neills principally lived in Ultonia or Ulster, during our Saint's lifetime. See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," n. 26, p. 543.

⁶⁸ These incidents are related, as if occurring while St. Brigid was at Kildare—a gratuitous, yet a probable supposition—of Abbate D. Giacomo Certani. See "*La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese*," Libro Quarto, pp. 290 to 292.

⁶⁹ The Third Life calls him a carter or groom.

⁷⁰ As we are told, the servant was boiling some meat in a cauldron.

⁷¹ See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," Prima Vita S. Brigide, stanza 26, p. 516.

⁷² See *ibid.* Secunda Vita S. Brigide, cap. xvi., p. 520. Tertia Vita S. Brigide, cap. lii., p. 532. Quarta Vita S. Brigide, lib. ii., cap. xxii., p. 553. Sexta Vita S.

Brigide, sec. xlv., p. 592.

⁷³ The Abbate D. Giacomo Certani writes: "*Il Rè della Lagena era venuto à Kildaria*," &c. — *La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese*," Libro Quarto, p. 303. Yet, although it may fairly be inferred, that he was the King of Leinster, that he came to Kildare, on this occasion, cannot be established from those accounts contained in St. Brigid's more ancient Lives.

⁷⁴ In Professor O'Looney's Irish Life of St. Brigid, pp. 35, 36, he is called "*Lo-man, Brigid's leper*," as if he were some person kept in her employment, or some charitably maintained poor simpleton, whose mind and body were wasted through disease.

⁷⁵ Several fine specimens of ancient bronze and iron spear-heads are yet preserved in the Royal Irish Academy Museum.

⁷⁶ So explained by Colgan, in a note. See, Vita Tertia S. Brigide, n. 29, p. 543.

arms, if Brigid required him. Our saint's messengers then asked what caused a delay, which prevented the king from proceeding further on his journey. His retinue replied, although riding much, they knew God's providence had delayed them, that Brigid might be released from the leper's importunity. Giving praise to God and to our saint, the royal cortege soon arrived at their home. Her messengers returned to the holy abbess with the king's spear. This she immediately handed to the leper. Then, the saint and her guests partook of the banquet provided,⁷⁷ and while thanking the Almighty for favours received,⁷⁸ there can hardly be a doubt, she felt grateful to the high-minded and generous dynast, who had so great a reverence for his pious hostess.

Unless referred to an early period of her life, it is very difficult to reconcile with exact chronology the following statements, contained in St. Brigid's Acts. The holy abbess possessed that benign and ingenious power, which could pacify those fiery and passionate spirits, whose ebullitions gave rise to so many private and public quarrels. Her blessing was the harbinger of peace.⁷⁹ One day, walking near the road-side, Connall, son to Niall—supposed to be the Monarch of the Nine Hostages—came towards Brigid, who was accompanied by her nuns. Now, the last-mentioned celebrated king had two sons⁸⁰ so named; one being distinguished as Connall Crimthann,⁸¹ while the other was called Connall Gulban.⁸² As the latter⁸³ died, A.D. 464,⁸⁴

⁷⁷ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Quarta S. Brigide, lib. ii., cap. xxv., p. 553. See also, Vita Tertia S. Brigide, cap. iv., p. 533, *ibid.*

⁷⁸ See the Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's account of the foregoing occurrences in "La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Quarto, pp. 303 to 308.

⁷⁹ See L. Tachet de Barneval's "Histoire Légendaire de l'Irlande," chap. viii., pp. 80, 81.

⁸⁰ Their respective deaths are commemorated, in Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i.

⁸¹ Connall Crimthann was ancestor to the O'Melaghlin, who bore the tribe-name of Clann-Colmain, and to other ancient and powerful families in Meath. From this prince were descended seventeen Irish monarchs. There were nine monarchs of Ireland, belonging to the race of Aedh Slaine, who was himself monarch of Ireland, from A.D. 599 to 605. When surnames had been established, the chief family of his race took the surname of O'Kelly Breagh. This clan settled in the great plain of Bregia, towards the east of ancient Meath. See O'Flaherty's "Ogygia," pars iii., cap. lxxv., p. 410, and cap. xciii., p. 431.

⁸² The Cinel-Conaill, or Connall's race, are the O'Donnells and their correlative families, in Tyrconnell, or the county of Donegall; while Magh-Slecht was the plain around Ballymagauran, in the north-west part of Cavan County. Here Connall Gulban was killed by the Masraidhe, an ancient Firbolg tribe, who lived in that place, as the Book of Fenagh mentions. The prince had gone into their territory on a predatory excursion, and he had seized a

great prey of horses; but, he was pursued and overtaken at Loch Saloch, near Fenagh, in the county of Leitrim. Here, he was slain and buried. The account of Connall Gulban having been buried by St. Caillin is said to be an anachronism and a fabrication of the writer of St. Caillin's Life, preserved in the "Book of Fenagh." St. Caillin is reputed a contemporary of St. Columkille, and consequently he could hardly have been born in 464, much less have been abbot of Fenagh in Magh-Rein. There is much to be read—not, however, of a very well-authenticated character—regarding Connall Gulban in "The Book of Fenagh," in Irish and English, originally compiled by St. Caillin, Archbishop, Abbot, and Founder of Fenagh *alias* Duubally of Moy-Rein, tempore S. Patricii; with the contractions resolved, and (as far as possible) the original Text restored. The whole carefully revised, indexed, and correctly annotated, by W. M. Hennessy, M.R.I.A., and done into English by D. H. Kelly, M.R.I.A. See pp. 89, 91, 93, 95, 97, 139, 141, 143, 147, 155, 157, 159, 161, 225, 235, 243, 253, 265, 313, 317, 323, 325, 359, 395, 405, 409.

⁸³ In Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," at A.D. 464, we find, in the *hiatus*, which supplies the "Annals of Tigernach," an account of the death of Connall Gulban, from whom the family of Tir-Connel derives its origin. See p. 113, *tomus ii.*

⁸⁴ In Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," at A.D. 464, we read: "Connall Gulban, son of Niall of the Nine Hostages (from whom are descended the Cinel-Conaill), was slain by the old tribes

and as the former lived to A.D. 475,⁸⁵ or even later;⁸⁶ it is only reasonable to suppose, that Conall Crimthann was the prince, who addressed the abbess in these terms: "O holy virgin, bestow on me your special benediction, lest my brother Carbre⁸⁷ kill me, on account of the kingdom." God's pious servant said to him: "Let your soldiers precede me, and I will bless you, following them." At her request, the soldiers preceded them, on their march. When the whole company advanced through the hills, one of her nuns said to St. Brigid: "O mother, what shall we do? Behold, Carbrey,⁸⁸ the brother of this prince, approaches, and these brothers will strike each other." Our saint replied, that the Almighty would prevent such an accident.⁸⁹ At the same time, Carbrey came up to Brigid, and he said to her: "O holy virgin, bless me, because I fear meeting my brother Conall,⁹⁰ in these parts." A film was drawn over the brothers' eyes.⁹¹ Afterwards, all went together with the abbess, while the hostile brothers did not recognise each other, owing to our saint's prayers.⁹² At length, parting in different directions, the brothers Connall⁹³ and Carbrey⁹⁴ even kissed each other, as

of Magh-Slecht, he having been found unprotected, and he was buried at Fidhmach-Maighe-Rein, by St. Caillin, as the life of the aforesaid saint relates."—Vol. i., p. 147. Also, see "The Book of Fenagh," edited by W. M. Hennessy and D. H. Kelly, pp. 96, 97.

⁸⁵ In Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," at A.D. 475, we find: "Conall Cremthoinn, son of Niall of the Nine Hostages, from whom are sprung the Clann Colmain, and the race of Aedh Slane, died."—Vol. i., p. 149.

⁸⁶ At the year 480, the "Ulster Annals" record the death of Conall mac Cremthainne mac Neill. In a note, Dr. O'Connor observes, that the territory of Tyrconnell derived its name from him. See "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus iv., p. 6, and n. *ibid.* This is incorrect, however, as all Irish genealogists and historians are unanimous in stating, Tyrconnell district derived its name from his brother, Connall Gulban.

⁸⁷ At A.D. 500, the "Annals of Ulster" state, that Carbre, the son of Neill, fought the battle of the White Hill or Chnuc Ailbe against the Leinstermen. See Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus iv., p. 10.

⁸⁸ See "The Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. ix., pp. 121, 122.

⁸⁹ Colgan remarks, that it is doubtful which Conall had been mentioned in the text; whether Conall Gulban, or Conall Cremthainn. He thinks, that the quarrel, here alluded to between Conall and his brother Carpy or Carbre, must have had reference to some extension or arrangement of territory. At this period, Carbre held a tract of country, called after his own name *Carbre*, even to times less remote. It was situated in the province of Connaught, and it lay continuous to the principality of Conall Gulban. He had another tract in the district of Teflia, near the bounds of

Conall Cremthoinn's lands in Meath. Formerly this tract was called Carbre Teflia, to distinguish it from the other.

⁹⁰ On both the foregoing accounts, Carbre could be committed to a quarrel with either Conall; yet, Colgan thinks the dispute in question lay between him and Conall Crimthann, for these reasons. As St. Brigid is supposed to have been born in 453, she was not a nun, and could only have been twelve years of age, at the time of Conall Gulban's death, in 404, while she was an abbess, and distinguished for her miracles, about the year 475, when Conall Crimthann is thought to have died. See "Trias Thaumaturga," Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, n. 38, p. 544.

⁹¹ See the account of this adventure in L. Tacket de Barneval's "Histoire Légendaire de l'Irlande," chap. viii., pp. 77, 78.

⁹² At A.D. 475, the "Annals of Inisfallen"—changing the form of his name—note the demise of McConaille, mac Cremthainne, meic Neill. See Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus ii., p. 3.

⁹³ Again, in the *hiatus*, which supplies the "Annals of Tigernach," as if according with the Four Masters and the "Chronicon Scotorum," at A.D. 475, is noted the death of Conallus Crimthann, son to Niall of the Nine Hostages, from whom the Clan-Colman O'Neills are derived, and the race of Aedh Slane. See p. 116, *ibid.*

⁹⁴ This is said to have been the same Carbre or Carpy, an infidel, who refused to receive baptism, at St. Patrick's hands, and on whom a malediction was pronounced by the Irish Apostle. See William M. Hennessy's translation of the Irish Tripartite Life of St. Patrick, part ii., in Miss M. F. Cusack's "Life of St. Patrick, Apostle of Ireland," p. 396. Yet, he must have repented at a subsequent period—probably he received baptism and became a Christian; as otherwise, it is not likely he would have asked a blessing from St. Brigid.

if they had been most devoted friends.⁹⁵ When this occurrence became fully known, God's holy providence and the fame of St. Brigid, as a peace-maker, were universally extolled.⁹⁶

Again, a legend was in vogue, that on another occasion, when about to invade the country of the Picts,⁹⁷ who often warred with the Britons,⁹⁸ this same Conall, accompanied by his soldiers, bearing their hostile emblems or standards,⁹⁹ came to St. Brigid. He then said: "O Saint of God, we crave your blessing, for we are about to invade distant territories to defeat our enemies." The saint replied: "I entreat the Omnipotent Lord, my God, that, in this instance, you neither inflict injury on any one, nor suffer it yourselves, wherefore lay aside those diabolical emblems." Although she was unable to prevent the war, God was graciously pleased to grant those prayers of the holy virgin. On hearing her words, the hostile bands sailed for the country of the Cruitheni,¹⁰⁰ in the northern part of Britain.¹⁰¹ Then, the Irish invaders thought they had taken possession of a certain entrenched camp or castle,¹⁰² besieged by them, that they had burned it, and had killed many of their enemies, who were beheaded.¹⁰³ Afterwards, the leader and his

⁹⁵ See Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Quinto, pp. 343 to 346.

⁹⁶ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Quarta S. Brigide, lib. ii., cap. xxxvi., p. 555. Also, Vita Tertia S. Brigide, cap. lxvi., p. 534, *ibid.*

⁹⁷ A learned and researchful Scottish writer has observed, that the Pictish period of Caledonian history embraces a course of three hundred and ninety-seven years, viz., from the date of the Roman abdication of the government of North Britain, A.D. 446, to the subversion of the Pictish government, A.D. 843. He adds, "there can be no doubt, that the Picts were Celts, and that they were no other than a part of the race of the ancient Caledonians under another name."—"A History of the Highlands and of the Highland Clans," by James Browne, Esq., LL.D., vol. i., chap. iii., p. 60.

⁹⁸ For nearly forty years after the rule of Constantine III., the Britons languished under a continual war, during the earlier part of the fifth century. See Sir Winston Churchill's "Divi Britannici: being a Remark upon the Lives of all the Kings of this Isle, from the year of the World 2855, unto the year of Grace 1660." Sect. i. Class of Britones. Vortigern, p. 93.

⁹⁹ Extrem to any evidence contained in the ancient Lives of St. Brigid, the Abbate D. Giacomo Certani—who records these incidents—asserts, that the standards were ornamented with the figures of some false Gods, and that they were inscribed with magical characters. See "La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Quinto, pp. 346 to 348.

¹⁰⁰ The Picts were called *Cruithne*, by the ancient Irish, in the idiom of this latter people. They are also called *Cruachna*, being the older Pictish or Celtic race of Scotland. See Daniel Wilson's "Archæ-

ology and Prehistoric Annals of Scotland," part i., chap. iii., p. 59.

¹⁰¹ "The geographical position of the British and Irish coasts sufficiently accounts for frequent intercourse between the natives of Scotland and Ireland from the earliest periods." . . . "The remarkable ancient historical Gaelic poem, generally termed the ALBANIC DUAN, written in its present form in the reign of Malcolm Canmore, about the middle of the eleventh century, thus refers to the first peopling of Scotland and the Irish origin of the northern Picts:—

"Ye learned of all Albin,
Ye wise yellow-haired race,
Learn who was the first
To acquire the districts of Albin.

"Albanus acquired them with his race,
The illustrious son of Isiscon,
Brother to Britus, without treachery,
From him Albin of ships takes its name.

.

"The Cruithne acquired the western region,
After they had come from the plains of Erin:

Seventy noble kings of them
Acquired the Cruithen plains."

—See *ibid.*, part iv., chap. i., p. 468.

¹⁰² A distinguished modern historian has asserted of Scotland: "The country is crowded with hill-fortresses, small and great; they may be counted by hundreds. They consist of mounds of earth or stone, or both, running round the crests of hills." —John Hill Burton's "History of Scotland, from Agricola's Invasion to the Revolution of 1688," vol. i., chap. iii., p. 91.

¹⁰³ See this account in L. Tachet de Barneval's "Histoire Légendaire de l'Irlande," chap. viii., pp. 80, 81.

bands returned to their own country, with great rejoicing and in fancied triumph. According to the legendary account, however, all this turned out to be a complete illusion, and when they had landed at the port for which they were bound in Ireland, it was only then dispelled. This was soon learned from the report of trustworthy messengers. Connell is said to have given praise to God, when he learned that no loss of life had occurred. He resolved on seeing the abbess. When he came to the place where St. Brigid resided,¹⁰⁴ he related all that had happened. Then, he and his forces laid aside their warlike emblems, at St. Brigid's request. She said to Conall: "Because you have renounced these badges at my suggestion, in whatever danger you may be placed, invoke my intercession, and the Almighty will defend you on my account, and you shall be preserved from danger."¹⁰⁵ This promise of the saint was afterwards fulfilled. Some time subsequently, Conall, with a large army, invaded the territories of his enemies, when he obtained a great victory over them.¹⁰⁶ Afterwards, he returned in triumph, towards his own country. When Conall had nearly reached his own dominions, night came on, and he entered a deserted fort or castle, by the way-side. There, his soldiers remarked to him, that they should incur great danger, by remaining so near the haunts of their enemies. These, stealing on them unawares, would be likely to follow, and might kill them while sleeping. The prince replied: "The night is now at hand, and I am fatigued; yet know, that the pious Brigid hath promised she will defend me in every difficulty, whenever I invoke her assistance. I believe, what she hath predicted must infallibly come to pass. On this night, I commend myself and my forces, to God's Divine protection, through her holy invocation." As had been suspected, their enemies stealthily came that night on their track. When his pursuers approached that fort where Connall¹⁰⁷ lay, they sent forward three scouts to examine it.¹⁰⁸ On entering, these only found a great number of persons sitting there, in clerical habits,¹⁰⁹ with a light in the midst, and with books open before them. The soldiers had placed their enemies' heads in that order, now represented by the books, on the perusal of which the clerics seemed intent.¹¹⁰ On returning, his spies told their chiefs what they had seen, and again the leaders despatched three other scouts to return and report the result of their errand. As in the former instance, clerics were seen reading their books. Whereupon, the band of Conall's enemies returned to their homes. On the following day, ambassadors were sent to Conall,¹¹¹ and these asked him for those heads

¹⁰⁴ This might have been at Kildare, if we accept the late period assigned for Conall's death. The "*Annales Buelliani*," at A.D. 487, enter, "*Mors Conaill*." See Dr. O'Connor's "*Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores*," toms ii., p. 3. See, also, John D'Alton's "*History of Ireland and the Annals of Boyle*," vol. ii., p. 72.

¹⁰⁵ See Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "*La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese*." Libro Quinto, pp. 348 to 351.

¹⁰⁶ The place where this victory was gained is not recorded.

¹⁰⁷ In Dr. O'Connor's "*Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores*," toms iv., the "*Annals of Ulster*" relate, at 519, the battle of Betnea, in Drumbadh, or in the hills of Bregia, in which fell Ardgál, son of Conaill, son to Neill. Colga, King of the Easterns, and

Muireheartach Mac Erc were victors. Ardgál was probably son to this Connall; for again, at 522, the battle of Detnea (Conaill Chremhtaine mc Neill) is entered in the "*Ulster Annals*," as if this might be a more correct date. See p. 13.

¹⁰⁸ See "*The Life of St. Brigid*," by an Irish Priest, chap. ix., pp. 117, 118.

¹⁰⁹ D. Giacomo Certani, who relates these adventures, calls those clerics—as in many other such cases—*Canons Regular*. This, however, is but a phantasy of the author. See "*La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita S. Brigida Ibernese*." Libro Quinto, pp. 351 to 354.

¹¹⁰ See L. Tachet de Barneval's "*Histoire Légendaire de l'Irlande*," chap. viii., pp. 81, 82.

¹¹¹ From his great-grandson, Colman the

which he had taken with him, that so they might be interred with the decapitated bodies. On delivering this message, the petitioners obtained their demand, and returned to their chiefs. These learned, afterwards, how Conall and his army had been really in that place, where they remained invisible to their pursuers. The legend of our Saint's Acts relates, that such circumstances, becoming known to the people on either side, caused them to glorify God's name, and to extol that of Brigid.¹¹² Thus, where iniquity and strife abounded, her gentle and charitable soul desired that grace and peace should more abound.

CHAPTER X.

ANCIENT IRISH HOSPITALITY—BISHOP BROON'S VISIT TO ST. BRIGID—THE EIGHT BISHOPS OF TULLACH NA N-ESPUC—HOLY BRIGID'S LOVE FOR THE POOR—HER GENEROUS GOOD NATURE—HER GENTLENESS OF MANNER—ILLUSTRATION OF SUCH CHARACTERISTICS—HER CHAPLAIN, NATFROICH—ST. NINNIDH—ST. CONLEATH APPOINTED BISHOP OF KILDARE.

IN Ireland of the olden time, hospitality was a characteristic of her nobles and of her simple-minded people. Each tribe had its *Biatach*¹ and its affinities;² the stranger and wanderer were welcomed to friendly homes; while the bard tuned his harp, when the generous host held forth his hand to the honoured guest. Should not our great saints then be received with all possible manifestations of respect while on their travels? More temperate than most others, they could partake of wine and metheglin without degeneracy; while, their sources of wealth, like the faith which created it, seemed inexhaustible and bid defiance to prodigality. Kings, with their suite, and even with their army, often sat down at the table of a poor bishop, anchorite or religious, and partook of frugal fare, frequently supplied in a most Providential manner.³

Such was her respect for those men deserving it, that Brigid paid them every mark of attention and politeness; while, her modesty was so great, that she never presumed to look fully on the face of any man.⁴ Yet, she was always joyful, when distinguished bishops came to her home. From a circumstance hereafter related, it may be possible, that St. Brigid was living

Great, the Clan-Colman is derived. See John D'Alton's "History of Ireland, and the Annals of Boyle," vol. ii., p. 72.

¹¹² See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Vita Quarta S. Brigide, lib. ii., cap. xxxvii., xxxviii., pp. 555, 556. Also, Vita Tertia S. Brigide, cap. lxvii., pp. 534, 535, *ibid.*

CHAPTER X.—"The *Biatlach* or *Biatagh* was a public officer, whose duties were to supply the king's household with provisions, to furnish necessaries for the army, and to provide entertainment for travellers. See Dr. O'Brien's "Focaloir-Gaoidhilge-sax-Bhearla, or an Irish-English Dictionary," in v. Also, "Tracts relating to Ireland," printed for the Irish Archaeological Society, vol. ii. "The Statute of Kilkenny," edited by James Hardiman, n. (c), pp. 4, 5.

² In that ancient Irish tract, known as the "*Táin Bó Chuailgne*," or, "The Cattle Prey of Cooley," as found in "The Book of Leinster," class II. 2, 18, T.C.D., we

find allusions to the *biatais* or "purveyors." See Professor Eugene O'Curry's "Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish." Edited by Dr. W. K. Sullivan, vol. iii. Appendix, pp. 438, 442.

³ See the glowing account of L. Tachet de Barneval, in "Histoire Légendaire de l'Irlande," chap. viii., p. 79. He adds: "Quelquefois même un saint voyageur venait au secours de son hôte surpris au dépourvu, et les convives, après un instant d'inquiétude, voyaient les mets et la liqueur renaître au fond des vases, et remonter aux bords des coupes. Alors on bénissait Dieu, et le festin reprenait, plus joyeux et plus chrétien."

⁴ Such is the account contained in her metrical acts:—

"Omnibus illa viris dignos præbebat honores,
Nec tamen ipsa virum in faciem conspexerat ullum."

near the shore of Leinster,⁵ when the following recorded occurrence took place. Holy Bishop Broom, on whose behalf St. Brigid wrought a wonderful miracle, came to visit the illustrious virgin. He brought with him horses, chariots, and a considerable following of attendants.⁶ Approaching the monastery of our saint, night came on darkly around them, and they were exposed to inclement, wintry weather, in the midst of a thick wood.⁷ Having a revelation regarding this circumstance, Brigid said to her virgins: "Let us pray, my daughters, for holy guests, who are approaching us, under great privations, that the Lord may compassionate their labours."⁸ Then Bishop Broom and his companions had a vision of St. Brigid's monastery, and of St. Brigid, with her companions, joyfully setting out to meet them. Our saint immediately led them into a large hall, prepared for their reception. Having taken off their sandals, she washed their feet, and then refreshed them with abundance of meat and drink.⁹ Scotie cups were placed before the strangers.¹⁰ The nuns also took care of their vehicles, as it seemed, and placed beds for them to lie upon, while supplying them with all things necessary for their maintenance. When morning dawned, St. Brigid addressed the nuns¹¹ of her monastery: "Let us go forth to meet Bishop Broom and his companions, straying in a wood during the past night." Then our saint with her virgins went out and soon found their expected guests, sitting down in the forest. The travellers thus learned, that God had wrought a miracle in their favour, on St. Brigid's account; for, they related what happened to them, as if the abbess had been ignorant of it. Afterwards, they gave thanks to God, while joyfully proceeding with His illustrious servant to her monastery.

⁵ Father John Boland, in treating about the other religious establishments of St. Brigid, seems to overlook the statement, that she lived near the maritime part of Leinster. See "Acta Sanctorum," tomus i., Februarii. Commentarius Prævius ad Vitam S. Brigidæ Virginis Scotæ Thaumaturgæ, Kildaricæ et Duni in Hibernia. Sec. V. Kildariense, et alia S. Brigidæ monasteria, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, pp. 105, 106.

⁶ Abbate D. Giacomo Certani, who relates this adventure, makes his attendants Regular Canons, but without any warrant. See "La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida." Libro Sesto, p. 481.

⁷ This adventure is related in the Bollandists' "Acta Sanctorum," tomus i., Februarii. Vita Prima S. Brigidæ. Auctore Anonymo, cap. xiii., p. 130.

⁸ The author of St. Brigid's Fourth Life afterwards adds: "Mira multum, fratres charissimi, dieturus sum vobis," &c. These words seem to indicate, that the Life in question had been intended for monastic spiritual lectures. See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. lviii., p. 559.

⁹ When they arrived at St. Brigid's monastery, it is stated:

"Postquam rite cibo sanctorum membra refecit,
Præsulis et pedibus tepidas asperserat undas
Illa sitim propter post Scotica pocula ponit."

—Vita Sexta S. Brigidæ, § xv., pp. 584, 585, *ibid.* The Scottish or Irish cups here alluded to were probably "methers," of which many specimens are still preserved. In Sir William R. Wilde's "Descriptive Catalogue of the Antiquities of Stone, Earthen and Vegetable Materials in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy," there is an interesting account of ancient methers and drinking vessels, with characteristic illustrations, part i., class iii., pp. 214 to 218. Also part ii., class iv., pp. 264 to 267.

¹⁰ Most probably they were regaled with *mad*, a favourite drink of the ancient Irish, as with the Teutons of Northern Europe. This was quaffed from *methers*, generally modelled from alder wood, crab-tree, sometimes from sycamore or saw-wood. They were quadrangularly formed, at the top, although usually rounded at the bottom. Those who used them drank from the angles. Sometimes two and sometimes four handles are found on specimens yet preserved. See an interesting article "On Methers and other ancient Drinking Vessels," by Thomas Joseph Tenison, J.P., in "The Proceedings and Papers of the Kilkenny and South-east of Ireland Archaeological Society for the year 1860," vol. iii., part i. New Series, pp. 54 to 61.

¹¹ As usual, Abbate D. Giacomo Certani makes them canonesses. His local and modern ideas often lead him astray. See "La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Sesto, p. 483.

St. Brigid had previously gone out to the wood, according to her knowledge of their case. There they supposed themselves enjoying her monastic hospitalities.¹² The holy bishop remained with her for some days. Then, with his people, Broon returned to his own part of the country. On bidding him farewell, St. Brigid bestowed a Chrismal¹³ on the bishop, which he prized as a valuable gift. She was accustomed then to give many rich presents to pilgrims and to the poor. On a certain day, after the foregoing occurrences, while this bishop travelled by the sea-shore,¹⁴ his disciple, who bore St. Brigid's Chrismal,¹⁵ left it behind him, through forgetfulness.¹⁶ Recollecting such omission, he came to the bishop, and told what had occurred, while his eyes were suffused with tears. The holy bishop assured the monk he ought not weep, for the devil should have no power to deprive him of a gift bestowed by St. Brigid. The disciple had left that Chrismal by the shore, near low water-mark. During his absence, the sea-waves passed over it, at full tide. The brother, on his return, saw the sea in this latter condition, and waited for its ebb. At length the waves receded to where the travellers stopped. There he happily found the vessel.¹⁷ The disciple showed his Chrismal to Bishop Broon. Then the latter gave thanks to God and to His holy servant, Brigid.¹⁸

On one occasion, eight bishops¹⁹ came from a church, called Tolach na nEspuc,²⁰ in the territory of Hi-Briun-chualann,²¹ on a visit to St. Brigid.²² She then dwelt near the margin of a lake, thenceforward to be denominated Loch-learnachta.²³ The holy virgin felt rejoiced at the arrival of such a

¹² In the Sixth Metrical Life of our saint, this miraculous occurrence is more poetically described, and with those additional circumstances of the travellers entertaining some illusion, that the night passed by them in the woods seemed to have been spent within the walls of St. Brigid's institution, while her nuns appeared ministering to all their wants.

¹³ See the Bollandists' "Acta Sanctorum," tomus i., Februarii. Vita Prima S. Brigidæ, Virginis, cap. xiii., p. 130.

¹⁴ It is difficult to say, whether this visit of Bishop Broon and his companions was to a convent of St. Brigid, while she was in Westmeath, or in Connaught, at Kildare, or at her place of residence, beside the Irish Sea. The course of his journey by the sea-shore would seem favourable to the latter identification. However, as the occurrence in question took place, after his visit to St. Brigid, Bishop Broon might have been traversing some other and more distant maritime part of Ireland.

¹⁵ It is called "Chrisma," which word has various ecclesiastical applications. It is sometimes used for a Chrismal, or vessel in which the Chrisma or Holy Oil is kept; sometimes for the ciborium, in which the Body of our Lord is placed. But the word has a variety of other meanings, which will be found in Du Cange's "Glossarium Medie et Infimæ Latinitatis," tomus ii., pp. 338 to 340.

¹⁶ The Third Life of our saint states, that it was left on a stone, which lay by the sea-shore.

¹⁷ See Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Sesto, pp. 481 to 488.

¹⁸ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. lviii., lix., lx., p. 559. See also, Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. lxxxv., lxxxvi., p. 538, *ibid.*

¹⁹ In Professor O'Looney's Irish Life of St. Brigid, it is mentioned, that certain pious nobles, viz., the seven bishops of Tealach, in the west (? east) of Leinster, came as guests to the holy abbess. See pp. 37, 38. Afterwards, they are mentioned, as belonging to Uibh Bruin Cualunn, and to Tealach na Nespoc, which was in that territory. See pp. 41, 42.

²⁰ It is Latinized "Collis Episcoporum."

²¹ A sept living here bestowed a name on this territory, which comprised the greater part of Rathdown barony, in the present county of Dublin, with a northern portion of Wicklow county. In O'Clery's Irish Calendar, the churches of Cill-Inghine-Leinin, now Killiney, Tigh-Chonail, now Stagonnell, and Dunmore, were placed within this district. See Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., n. (n), p. 340.

²² Professor O'Looney's Irish Life of St. Brigid affirms, that the bishops found her in a place by the side of Cill Dara, on the north. See pp. 41, 42.

²³ It is difficult to identify this place. A little to the north-west of Kildare, Lough Minane or the Friar's Lough, is noted on the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Kildare," Sheet 22. By Rev.

company of venerable guests, who were probably Chorepiscopi,²⁴ and she went to the cook, named Blathnata,²⁵ to see if this latter had any refreshments provided for their entertainment. Her cook replied, she had not a sufficiency of viands, and especially nothing in the shape of beverage was ready. Such an account caused St. Brigid to experience a momentary confusion; but, recurring to prayer, an angel intimated to her, that her cows should be milked. When this had been effected, these cows gave such a quantity of milk, that all vessels in the place were soon filled. It is even said, the milk flowed in a stream along the ground towards a certain hollow, which was filled with this nourishing fluid. In after-times, that spot received the corresponding Irish name, *Loch-leamnachta*,²⁶ or "the lake of milk."

The situation of Tolach or Tulloch na n-Espoc in Uí Briúin Chualann identifies it with the ancient church of Tullagh, between Loughlinstown and Cabinteely. It gives name to the parish of Tully,²⁷ in the barony of Rathdown, and county of Dublin. On a green eminence, and embosomed among venerable elder trees, thickly interlaced with a few hawthorn and ash trees, are the ruins of its old church. The semi-circular choir-arch, the diminutive proportions of this building, and the rude stone crosses, with other memorials there, bespeak its antiquity.²⁸ One of the crosses stands on the road outside the graveyard;²⁹ the other remains in an opposite field.³⁰ Various stone fragments are scattered around the latter. Owing to these circumstances, it has been inferred, that Tullagh had been one of those sanctuaries or asylums, benevolently intended to protect the penitent or the persecuted, at a time when violence prevailed, and too often frustrated the demands of justice.³¹ The existing remains are a good-sized chancel—25 by 18 feet—to which a corresponding nave had never been built. Judging by the marks on its western wall, the old nave to which it was added measured only 15 feet in width.³² Here are some curiously incised rude stone monuments.³³ The late George V. Du Noyer and Mr. H. Parkinson have drawn and described these objects.³⁴ A pictorial illustration³⁵ of the

John F. Shearman, "*Lough Minane*" is interpreted "the kid's pool."³⁷

²⁴ "The early annalists of Ireland give ordinarily such a representation of the prelates whom we now speak of, and of the functions which these dignitaries administered, as shows, that they regarded these ecclesiastics as really belonging to the episcopal order."—Rev. P. J. Carew's "*Ecclesiastical History of Ireland*," chap. iv., pp. 127, 128.

²⁵ Called also *Blath* or *Flora*. She is honoured with a festival, at the 29th of January.

²⁶ In his additions to *St. Aengus's Martyrology*, at the 1st of February, Charles Maguire relates, the foregoing incidents.

²⁷ It is shown on the "*Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Dublin*," Sheets 22, 23, 25, 26.

²⁸ See John D'Alton's "*History of the County of Dublin*," p. 931.

²⁹ This is of a northern order, and supposed to be a perforated Odin cross, by Ledwich, who is a very poor authority on the subject.

³⁰ This is of the Maltese shape, very tall,

and it bears some carvings in alto-relievo, on one side.

³¹ See John D'Alton's "*History of the County of Dublin*." The author supposes this church to have been originally built by the Danes, and dedicated to their martyr-king St. Olave, who was slain on the 29th of July, A.D. 1030. See pp. 930, 931.

³² "The tops of all the windows have been built up, so that the mouldings cannot be seen; but the mere fact of the windows having round arches internally is not inconsistent with the late date (viz., perhaps after the 12th or 13th century) ascribed above to the church."—Dr. J. A. Purfoy Colles' communication in the "*Journal of the Royal Historical and Archeological Association of Ireland*," A.D. 1870, vol. i., part i. Fourth series, n. i., pp. 210, 211.

³³ Of these two illustrations are given by Dr. J. A. Purfoy Colles. See *ibid.*, p. 210.

³⁴ See "*Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*," vol. viii., p. 61, and vol. x., pp. 340 to 342.

³⁵ This is from a drawing by Bigari, which was in possession of the Right Hon. William Conyngham. It represents the scene par-

old church has been given by Grose,³⁵ with a letterpress account by Ledwich.³⁷ Some of the features represented as existing in the last century have since disappeared.³⁸

To our saint, as to a common centre of gravitation, a crowd of poor and afflicted persons daily resorted, to seek relief in their various necessities ;³⁹



Tullagh Old Church, County Dublin.

some expecting bread, cheese, butter, meal or corn ; others requiring milk or some other kind of liquid ; some asking for linen, wool and coverlids ; as they severally stood in need of these various articles.⁴⁰ And, as works of charity must be performed by persons, who seek the kingdom of God and His justice,⁴¹ so this bounteous virgin, filled with the spirit of Christian magnanimity, could never bear to send the necessitous away unconsoled. Although, she often laboured under an insufficiency, or a total want of means, to give alms ; yet, the Divine riches were copiously showered upon her, in one way or another. The Almighty never refuses His assistance, whenever a sincere and an energetic effort of real charity is exercised, by any of His creatures. This was fully illustrated, on a certain occasion, when a great number of paupers came to our saint, earnestly wishing to procure a draught of beer, which they asked from her in charity. As the legend relates, she had not this beverage, at the time, to assuage their thirst, and as she did not wish to refuse these poor people their request, Brigid thought of

tially denuded of trees, with a fine cross in the foreground.

³⁵ See "Antiquities of Ireland," vol. ., p. 15.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 16.

³⁸ The accompanying original sketch, by Mr. John O'C. Robinson, Blackrock, county of Dublin, was taken in October, 1875, on the spot. It was drawn on the wood, by William F. Wakeman, and engraved by

George A. Hanlon, Dublin.

³⁹ See Surius' "De Præbatis Sanctorum Historiis," Februarii, tomus i. Vita S. Brigidæ, Virginis, p. 808.

⁴⁰ The attributes and characteristics of St. Brigid are expressed in the sixth Metrical Life ; where it is said, that various matters to bestow on the poor seemed as it were to increase under her very look.

⁴¹ St. Matt. vi., 33.

the place, where she might procure it, and how it might be obtained. While her cogitations ran on this subject, she saw, at a little distance, water that had been prepared for baths.⁴² Asking for heavenly assistance, in enabling her to satisfy the expectations of that thirsty flock, she besought the Saviour of the world, who promises every request to those who ask in his name,⁴³ that he would enable her to convert this water into beer; so that her beloved poor should not return more sorrowful than they came, and be disappointed in their petitions and expectations. For hope, often the only solace of miserable persons, had sustained them before their arrival, and as they felt assured their sufferings should be relieved by Brigid, so must a refusal to assist them weigh more heavily on their spirits.⁴⁴ Approaching near that water, the Abbess impressed a sign of the cross on it, and invoking the name of Christ, she blessed it. Then, He, who had formerly changed water into wine, at the marriage feast of Cana, in Galilee,⁴⁵ was pleased, through the merits of his holy servant, to change water into beer, in this present instance. And, as on the former occasion, joy was brought to the hearts of those, who celebrated the nuptials, by procuring that supply of wine, which had been desired; so was St. Brigid rejoiced, when she had been enabled to present the thirsting multitude of poor, with beer instead of water, thus satisfying both their requests and their necessities.⁴⁶ Thus, she seemed never to tire in bestowing largesses on the poor and wretched.

Once it happened, there had been a want of bread, in a place where St. Brigid and her nuns lived. A certain well-disposed and benevolent man,⁴⁷ inhabiting the eastern part of the Liffy's plain, came to our abbess. He requested Brigid to permit some of her daughters to return with him, that they might bring back measures of corn. When the nuns had been loaded with his gift, and had set out on their journey homewards, the Liffy was swollen beyond its banks, to such a degree, that they could not pass over, neither boat nor bridge affording them opportunity. There had been a ford, at the usual place of crossing. This men and animals could wade over, without

⁴² The author of our saint's Fifth Life remarks, *en parentese*, "nam et tunc et modo balneis tam Hiberniensium natio, quam Scotorum frequenter uti solent." Frequent allusions are made to this custom, in the acts of Irish saints, where we are informed, that guests in the monastic institutes, more especially, had baths prepared for their reception. It is likely, moreover, that these baths were much used in private families, at a very early period of our social existence, as a people; and, the Scotch appear to have followed our old Irish practice, in this instance, as in many others. The custom, thus early prevailing, has long survived time's changes; and even among the peasant class of Irish, at this present day, the practice of feet bathing in warm water, before retiring to rest for the night, is a very common one. It is supposed to contribute very much to health and to bodily refreshment, as it undoubtedly does to comfort and to cleanliness.

⁴³ St. Matt. vii., 7.

⁴⁴ In the Second, Third and Fourth Lives of our Saint, the poor, in whose favour the foregoing miracle had been wrought, are

called lepers. See Vita Secunda S. Brigide, cap. ix., p. 519. Vita Tertia S. Brigide, cap. civ., p. 540. Vita Quarta S. Brigide, lib. ii., cap. lxxiii., Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." This and other miraculous occurrences, such as restoring sight to one born blind, &c., are mentioned in her various offices. See "Chronica Generalis Mundi," Petrus de Natalibus, as also various Acts of the saint.

⁴⁵ St. John ii., 1 to 11.

⁴⁶ See, Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Quinta Vita S. Brigide, cap. xxxiv., xxxv., p. 575. Sexta Vita S. Brigide, § v., p. 583. Vita Prima S. Brigide, § 19, p. 516.

⁴⁷ In the Sixth Life this benefactor of St. Brigid is called a noble, and it is said,

"Ille dedit pueris saccos similagine plenos, Virginis ancillas dimisit denique onustas."

From this, it would appear, that the present made to St. Brigid consisted of fine flour, which her nuns carried in sacks. It is probable, those religious were assisted by certain boys, as mentioned, when they set out on their return.

much difficulty, except in time of floods. The nuns then sat down on the river bank, and invoked St. Brigid to aid them, at this juncture. Immediately, they were all transported with their burdens to the opposite bank, through St. Brigid's merits and the power of God; but, removed by what means, or in what manner, remained a secret to them. Coming to their superioress, they related that miracle which had taken place, when the holy abbess told them, to conceal it from the world.⁴⁸ Yet, a knowledge of this wonderful incident could not be suppressed, because others heard about it, before Brigid had issued her mandate.⁴⁹

One day, a certain bishop, with a large retinue, visited the abbess. She was unprovided, at the time, with means necessary to afford refreshment for such a large number of persons. The Almighty, however, miraculously and instantaneously supplied her with food, sufficient for the refectory of her guests. In like manner, on the same day, two other bishops arrived, at different hours. Those prelates were unexpected visitors to our saint. Still refreshment was found wondrously provided for their wants.⁵⁰ The saintly abbess had a cow, which gave an incredible quantity of milk. A certain avaricious man entreated her to make him a present of that animal. With this request, Brigid is said to have complied. But, before the man had driven the cow to his lands, she gave no more milk than was customary, with other animals of her class. Afterwards, a generous man bestowed another cow for Brigid's use. Through a special permission of Providence, this beast proved equal to the former, in giving a copious supply of milk.⁵¹

At another time, a woman came to St. Brigid, saying: "O mother, what shall I do, regarding this son of mine? For, he is almost an abortion, being blind from his birth, and having a tabulated face."⁵² Hence, his father wished to deprive him of life." Compassionating the distress of this woman, Brigid ordered the child's face to be washed in water that was near. Then, all former blemishes were removed, the Almighty restoring him, through St. Brigid's merits. This boy was called Cretanus or Crimthann,⁵³ and he lived for a long time, after the removal of his deformity.⁵⁴

The following incidents are alluded to, in many of our saint's acts. A certain necessity required St. Brigid's presence, in one of her fields, and in connection with the interests of her institution. Knowing the boundless liberality of the saint, a young man, addicted to pleasantries, resolved to play off a joke at her expense, by obtaining under false pretences one of her sheep, that grazed on the pastures around; although rich, and having no

⁴⁸ See Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Sesto, pp. 502 to 504.

⁴⁹ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. lxx., p. 560. Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. xcviii., p. 539, *ibid.* See, also, Vita Sexta S. Brigidæ, sec. lx., p. 594, *ibid.*

⁵⁰ See the Bollandists' "Acta Sanctorum," tomus i., Februarii. Vita iv. S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. x., p. 169.

⁵¹ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. lxx., p. 560. Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. ci., p. 540, *ibid.* In this latter life, the miraculous supply of milk is said to have occurred, in consequence of the arrival of three bishops and their companions, most probably those guests, already mentioned in the Fourth

Life. In the Third Life, there is no mention about the second cow given to St. Brigid.

⁵² Colgan explains the expressions, "tabulatam faciem," to mean a face, plain like the surface of a table, having all its parts of equal prominence, and of featureless deformity; hence, deprived of those various organs of sense, to be found in more regularly formed features.

⁵³ In the Third Life, he is called Cretanus, and of him it is very unintelligibly said, "quem affirmant usque ad mortem dolorem oculorum habuisse, sed tum sanos oculos semper habebat."

⁵⁴ See, Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. lxxi., p. 560. Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. cii., and n. 49, pp. 540, 545, *ibid.*

real necessity to appear otherwise, he assumed the garments and disguise of a pauper.⁵⁵ Appearing to sustain upon a staff his limbs, tottering with pretended infirmity and want, he approached the holy abbess. His steps seemed unsteady, while drawing deep sighs, and with a voice broken and resumed only at intervals, he entreated that one sheep from her flock should be given to him. An appeal of the kind was seldom made in vain to St. Brigid; the looks, gestures, and habit of the petitioner, inducing an opinion of his extreme poverty. His request was complied with, and a sheep was given, which he conveyed to a suitable hiding-place. Encouraged by the success of this sportive experiment, he returned again, in another assumed disguise and habit. Again, he pleaded want of means and health; and, again he received a sheep from the abbess. This he accepted with expressions of thanks, and removed it, to that place, in which he had left the other animal. This trick was repeated, no less than seven different times, and with like success. But, God would not permit His holy servant to suffer any loss, owing to her charitable credulity, nor would he allow the young man to derive any advantage, from his cunning deception. Those, who knew that St. Brigid had already lessened her flock by seven sheep, were surprised to find the original number of animals, when counted in the evening. So boundless was her large-hearted charity, that it was often almost indiscriminating. Those sheep, which had been hidden by the young man, were not found in their place of concealment, when it was examined;⁵⁶ so that the jest, he practised upon the saint, redounded to his own confusion and ridicule.⁵⁷ His day's futile labour and his falsely-assumed characters were made a subject for pleasantry, and directed by his acquaintances against himself. This gave him more annoyance than the loss of those animals he had surreptitiously acquired, in the hope of creating some merriment in the neighbourhood.⁵⁸

The illustrious *religiuse* exercised a mysterious sway over wild beasts of the forest, and birds of the air.⁵⁹ The following circumstance is attributed to the all-subduing influences of the gentle lady's virtues, and it is commended by Cogitosus to the attention of his brethren, for whose special edification the Acts of holy Brigid had been composed. To show how even irrational animals became subject to her will and words, while remaining tame and domesticated, he instances a wild boar, affrighted by his pursuers, that fled from the woods. At last, that boar joined a herd of swine, belonging to St. Brigid. Finding him among her own animals, with her blessing the saint caused him to remain there in security, and he became perfectly domesticated.⁶⁰ One day, Brigid saw some wild ducks swimming in a river, and

⁵⁵ In Professor O'Looney's Irish Life of St. Brigid—where this story is noticed—this deceiver is called a thief. See pp. 41, 42.

⁵⁶ The matter is thus briefly related, in the First Metrical Life; according to the Latin version:

“Vir importunus, qui postulavit
A Brigida propter amorem Domini,
Accepit septem verveces ab ea:
Nee grex inde fuit diminutus.”

—Vita Prima S. Brigidæ, § 18, p. 516. Colgan's “Trias Thaumaturga.” It is in like manner mentioned, in Vita Secunda S. Brigidæ, cap. viii., p. 519. Tertia Vita S. Brigidæ, cap. ciii., p. 540. Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. lxxii., p. 560, *ibid.*

⁵⁷ See the foregoing account in Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's “La Santità Prodigiola.” Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese. Libro Sesto, pp. 504 to 507.

⁵⁸ Such is the detailed narrative, as furnished in the Vita Quinta S. Brigidæ, cap. xlii., p. 577. Colgan's “Trias Thaumaturga.”

⁵⁹ This is alluded to, in the Bollandists' “Acta Sanctorum,” tomus i., Februarii. Vita ii., cap. iv.

⁶⁰ See Colgan's “Trias Thaumaturga.” Vita Secunda S. Brigidæ, cap. xix., p. 520. Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. cix., p. 540. Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. lxxiv., p. 560. This circumstance is thus recorded in the First Metrical Life, according to the Latin version:

occasionally flying through the air.⁶¹ These fowl she collected around her, in great numbers; for, they flocked towards her, without any apparent apprehension of danger, when they heard this holy virgin's gentle voice calling them. For some time, our saint caressed them, and covered them with her hand; afterwards she allowed their return to their feathered companions.²

By her extraordinary practices of piety, Divine power was manifested through her, in the following instance.⁶³ There was a certain very strong man, named Ligid, who is said to have had the physical strength of twelve ordinary men, while his appetite for food was proportionately excessive. Ligid asked St. Brigid to petition God in his behalf, that his appetite might be restrained within reasonable bounds, while yet he might retain his bodily strength. The saint complied with his request, and gave him her blessing.⁶⁴ Afterwards, this Ligid⁶⁵ was content with a quantity of food usually necessary for the support of an ordinary man, while his strength⁶⁶ continued equal to the united bodily prowess of twelve labourers.⁶⁷

After St. Brigid came to her own city, certain religious men visited her, and preached the Divine Word, in her presence. Afterwards, the abbess told her cellarer or store-keeper⁶⁸ to prepare a dinner for her pious guests. Asking what kind of a meal should be prepared, she was told by Brigid, to set different dishes before them.⁶⁹ But, as the store-keeper had not means for complying with our saint's mandate, she requested the abbess to retire to the church and to pray there, trusting the result to Divine Providence. As already remarked, such had been the boundless charity of Brigid, that she immediately distributed to those in need, whatever the Almighty bestowed on her. Well knowing the real state of affairs, the abbess told her store-

"Aper solebat venire in ejus gregem,
Versus Aquilonem, ubi est vallis nunc:
Quem Brigida baculo benedixit;
At cum grege jugiter permansit."

—Vita Prima S. Brigidæ, sec. xxix., p. 516.
This miracle is alluded to in our saint's offices.

⁶¹ Abbate D. Giacomo Certani, who relates this incident, states, that over these animals, St. Brigid exercised as absolute a dominion as could our first parents have practised in their terrestrial Paradise. See "La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Sesto, pp. 516, 517.

⁶² See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. xcii., p. 562. Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cxxvii., p. 541. This miracle seems the one alluded to, in the First Life, as related in the following Latin lines:

"Clarum est in ejus gestis,
Quod singularis mater fuerit filii Regis
magni (*id est*, Dei),
Benedixit avem volatilem,
Ita ut eam apprehenderit sua manu."

—Vita Prima S. Brigidæ, sec. xxxiii., p. 517. Also Vita Secunda S. Brigidæ, cap. xxii., p. 521.

⁶³ So are we informed by Cogitosus.

⁶⁴ See the account in Abbate D. Giacomo

Certani's "La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Sesto, pp. 513, 514.

⁶⁵ Surius, concealing the name of Ligid, briefly relates this miracle, in "De Probatis Sanctorum Historiis," &c., tomus i., Februar. Vita S. Brigidæ, Virginis, p. 809.

⁶⁶ By Abbate D. Giacomo Certani, he is called "vn Sansone Ibernese."

⁶⁷ See, Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Secunda S. Brigidæ, cap. xxiv., p. 521. Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. cx., p. 540. Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. lxxv., p. 560. In the First Metrical Life, this miracle is thus introduced:

"Quantas fecerit virtutes,
Nullus est qui referre posset plene.
Præclarum qualiter minuerit edacitatem
Lugadii
Pugilis, et ejus non extinxit vires."

—Vita Prima S. Brigidæ, sec. 34, p. 517.

⁶⁸ In the Fourth Life of our saint, she is called, "Cellaria," and in the Third "Coqua." These and similar incidental notices, in the legends of our saints, serve to give us an idea, regarding various officials connected with ancient monasteries and nunneries, or relating to their domestic economy.

⁶⁹ In the Third Life, we read, that Brigid said to her, "Give them bread and butter, with several dishes of meat and onions."

keeper to go into the cellar, and to mark it with a sign of the cross, to close it, and on her return to pray, while herself entered the church.⁷⁰ About the sixth hour,⁷¹ the abbess called her store-keeper⁷² and said, "The time for waiting on our guests has arrived; go now to the cellar,⁷³ and liberally give them, whatsoever you may find there." Opening it, the store-keeper found in the cellar all those different kinds of food, mentioned by St. Brigid. And these various viands lasted during seven entire days, serving as refreshments, not only for the guests, but even for the whole religious community, as also for the poor.⁷⁴ At that time, no persons living in the nunnery, save only the abbess and her store-keeper, knew whence came those provisions, nor who had provided them.⁷⁵ A knowledge of this miraculous occurrence remained among the secrets of Divine Omnipotence.⁷⁶

It is said, our saint was at a certain place, where there were many rivulets, yet unprovided with water-herbs,⁷⁷ that usually grow in a natural state on streams supplied by fountains.⁷⁸ While there, a band of holy virgins, belonging to the place, came to visit and to ask her a question. They say to her: "Why, O mother, do not the water-herbs,⁷⁹ on which holy men are accustomed to live, grow in those waters?"⁸⁰ The holy abbess, knowing that they desired a growth of such herbs there, spent the following night in vigil and prayer.⁸¹ On rising the succeeding morning, those religious found

⁷⁰ In the Third Life, the account runs a little differently, as follows: Brigid said to the cook, "sweep the kitchen pavement, close the cook-house; then go to thine own house, and pray in it; I will go to the church." This shows, that the inmates of St. Brigid's establishment lived in separate houses or cells, probably grouped together around the church—the usual ancient Irish monastic arrangement.

⁷¹ From the manner, in which this is related, it would seem, the sixth hour was the time usually set apart for the dinner of these guests; perhaps, too, it was the hour for the conventual meal.

⁷² So called in the Fourth Life of our saint, but designated "the cook" in the Third Life.

⁷³ In the Fourth Life, we read that she was directed to this place, but in the Third Life, she was ordered to the cook-house or kitchen.

⁷⁴ From this narrative and in similar accounts, we may well infer, how large and bountiful were the distributions of food, made to the destitute, in our early monastic institutes.

⁷⁵ This miracle is recorded in Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "*La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese.*" Libro Quinto, pp. 417 to 419.

⁷⁶ See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga.*" Vita Quarta S. Brigide, lib. ii., cap. lv., p. 558. Vita Tertia S. Brigide, cap. lxxxii., p. 537, *ibid.* Vita Sexta S. Brigide, sect. alix., p. 593, *ibid.*

⁷⁷ Most probably, these herbs were of the species, known as "water cresses." The Fourth Life of our saint adds, that many saints who were accustomed to fast with extreme rigour in the western parts, usually

fed on such herbs. And in the Sixth Life, it is said, that these holy men,

"*Frigida cum crispis subebant pocula et herbis.*"

⁷⁸ In the beautiful lines of John Fraser on "The Holy Wells," we have the following appropriate allusions:—

"The cottage hearth, the convent wall, the battlemented tower,
Grew up around the crystal springs, as well as flag and flower;
The brookline and the water-cress were evidence of health,
Abiding in those basins, free to poverty and wealth."

—Edward Hayes' "*Ballads of Ireland*," vol. i., p. 7.

⁷⁹ See Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "*La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese.*" Libro Quinto, pp. 419 to 421. There these herbs are called "*Cauoli Acquatici*," in the Italian language.

⁸⁰ In reference to the different species of herbs, mentioned in the Fourth Life of our saint, Colgan endeavours to explain their nature in a note. "*Per Brisia videtur intelligere genus aquatici oleris, quod Hibernice dicitur Biorar & Latine anasturtium aquaticum, quo passim Eremitæ istius temporis & Patriæ vesciebantur: per Sampsia, quid intelligat, nescio, nisi forte herbam quam Latini vocant sampsychem, & aliis nominibus vocatur amaricis & maiorana; vel aliam, quam Hiberni vocant Samhadh, Latini vero, accosant.*"—N 10, p. 506.

⁸¹ See the Bollandists' "*Acta Sanctorum*," tomus i., Februarii. Vita Quarta S. Brigide, lib. ii., cap. viii., p. 107.

the rivulets filled with such herbs,⁸² while others grew for a considerable distance around, and where they had not hitherto been seen. This abundant growth of water-cresses⁸³ was granted by God to St. Brigid's prayers.⁸⁴ The fame of our glorious virgin had already extended to very distant places. Certain men, wishing to recommend themselves to her good offices, came from afar, and brought with them many presents on horses and in waggons.⁸⁵ But, on that day, when they expected to have arrived, those travellers entered thick woods, where night fell upon them. So dark were its shades, that their waggons could not be driven through the forest, and they went astray in an unknown place. However, the holy Brigid had some prophetic intuition regarding their distress. Praying to God for them, she told her nuns to kindle a fire, and to warm some water, that the feet of guests she expected this night might be washed. Her nuns wondered at her saying, that men were journeying through the darkness on this particular night. Meanwhile, a great light appeared to the travellers. Its glow illuminated their path, until they arrived at St. Brigid's monastery.⁸⁶ The holy virgin went out to meet them, when all gave thanks to God. Having accomplished the object of their visit, and after staying three days, the travellers resumed their return journey, by that same road they had previously traversed. Such was the roughness or intricacy of their passage, that they had much difficulty, even in the day-time, to draw their empty waggons along.⁸⁷ Yet, on account of St. Brigid's prayers, Christ himself caused the rough places to become smooth, on the night of their journey, while miraculous light guided them on the way.⁸⁸ This incident reads very much like that previously related regarding Bishop Broon and his companions.

Previous to the residence of a bishop at Kildare, a priest, named Natfroich,⁸⁹ was charged with the performance of clerical duties for the religious inmates of the nunnery. He became St. Brigid's frequent and confidential companion. He was accustomed to read passages from some religious book, whenever the community assembled at their meals. From such circumstances, which are recorded in different lives of our saint, it is quite probable, that this priest was spiritual director of the abbess and of her nuns; and, we are told, that he remained with the holy woman, during his whole lifetime. Natfroich, after his ordination, became chaplain to St. Brigid and to her nuns,

⁸² The Fourth Life has it, that the rivulets were "supra modum illis oleribus plenos, i.e., Brisia et cæteris oleribus abundantes."

⁸³ The water-cress, which grows in our brooks and rivulets, is a well-known aquatic plant, and it forms an excellent and a wholesome salad. Its flowers are white, and they appear in July. See James Townsend Mackay's "Flora Hibernica, comprising the flowering Plants Ferns Characæ Musci Hepaticæ Lichenses and Algæ of Ireland arranged according to the natural system, with a synopsis of the Genera, according to the Linnæan System." Vasculares. Class 1. Sub-class 1. Order 6, pp. 17, 18. Dublin, 1836, 8vo.

⁸⁴ The writer of the Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. lvi., p. 558, adds, that there herbs of the same species did not fail to grow in his time through the blessing of God and of St. Brigid. See also, Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. lxxiii., p. 537. Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." This

miracle is also mentioned in the Vita Sexta S. Brigidæ, section 1., p. 593, *ibid.* In this latter, it is said, she cured many lepers and sick, as also blind and lame persons.

⁸⁵ See the Bollandists' "Acta Sanctorum," tomus i., Februarii. Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. viii., p. 168.

⁸⁶ The Third Life says, that it appeared only to the chief man, among these travellers. In her Sixth Life, he is called "præsul venerabilis," or a "venerable bishop."

⁸⁷ See this narrative also set forth in Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Quinto, pp. 421 to 424.

⁸⁸ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. lvii., pp. 158, 159. Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. lxxiv., pp. 537, 538, *ibid.*

⁸⁹ See an account of this saint at the 11th of December, the date set down for his feast.

for whom he often read the Holy Scriptures and other pious books. By appointment of St. Patrick, he attended on her during her travels, while he frequently acted in the capacity of charioteer. Being thus engaged, the following recorded incident took place.⁵⁰ On a certain day, when the presence of our saint was necessary, at a great congregation, she proceeded to the spot in a chariot, drawn by two horses.⁵¹ We are told, in St. Brigid's Third Life, that the abbess—most probably on this occasion—was proceeding to the plain of the Liffy, and that another holy virgin sat with her, in the chariot. The charioteer, who was with them, had been desired to instruct his travelling companions.⁵² The better to make himself heard, he turned his head over his shoulder. Then said the abbess, "Turn round that we may hear better, and throw down the reins." So her chaplain cast the reins over the front of the chariot, and addressed his discourse to them, with his back to the horses. One of these slipped its neck from the yoke, and ran free; yet, so engrossed were Bridget and her companion, in the sermon of the priestly charioteer, they did not observe that the horse was loose, and that the carriage was running all on one side.⁵³ This happened at the edge of a very dangerous precipice. The King of Leinster is said to have witnessed the whole occurrence,⁵⁴ from a high hill.⁵⁵ Although at a distance, he knew St. Brigid's chariot.⁵⁶ Finally, breaking his traces, the animal ran through the adjoining fields, in an affrighted manner. By a manifest interposition of Divine Providence, however, the saint escaped danger, and she continued her journey with one horse; another account informs us, the other horse got once more into the traces.⁵⁷ The saint safely reached the place for assembly. Here, Brigid exhorted the people, by pious admonitions; while the rumour of her danger and subsequent escape having reached them, the minds of all present were filled with admiration and rejoicing.⁵⁸

Her prescience and spirit of prophecy were among the most remarkable gifts of the abbess. On a certain day, when the glorious Brigid went from her monastery, in the Liffy plains, towards a place some little distance removed from it, in a easterly direction, a young student, who was the son of Ethach,⁵⁹ and from a country called Mulus,⁶⁰ met her on the way. When he saw our saint, this student began to race, with all the giddiness and vivacity of a school-boy. St. Brigid told one of her nuns to call him towards her, but scarcely could this youth, named Ninnid, be induced to approach

⁵⁰ See Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Quarto, pp. 287 to 290.

⁵¹ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Secunda S. Brigidae, cap. xviii., p. 520. Also "Vita Prima S. Brigidae," sec. 28, p. 516, *ibid.*

⁵² See "Vita Tertia S. Brigidae," cap. lii., p. 532, *ibid.*

⁵³ See Rev. S. Baring-Gould's "Lives of the Saints," vol. ii., 1 February, p. 18.

⁵⁴ See "Quarta Vita S. Brigidae," lib. ii., cap. xxi., pp. 552, 553. Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga."

⁵⁵ Probably from one of those eminences, now known as "the Red Hills of Kildare."

⁵⁶ See the Bollandists' "Acta Sanctorum," tomus i., Februarii. Vita Quarta S. Brigidae, lib. ii., cap. iii., p. 162.

⁵⁷ According to the Third Life.

⁵⁸ In the Sixth Metrical Life, it is said,

that St. Conlaid had first paid her a visit. Then follows an account, concerning the saint's journey in her chariot, accompanied by some of her companions. It is added, that the miracle occurred on the return of St. Brigid to her establishment, after having visited the house of a certain holy virgin. See "Vita Sexta S. Brigidae," secs. xliii., xlii., pp. 591, 592. "Trias Thaumaturga."

⁵⁹ The Abbate D. Giacomo Certani writes: "Hebbe costui per Padre Eocadio, ò vero Eutichio, come alcuni scriuono, che fu Figliuolo d'Aido vno de Figliuoli di Liogario."—"La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Sesto, p. 489.

⁶⁰ Colgan observes in a note, that there is an island in Albanian Scotia, which is called Mule or Mula. Ninnidius spent some time in Britain. Perhaps, he dwelt there as a permanent resident, and may be properly designated as "de partibus Muli."

the abbess. When he did, however, she asked him, whither he was running, in such haste. He immediately replied: "It is my duty to enter the kingdom of heaven, and towards that I ran." The abbess said: "Would that I were worthy to run with you this day towards God's kingdom, but pray for me, brother, that I may enter that realm of bliss."¹⁰¹ The scholar returned: "O saint, do you in like manner entreat the Almighty, that my course towards the heavenly kingdom be a constant one. In requital, I will pray for you, with many other persons, that you may attain immortal happiness." Then, St. Brigid prayed for him. Ninnid became filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, and he performed penance. This youth was a son to Ethach, and he was from the country, called Mulus. He then began and continued to be a religious person to the very date of his death.¹⁰² He is ranked, also, among the most distinguished of our Irish saints.¹⁰³

To this young student, St. Brigid then said: "On the day of my death, I shall receive Communion of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, from thy hand." St. Ninnidius replied: "Would that thou couldst live until thou receivest Holy Eucharist from me." These words he spoke, because he wished at this time to become a pilgrim. For a long time, he desired to be absent, so that he might not soon again see the saint, and that she might live to an extreme old age. Probably, on some subsequent occasion, mutually bestowing a blessing on each other, and commending themselves respectively to God, with words of religious wisdom, they separated, each of them taking a different destination. From the day Brigid spoke to him, Nennid wished to preserve from defilement that hand, which she had predicted should minister to her the august Viaticum on the day of her death. Hence, we are told, he put on it a close-fitting brass gauntlet, secured with a lock and key, so that his hand should not be able to touch his body, nor be touched by any unclean thing. Thence, his cognomen was derived; for, in the Scotie dialect he was called, *Ninnidh lamglan*,¹⁰⁴ which in English is interpreted, "Ninnidius of the clean hand." Afterwards, the great Father of our Irish Church caused him to be ordained, although he was humbly reluctant to assume the sacerdotal office,¹⁰⁵ lest he might be called a great priest, according to the inspired writings.¹⁰⁶ This Ninnidius sailed over to the country of the Britons, wishing to become an exile from Ireland, for a long period, as he knew St. Brigid's prediction must be fulfilled.¹⁰⁷ When Ninnidius entered the ship, he is said to have cast the key

¹⁰¹ See the whole of this account in the Bollandists' "Acta Sanctorum," tomus i., Februarii. Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, cap. ix.

¹⁰² See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. lxi., p. 559. Also, Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. lxxviii., p. 537, *ibid*.

¹⁰³ In a note to this latter Life, Colgan adds, he was the same St. Nennius or Nennidius, whose Acts he published at the 18th of January in "Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ," xviii. Januarii. See Vita S. Nennidhii, seu Nennii, pp. 111 to 115.

¹⁰⁴ Colgan refers us to notes, which were appended to St. Nennidius' Acts, at the 18th of January, for certain observations on this derivation. The Latin form of his name is *Nennidius manus munde*. See "Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ," xviii. Janu-

arii. Vita S. Nennidhii, n. 17, p. 115.

¹⁰⁵ The meaning must be, that this humble diffidence, regarding the responsibilities attached to his sacred calling, caused Nennidius to hesitate at first, until the persuasions of pious persons and his own sense of a Divine call induced him no longer to resist heaven's designs in his vocation.

¹⁰⁶ Allusion is probably made to Ecclesiasticus, xlv., 15.

¹⁰⁷ The Abbate D. Giacomo Certani, with much circumlocution, has an account of the foregoing and many extraneous circumstances, in "La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Sesto, pp. 488 to 502.

¹⁰⁸ This narrative ends with an account, that the miracles and incidents of Ninnid's closing years were to be found in an old Life of him which had been written. See Vita

of his manacled hand into the deep, that it might not be recovered again for any accomplishment of its purpose.¹⁰⁸ But, as the Scripture declares, no wisdom or prudence or counsel can oppose the Almighty's designs. And so the event is said to have accorded with St. Brigid's prediction.¹⁰⁹ However, it must be observed, that some of the foregoing circumstances are manifestly the concoction of legend-mongers, and are inconsistent with a supposition, that Ninnidh could have efficiently discharged the duties of his priesthood under the conditions, which have been related.

As the Abbess Brigid's establishment increased in importance, the city of Kildare grew, likewise, in a corresponding ratio. Revolving in mind a necessity that appeared to exist, for the residence of a bishop there, to obtain the object of her desires, our saint made application to some of the Irish prelates. Her petitions appear to have been favourably received, for, she had the nomination of Kildare's first bishop;¹¹⁰ a privilege, which the other prelates might have allowed, on account of her exalted merits, and those services which she had rendered to religion in that portion of the province, where she presided in her capacity of abbess.¹¹¹ It is stated, also, that the bishop appointed, in conjunction with herself, exercised jurisdiction over all houses of her order, throughout Ireland. Some difficulties exist, in supposing the Bishop of Kildare to exercise jurisdiction over nuns, living outside his immediate bishopric; for, although named Archbishop of the Irish Bishops,¹¹² yet, it is also well known, that the Irish Primacy had never been transferred from Armagh to Kildare. With her usual discrimination, the person, selected by Brigid to assume the episcopacy, was a holy man, named Conleath.¹¹³ He lived the life of a cellule recluse, in the southern part of the Liffey plain. At what particular period this consecration of Conleath took place, we have no means for determining;¹¹⁴ yet, we must suppose, some years had elapsed, from the establishment of the community at Kildare, before its erection into a see, and the consequent appointment of a bishop.¹¹⁵

That St. Brigid exercised a certain degree of jurisdiction over the Bishop of Kildare who was her contemporary,¹¹⁶ and that the abbesses, who were her successors, retained such jurisdiction over the abbots and bishops of the see, have been supposed. This state of affairs, however, is so repugnant to the spirit of church discipline, in all ages, and even unsupported by any reliable authorities, on the subject, that we can have no hesitation in rejecting such supposition. We rather prefer coinciding with an explanation offered,¹¹⁷

Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. lxii., lxiii., pp. 559, 560. Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Also n. 18, p. 566, *ibid*.

¹⁰⁹ In the Fifth Life of St. Brigid, an account given, regarding the foregoing incidents, is somewhat different, and interpolated, it would appear, with observations and interpretations, not found in more ancient authorities. It is there said, that Ninnidh exiled himself, at the request of St. Brigid; that he went to Rome to visit the shrines of the holy Apostles; and, that he spent four years as a pilgrim, when he was warned by an angel of God to return into Ireland. This order he is said to have obeyed, finding St. Brigid, at the point of death, on his arrival. Soon after, giving her Communion, the holy priest himself was gathered to his fathers. See Quinta Vita S. Brigidæ, cap. lvii., lviii., pp. 581, 582, *ibid*.

¹¹⁰ As Cogitosus remarks,

¹¹¹ See Rev. M. J. Brennan's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," chap. iii., p. 51.

¹¹² "Archiepiscopus Hiberniensium Episcoporum." — Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Secunda Vita S. Brigidæ. Prologus, p. 518.

¹¹³ See his Life at the 3rd of May.

¹¹⁴ In the "Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, it is stated, this event took place, about the year 490, and probably in the Church of Kildare. See chap. vi., p. 74.

¹¹⁵ See the Italian "Breviarium Gienensis," lect. ii., where it is said, Bishop Conleath was appointed by her to consecrate churches, he having been taken from the desert.

¹¹⁶ This is an opinion, entertained by Colgan.

¹¹⁷ By Dr. Lanigan.

¹¹⁸ By Cogitosus.

to account for this presumed anomaly. It has been conjectured—and with every appearance of credibility—that, as the church of Kildare had been built from funds supplied by the monastery, and as its community, besides holding possession of a proprietary right and title, appears to have been at the expense of providing requisites for religious worship; it is only reasonable to imagine, that the church, which was used as a cathedral, had been under joint management both of the bishop and of the abbess. And this supposition is furthermore confirmed, by what is related in *St. Brigid's Life*¹¹⁸ where we read, that she bestowed some very costly vestments¹¹⁹ which were used by Conleath on the festivals of our Lord, and on those of the Apostles, while engaged offering up the Divine Mysteries.¹²⁰ It is almost certain, however, that our saint, on account of her singular prerogatives and virtues, exercised a special jurisdiction, and enjoyed an extraordinary pre-eminence, over all the religious women of her day in Ireland.¹²¹ Not only Cogitosus, but several other writers, will be found, applying epithets to St. Brigid, which indicate her exalted station and superiority,¹²² at least in some correlative sense. Thus, as the representative of Irish female religious, St. Brigid ranks foremost;¹²³ as St. Columkille represents the highest order of male monachism, and as St. Patrick crowns the hierarchy; so these sacred three are united in popular veneration and in a supreme degree.

CHAPTER XI.

ST. BRIGID'S BENIGNITY AND PRUDENCE—REWARDS MIRACULOUSLY BESTOWED ON THE POOR AND ON HER ENTERTAINERS—ST. HINNA—MIRACULOUS OCCURRENCES—ST. DARIA'S SIGHT PARTIALLY RESTORED—FAITH IN ST. BRIGID'S INTERCESSION JUSTIFIED.

THE benignant Brigid regarded her religious daughters and her pupils with true affection; the servants and labourers, about her establishment, she indulged as members of her own family.¹ Seldom when correcting faults did she use terms of reproach; but, always considering the most practical means for removing evil to be the healing of a sinner's soul, her action was deemed more important than even her charitable direction or advice. She knew

¹¹⁹ See Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Sesto, p. 539.

¹²⁰ "Nam vestimenta transmarina et peregrina Episcopi Conleath decorati luminis, quibus, solemnitatibus Domini, et vigiliis Apostolorum sacra in altaribus offerens mysteria utebatur, pauperibus largita est."—Cogitosus or Secunda Vita S. Brigidæ, cap. xxix., p. 522. Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga."

¹²¹ In the "Breviarium Giennensis," it is said, from all the provinces of Ireland, that a great multitude flocked to her monastery, "quod est caput pene Hiberniensium Ecclesiarum, id est, Scotorum." Again: "Et ipsa puellarum mater extitit, ut amborum meritis Hiberniensis insula Christo devotissime serviret," lect. i., iii. See *ibid.* Appendix Prima ad Acta S. Brigidæ, p. 601.

¹²² See *ibid.*, Cogitosus or Secunda Vita S. Brigidæ. In Prologo, and in cap. xxxvi., pp. 518, 524. The Bishop of Ossory, in his "Dissertation on St. Brigid," has similar remarks, in the commencement of his treatise, p. 1. See Appendix Secunda ad Acta S. Brigidæ, sec. xxxix., p. 608, *ibid.*

¹²³ According to David Roth.

CHAPTER XI.—¹ Such is the account as furnished by the metrical panegyrist, in these lines :—

"Qualis erat pueris, famulis, hæc ipsa puellis
Talis amore pio cunctis pulcherrima virgo
Pauperibus fuerat et miseris, larga pupillis."

Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Sexta Vita S. Brigidæ, sec. v., p. 583.

how to compassionate the weakness of others.² She sought to repair imprudence and crime, without causing scandal or exposing the delinquent. An instance of such thoughtful interposition occurs, in the case of a certain young person, bound by a religious vow.³ The result was a reward for that merciful interference; as the person became penitent.⁴ And, because all things are rendered possible, on the ground of unwavering faith,⁵ so was the life of St. Brigid daily illustrated by miracles. Thus, as various poor and infirm creatures visited her, to have their several wants supplied, it happened on one occasion, that she afforded relief to a person, who required the useful condiment of salt, which was procured in a supernatural manner.⁶

The following two miraculous incidents, attributed to our saint, are thus related.⁷ While her mind was elevated to the contemplation of heavenly subjects, as was her frequent habit, the things of earth were altogether forgotten. Such being the case, on a certain occasion, and most probably while engaged about some culinary affairs, a dog removed a large piece of bacon. When sought, this was not to be found, in its usual storing place; but, after a month had expired, it was discovered, whole and untouched, in the kennel. That dog durst not eat this food, belonging to Brigid, and his natural appetite, for so long a period, seemed restrained by some wonderful and inexplicable intervention.⁸ In season and out of season, St. Brigid's bounty had been taxed by the importunities of poor persons, and her charities seemed exhaustless, while the fame of her miracles still caused many destitute persons to approach her every day. Among these, a poor person, in need of alms, had been sent by the saint to her servants, who were engaged in cooking flesh-meat. Our saint directed that immediate relief should be given to the applicant. While herself was present, one of holy Brigid's servants, engaged in cooking, thoughtlessly threw⁹ a piece of undressed flesh-meat, into the folds of her garments.¹⁰ This the abbess brought to that poor person, as an alms, while her white robe,¹¹ was found to preserve its purity, without a single speck or stain.¹²

² See "The Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. ix., p. 112.

³ Cases somewhat similar are recorded in a Life of St. Ailbe, at the 12th of September, and in a Life of St. Kieran of Saigir, at the 5th of March. See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Secunda S. Brigidæ, n. 12, p. 526, and Tertia Vita S. Brigidæ, n. 60, p. 545, *ibid*.

⁴ See this account, treated at more length, in Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiata. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Sesto, pp. 507 to 512.

⁵ See Hebrews, xi.

⁶ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Prima S. Brigidæ, sec. 20, p. 516. Vita Secunda S. Brigidæ, cap. x., xi., pp. 519, 520. Tertia Vita S. Brigidæ, cap. cv., cvi., p. 540. This miracle is given, with additional particulars, in the Fifth Life. Vita Quinta S. Brigidæ, cap. xlv., p. 578. In the Sixth Life, a miracle is recorded of a somewhat analogous character. However, this account does not appear applicable to the narrative, alluded to in the text. See Vita Sexta S. Brigidæ, sec. xxiv., p. 586.

⁷ See Cogitosus, or Secunda Vita S. Brigidæ, cap. xiv., p. 520, *ibid*.

⁸ See Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "La

Santità Prodigiata. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Sesto, pp. 514 to 516.

⁹ Some of our Saint's Lives merely say, that the cook threw it into the bosom of the charitable abbess; but, this act of discourtesy towards her, on the part of a servant, can hardly be credible. The Latin word used, however, may admit of another meaning; for "in sinu," may signify "in a fold." The Irish line, in the First Life of St. Brigid has it:—

"Ḑroḡad fo ḡear in na huét."

In English: "boiled meat, which was cast into her bosom."

¹⁰ Where Cogitosus says, this man threw the piece of meat "in albatum ipsius sinuatæ vestis receptaculum," allusion seems made to her religious habit. This garment would appear to have fallen about the persons of herself and of her nuns, in graceful folds.

¹¹ From the words of Cogitosus, allusion is seemingly made to the white dress of St. Brigid's order.

¹² See, Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Secunda S. Brigidæ, cap. xv., p. 520. Vita Prima S. Brigidæ, sec. xxiii., xxiv., p. 516. Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. cviii.,

In those primitive times, and when hospices were not numerous in country parts, while St. Brigid and her nuns were engaged on missionary visitations, they were frequently obliged to accept the hospitalities of very humble people.¹³ It was on an occasion of this sort, while lodging with a private family, a man, named Icessus, or Eccus, a poet, with his wife,¹⁴ happened to sleep in the same house. The blessed abbess, at their request, gave them her benediction. Afterwards, a renowned son, St. Echenus or Etchen¹⁵ was born to the religious parents.¹⁶ During this visit, likewise, Brigid was instrumental in having a stolen silver lunette,¹⁷ restored to her hostess, and in a miraculous manner.¹⁸ This had been taken by a fugitive servant-maid.¹⁹ An injustice of a still more objectionable character, sought to be practised on an innocent woman,²⁰ caused the latter to fly for refuge towards St. Brigid's sanctuary. There she received a welcome, and the property she lost was procured by a miracle.²¹

The following miracle was wrought by St. Brigid, while lodging at the house of a certain poor and pious woman.²² The abbess had been engaged on one of her religious missions. When evening overtook her travelling over the extensive plain of Breg,²³ she entered the house of this poor woman, to claim hospitality for that night. According to St. Brogan's *Life of the saint*, this happened in the plain of Caoil.²⁴ Holding out her hands in token of welcome, the hostess joyfully and respectfully received Christ's holy servant, with her nuns. She also gave thanks to God, for their happy arrival. Having only one calf, it was immediately killed for the refreshment of those guests; but, having no wood to prepare a meal, the poor woman broke a frame or distaff,²⁵ which had been used for weaving stuffs. With its material, she kindled a fire, and proceeded to cook some meat, showing a right good will. After supper was over, passing the night in her accustomed vigils, holy

cviii., p. 540. *Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ*, lib. ii., cap. lxxvii., lxxviii., p. 561.

¹³ "En ce temps-là, les saints et les saintes s'en allaient par toute l'Irlande, évangélisant et prêchant, édifiant les fidèles par leur vertu et par leur miracles."—L. Tachet de Barneval's "*Histoire Légendaire de l'Irlande*," chap. viii., p. 78.

¹⁴ Abbate D. Giacomo Certani, who has a detailed account of this incident, calls him a prince of Leinster "per nome Mario Ecceca con la Principessa sua Moglie chiamata Briga."—"La Santità Prodigiosa. *Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese*." Libro Sesto, p. 517.

¹⁵ His feast occurs on the 11th of February.

¹⁶ See his *Life* in Colgan's "*Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ*," xi. Februarii. *Vita S. Ethenii*, pp. 304 to 306.

¹⁷ Abbate D. Giacomo Certani describes it as "vn certo suo adornamento fabricato d'argento lauorato da industriosa mano, che l'phaeua condotto in forma d'vna Luna non piena incastonandoui dentro ricchissime Gemme."—"La Santità Prodigiosa. *Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese*." Libro Sesto, p. 522. A great number of those laminated lunettes—but chiefly in gold—are yet to be seen in the Royal Irish Academy's Museum.

¹⁸ See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*." Tertia *Vita S. Brigidæ*, cap. xli., cxii., p. 540, and nn. 61, 62, p. 545. *Quarta Vita*

S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. lxxvi., pp. 560, 561, and n. 20, p. 566.

¹⁹ She had also lived with the family.

²⁰ A young man had given into her charge a valuable silver vessel, which he afterwards took away without her knowledge, thus hoping to make her his slave, when she failed to restore it. See Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "*La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese*." Libro Sesto, pp. 524 to 529.

²¹ See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*." Prima *Vita S. Brigidæ*, sec. xxxvi., p. 517. Secunda *Vita S. Brigidæ*, cap. xxvi., p. 522.

²² This is related by Cogitosus.

²³ Breg was the name of the plain, extending between Dublin and *Pontana Civitas*. Joceline writes "in campo Breaigh, specioso ac spatioso." *Vita Sexta S. Patricii*, cap. xxxix., p. 73. See also, *Vita Secunda S. Brigidæ*, n. 13, p. 526. Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*." *Pontana Civitas* is now known as Drogheda. See, Mr. D'Alton's "*History of Drogheda*," vol. i., p. 1.

²⁴ See also the Bollandists' "*Acta Sanctorum*," tomus i., Februarii. *Vita iv. S. Brigidæ*, lib. ii., cap. x., p. 170.

²⁵ This incident serves to reveal one of the ordinary occupations of an Irish housewife, in early times.

Brigid arose early on the following morning. To reward the cheerful and hospitable spirit of her entertainer, our saint caused another calf, like the one that had been killed, to appear in similar shape. The cow is stated to have received this young animal, as if it had been her own offspring. And, to the hostess she presented an equally valuable weaving-frame, in every respect, like that one, which had been destroyed. For, she would not allow this hospitable woman to undergo any loss, in consequence of her charity. Then, bidding farewell to her hostess and family, our saint happily and religiously proceeded on her journey.⁶

Truly wonderful are many of the legends, which have been recorded by her biographers. Those, which serve to display her extraordinary charities, are not the least numerous and strange. Brigid would have bestowed a large quantity of silver on a religious, named Hymna or Hinna,²⁷ but this latter refused to accept it. Hereupon, the pious abbess threw her offering into a river,²⁸ through which it floated, to the cell of St. Hinna.²⁹ This miraculous occurrence³⁰ caused St. Hinna to accept the gift.³¹ A man had been condemned to death, by a certain king's orders. Our saint interfered, in his behalf, and entreated that his life might be spared.³² At this moment, a quantity of solid silver fell upon the bosom of Christ's compassionate servant. This miraculous gift she at once gave the king, as a ransom for the unhappy captive. The condemned man was liberated from death, in consequence of such merciful interference, on the part of our saint. On another occasion, St. Brigid divided her only cloak, between two poor persons, so that each one of them received half of it. But fully to reward the wishes of the pious donor, it pleased God to cause each of those poor persons to possess an entire cloak.³⁴ Other equally extraordinary incidents are related, throughout our saint's Acts; but, writers who record such incidents declare, that more particular accounts are avoided to abbreviate their respective biographies.³⁵ A more powerful ruler had driven a prince, who was a particular friend of St. Brigid, from his principality. Our saint undertook to intercede with the

²⁶ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Secunda S. Brigidæ, cap. xxvii., p. 522. Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. cxiii., p. 540. Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. lxxix., p. 501. Vita Quinta S. Brigidæ, cap. lv., p. 581.

²⁷ In the Third Life of St. Brigid, this pious virgin is called Hymna, and in the Fourth Life, Hymna.

²⁸ This is said to have been the Liffey in Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Sesto, p. 546.

²⁹ Colgan says, "sed *Kinna* seu *Kinnia* videtur rectius legendum." He also remarks, that he is unable to find any Irish saint called Hymna or Hinna. But a St. Kinna or Kinnia is venerated at the 1st of February, according to the Irish Martyrologists. Colgan gives her acts, at the same day. See "Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ," i. Februarii. Vita S. Cinnie, pp. 234, 235.

³⁰ It is said to have a Providential guidance.

³¹ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. lxxxi., lxxxii., and n. 21, pp. 561, 566. Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. cxvi., p. 541.

³² This narrative occurs in Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Sesto, pp. 547 to 549.

³³ Most likely, he was the king of Northern Leinster, who, usually in St. Brigid's time, resided in the Dun, at Naas. In an Irish Poem of Rev. Geoffrey Keating, translated into English verse, by J. C. Mangan, we find these lines:—

"The chieftains of Naas were valourous lords, but their valour was crushed by Craft—

They fell beneath Envy's butcherly dagger, and Calumny's poisoned shaft."

—"The Sorrows of Innisfail." John Mitchell's edition of "Poems, by James Clarence Mangan." New York, 1859. 8vo.

³⁴ See Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Sesto, pp. 540, 541.

³⁵ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. lxxxiii., lxxxiv., lxxxv., p. 561. Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. cxvii., cxviii., cxix., p. 541, *ibid.*

king, on behalf of the fugitive, so that this latter might be allowed to retain his possessions; yet, the potentate would not hear her, but rejected her request. By a judgment from above, on this very same day, the king fell out of his chariot, and died from the effects of his fall.³⁶ At a time, when a great multitude of persons came to visit her, and being unprovided with a sufficiency of victuals for their refecton, St. Brigid miraculously supplied them with food.³⁷

The holy abbess had promised, at the hour of his death, to visit a certain magus, who had offered his possessions to God.³⁸ Her promise was redeemed; for, when the magus lay on his bed, expecting the approach of death, he said to his family: "Get ready all things that are necessary on this instant, because I see St. Brigid, clothed in white, with many others, on their way to meet me." After such words, he received Christian baptism, and being thus admitted within the true fold, he happily departed from life. Nor could this person have been that magus, who fostered our saint, in her young days; since he appears to have been baptized, before his possessions were given to Brigid. Still the matter, as related, may admit of a doubt regarding his identity with the present magus.³⁹

No matter how far we may dissent from the details of various legendary narratives, we must admit the spell of a charming treatment and a sublime moral lesson in the following story, related almost in the words of an accomplished writer, alluding to St. Brigid.⁴⁰ One evening, she sat with Sister Dara, or Daria,⁴¹ a holy nun, who was blind,⁴² as the sun went down; and they talked of the love of Jesus Christ, and the joys of Paradise.⁴³ Now, their hearts were so full, the night fled away whilst they spoke together, and neither knew that so many hours had sped. Then the sun came up from the Wicklow mountains, and the pure white light made the face of earth bright and gay. Bridget sighed, when she saw how lovely were earth and sky, and while she knew that Dara's eyes were closed to all this beauty. So she bowed her head and prayed. She extended her hand and signed the dark orbs of the gentle sister. Then the darkness passed away from them, and Dara⁴⁴ saw the golden ball in the east, while all the trees and flowers

³⁶ See this narrative in Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "*La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese.*" Libro Sesto, pp. 549 to 553.

³⁷ See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga.*" Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. lxxxvi., lxxxvii., p. 561. Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. cxii., cxiii., p. 541.

³⁸ The following narrative is given at more length in Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "*La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese.*" Libro Sesto, pp. 553 to 557.

³⁹ See, Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga.*" Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. xv., p. 528, cap. cxiii., p. 541, n. 66, p. 545. Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. lxxxviii., p. 561.

⁴⁰ See Rev. S. Baring-Gould's "*Lives of the Saints,*" vol. ii., February i., p. 20.

⁴¹ Dempster has the extraordinary statement, that Kildare was so called from the relics of a Scotch woman, Daria, mother of St. Ursula, and which had been brought to Ireland. Ussher has thoroughly refuted this statement. See "*De Primordiis Britannica-*

rum Ecclesiarum," pp. 626 et seq. "There was an Irish virgin of that name and a companion of St. Brigid at Kildare, who is mentioned in that same Fourth Life, *L. 2, C. 89.* But the author derives the name *Kildaire*, not from her, but from the oak. And in the Third Life (cap. 47) it is called *Cella roboris.*"—Dr. Lanigan's "*Ecclesiastical History of Ireland,*" vol. i., chap. viii., sec. x., n. 119, p. 408.

⁴² It is said she was so from her birth.

⁴³ See Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "*La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese.*" Libro Sesto, p. 537.

⁴⁴ There are three saints called Daria, Dara or Daire, in the "*Martyrology of Donegal*;" one a St. Daire, a virgin, venerated at the 8th of August; another St. Daire, a widow, whose feast occurs at the 28th of September; and a third St. Daire Bochanna, a widow, revered at the 2nd of November. See Drs. Todd's and Reeves' edition. Table of the Martyrology, pp. 398, 399. Yet, the present holy Dara may be distinct from any of the foregoing saints.

glittered with dew in the morning light. She looked a little while, and then, turning to the abbess, said: "Close my eyes again, dear mother, for when the world is so visible to the eyes, God is seen less clearly to the soul." So Bridget prayed once more, and Dara's eyes grew dark again.⁴⁵

Among many wonderful miracles, wrought through St. Brigid, it has been observed,⁴⁶ there was one very remarkable and great.⁴⁷ This also was generally known. A very large and lofty tree had been cut down, in the woods, with an axe, and it had been destined for a certain purpose by artificers. It seems probable, the timber had been required for some building purposes, in connexion with the holy abbess's religious establishment; since, thither it was brought, according to one account.⁴⁸ A number of strong men and oxen, with suitable machines, were assembled to draw it towards the destined place; for, on being felled, it had settled in a position, from which it could not be detached, without the utmost difficulty, owing to its weight and peculiar shape. But, neither the men, oxen nor various machines, by any exertion or application, could draw this tree from the spot, where it rested. Trusting to the efficacy of firm faith, whereby mountains are moved,⁴⁹ and all things become possible to those believing, according to Christ's words in the Gospel,⁵⁰ those present desisted from their efforts, and then invoked the protection and assistance of St. Brigid. Afterwards, those labourers moved the tree towards that place intended, without the least difficulty, and without human aid. Such a wonderful miracle was soon divulged, throughout all the provinces of Ireland.⁵¹ So, she made man honourable in his labours, and accomplished his labours.⁵² By the splendid miracles she wrought, and by the consummate sanctity of her life, she brought countless souls to the following of Christ.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DISCIPLES OF ST. BRIGID—HER HOLY CONTEMPORARIES—SHE OBTAINS PARDON FOR A MAN UNJUSTLY CONDEMNED TO DEATH—THE DROVERS AND SWINE ESCAPE FROM WOLVES—ST. BRIGID PROTECTS A YOUNG LADY, WHO WISHED TO BE A NUN—SHE RELIEVES THE ROAD-MAKERS—OTHER REMARKABLE OCCURRENCES.

AMONG the disciples, and honoured friends, specially patronized by the illustrious Abbess of Kildare, may be enumerated her immediate successor over the convent she had there founded, St. Darlugdacha. She survived holy Brigid only for a short term. St. Lasrea or Laisre, who was Abbess of Killaisre, St. Hynna or Kinnia, Virgin, St. Daria, Virgin, St. Blathnata or Blatha, Latinized, Flora, cook to St. Brigid, St. Conlaidh, Bishop of Kildare, St. Nennidius or Nennius, Bishop, St. Natfraicus or Nathfraich, her charioteer and chaplain, are all numbered among those, towards whom she had acted in the capacity of a Protectress.¹ Another St. Brigde, of Killbride, belongs

⁴⁵ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. lxxxix., p. 561. Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. cxxiv., p. 541.

⁴⁶ By Cogitosus.

⁴⁷ See, the Bollandists' "Acta Sanctorum," tomus i., Februarii. Vita ii., S. Brigidæ, cap. v., p. 139.

⁴⁸ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Prima S. Brigidæ, sec. xxxv., p. 517.

⁴⁹ See i. Corinthians xiii., 2.

⁵⁰ See St. Mark xi., 22, 23.

⁵¹ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. cxxv., p. 541. Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. xc., pp. 561, 562.

⁵² See Wisdom x. 10.

CHAPTER XII.—¹ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Appendix Quinta ad Acta S. Brigidæ, cap. xiii., p. 623.

to this class. Besides the foregoing, we can hardly doubt, that the glorious Patroness of Kildare had a very intimate acquaintance, with many of those holy men and women, who are ranked among the disciples of the great St. Patrick, as most of these were her contemporaries. Members of the Irish Apostle's own family circle, who came from Britain, are likely to have been among her most devoted friends.

Our saint could hardly have known St. Auxilius,² Bishop of Killossy, now Killishee, not far from Kildare, unless, indeed, during the years of her childhood, for he departed this life, so early as A.D. 460.³ Certain Archbishops of Armagh, administering the affairs of this church and see, even while the great Apostle of Ireland lived, such as St. Binan or Benignus, who died, November the 9th,⁴ A.D. 468,⁵ and St. Jarlath who went to heaven, February the 11th,⁶ A.D. 482,⁷ may have known and conversed with our saint. Their position and office, as ruling over the Irish Church, and St. Brigid's active services to religion, not in one particular district, but in several places, far apart from each other, warrant the foregoing inference. Even these survivors of St. Patrick in the See of Armagh, Cormac, who died on the 17th of February,⁸ A.D. 497,⁹ Dubtach I., who departed, A.D. 512¹⁰ or 513;¹¹ and Ailild I., who died on the 13th of January,¹² A.D. 525¹³ or 526;¹⁴ were probably accustomed to receive visits from St. Brigid, or to correspond with her, regarding various obligations and duties of her subjects, living in the different convents she had founded.

Several very eminent persons, living at her time, either visited or corresponded with St. Brigid. Hearing about the fame of Gildas,¹⁵ she sent a request to him by a messenger, that he would be pleased to transmit a token, which might often remind her of the donor's talents and sanctity. Gildas complied with this request, and sent her a small bell, cast by himself. This memorial our saint received with great pleasure. She attached more than ordinary importance to his gift, owing to the circumstance of having received it, from a person so remarkable and so holy.¹⁶ It seems probable, that Gildas, at this time, was a young man, and residing in the city of Armagh, where he is said to have ably discharged the duties of a professor. Again, it may be observed, the holy virgin, St. Brigid, must have been advanced in years, and approaching the close of her mortal career, when she asked for and obtained that much prized *souvenir* of friendship. In like manner, she must have been in the decline of life, when St. Brendan¹⁷ of Clonfert paid her a visit, in order to obtain instruction, on some religious questions. In the legend of

² See his Life at the 27th of August.

³ According to Ussher's Index Chronologicus, p. 531. See "Britannicarum Ecclesiarum Antiquitates."

⁴ See his Life at that date.

⁵ See Harris' Ware, vol. i., "Archbishops of Armagh," pp. 34, 35.

⁶ See his Life at that day.

⁷ See Colgan's "Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ," xi. Februarii. Vita S. Ierlathei, sive Hierlatii, pp. 307, 308.

⁸ See his feast at that day.

⁹ See *ibid.*, xvii. Februarii. Acta S. Cormaci, pp. 353, 359.

¹⁰ See Villanueva's "Sancti Patricii, Ibernorum Apostoli, Synodi, Canones, Opuscula," &c. Appendix vi., p. 384.

¹¹ See Harris' Ware, vol. i., "Archbishops of Armagh," pp. 36, 37.

¹² See his Life at that date.

¹³ See Villanueva's "Sancti Patricii, Ibernorum Apostoli, Synodi, Canones, Opuscula," &c. Appendix vi., p. 384.

¹⁴ See Rev. P. J. Carew's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland." Appendix, p. 405.

¹⁵ See his Acts at the 29th of January.

¹⁶ See Colgan's "Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ," xxix. Januarii, p. 183.

¹⁷ See his Life at the 10th of May. In Professor Bryan O'Looney's MS. Life of St. Brigid, an interesting anecdote is told, that St. Brendan, on acknowledging to her he never crossed over seven ridges, without thinking of God, learned in return from the devoted virgin, that from the first moment she had formed an idea of God, she never once diverted her attention from the sense of His holy presence. See pp. 45, 46.

his Acts, it is related, that he had this interview, after having returned from Britain, whither Brendan had gone to see St. Gildas, in his monastery. Even then, the fame of this latter holy man was very generally proclaimed. While sailing back to Ireland, St. Brendan witnessed a wonderful portent at sea, and he wished to have St. Brigid's explanation, regarding such a very extraordinary occurrence.¹⁹ No earthly affection or occupation ever caused interruption of her thinking on God. This she confessed to St. Brendan, at a spiritual conference, which took place between them. With Brigid's exposition he was greatly edified. Then, bestowing mutual benedictions, St. Brendan took leave of her, and proceeded on his way towards the Con-naught province.

During his earlier career, St. Finian,²⁰ afterwards the holy Bishop of Clonard, is said to have preached before St. Brigid and her religious daughters. This must have happened near the close of her career.

St. Iserminus,²¹ at Kilcullen, most probably was intimate with our saint, although in her Acts, no notice of him occurs. However, he was her contemporary,²² and his place, not far removed from Kildare, is at the present



Church of the Sacred Heart and of St. Brigid, Kilcullen, Co. Kildare.

time happily marked by a very noble parochial church, of Gothic design,²²

¹⁹ See "Acta Sancti Brendani." Edited by Rt. Rev. Patrick F. Moran, D.D., Bishop of Ossory. *Vita S. Brendani*, cap. xvii., pp. 16, 17.

²⁰ See his Life at the 12th of December.

²¹ This saint is considered by Colgan to have been identical with St. Sezin, whose Acts are given by Albert le Grande, in his

Lives of the Saints of British Armorica. Those Acts have been reproduced, with notes appended, in Colgan's "*Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ*," vi. Martii. *Vita S. Sezini*, pp. 477 to 479.

²² See his Life at the 6th of March.

²³ This was furnished by J. J. MacCarthy, architect, of Dublin.

and of exquisite proportions, which appropriately takes St. Brigid, the Mary of Ireland, for joint patron, united with the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ.²³ The venerable Iserninus died in the year 469.²⁴

St. Ailbe, Bishop of Emly,²⁵ visited St. Brigid, more than once, to receive her opinions regarding matters of a spiritual nature, as her prudence and judgment gave her a high character among all her contemporaries.²⁶ St. Fiech, Bishop of Sletty, most probably held interviews with the holy Abbess of Kildare, and he is reputed to have composed a hymn in her praise. He seems to have outlived her for some years. St. Kieran,²⁷ the Patron Bishop of Ossory, lived not far from Kildare, and most probably he had a personal knowledge of St. Brigid; for, he is thought to have survived her, and to have lived, until the middle of the sixth century.²⁸ St. Tighernach, Bishop of Clogher,²⁹ was the god-son of St. Brigid, while she resided at Kildare, and the infant was baptized by St. Conleth.³⁰ The foregoing would not nearly exhaust a list of her pious and distinguished familiars, while the enumeration and comparison of other names, with periods and places, might probably add considerably to the completeness of her large social circle.

The saddest memorials of the world and of its fleeting pleasures are the parted friends, who drop away from us to the grave, and who precede us thither, while we travel to the same goal. It is not well known, as we have already stated, how many of the ancient and patriarchal missionaries in Ireland enjoyed the friendship and confidence of St. Brigid, besides those specially mentioned in her Acts. Her early patron Mel, Bishop of Ardagh,³¹ departed to bliss about the year 487.³² Cianan, Bishop of Duleek,³³ followed in or about the year 488.³⁴ Bishop Maccaille,³⁵ who gave the veil to our holy abbess, died A.D. 489.³⁶ Bishop Melchu or Maolchu³⁷ most probably departed this life, before the close of the fifth century.³⁸ The illustrious

²³ This beautiful church has been erected by the zealous and pious pastor, Rev. Matthew P. Langan, P.P. of Kilcullen. The first stone was laid by His Eminence Paul Cullen, Cardinal Archbishop of Dublin, on the 5th of August, 1869; while, the dedication ceremony, performed by the same venerated Prince of the Church, took place on the 8th of September, 1872. The building material used on the exterior is Tullamore limestone, of the best description. The interior is most elegantly furnished with marble altars, and with details of architecture or decorations, in a suitable style. The church, towards the close of 1875, was perfectly completed, both externally and internally, with the exception of the grand tower and spire, to be joined to the nave, by a cloistral entrance. The detached building will represent the presbytery, when completed, but, it has yet to be built; however, under direction of the energetic and amiable pastor, we believe, this portion of the work will not be long delayed. The present engraving, by Mrs. Millard, is taken from a carefully-executed lithograph of the intended and complete architectural design.

²⁴ See Ussher's "Britannicarum Ecclesiarum Antiquitates." Index Chronologicus, p. 522.

²⁵ His Life occurs at the 12th of September.

²⁶ St. Ailbe is said to have died A.D. 541. See Drs. Todd's and Reeves' "Martyrology of Donegal," pp. 246, 247.

²⁷ See his Acts at the 5th of March.

²⁸ See Dr. Lanigan's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. ii., chap. x., sec. 2, and n. 31, pp. 8, 9.

²⁹ See his Life at the 4th of April. The close of his life is set down at A.D. 548. See Drs. Todd's and Reeves' "Martyrology of Donegal," pp. 94, 95.

³⁰ See his Life at the 3rd of May.

³¹ See his Life at the 6th of February.

³² See Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., pp. 152, 153.

³³ See his Life at the 24th of November.

³⁴ See *ibid.*

³⁵ See his Life at the 25th of April.

³⁶ See Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus iv. Annales Ultonienses, pp. 7, 8. By the compiler, he is incorrectly styled, "Epi Mannensis."

³⁷ Although some persons rank Saints Erc, Mel and Melchu, among St. Brigid's disciples, Colgan thinks, they ought rather be accounted her directors. See "Trias Thaumaturga." Appendix Quinta ad Acta S. Brigide, cap. xiii., p. 623.

³⁸ See his Life at the 6th of February.

Apostle of Ireland, St. Patrick,⁴⁰ was called away to Heaven, it is said, about A.D. 493.⁴⁰ Mochaoi,⁴¹ Abbot of Mahee Island, died A.D. 496. St. Cormac,⁴² Bishop of Armagh, and called, likewise, of Chrioch-in-Ernaidhe, departed this life the same year.⁴³ St. Ibar⁴⁴ or Iver died in the commencement of the sixth century.⁴⁵ Cerban, a bishop of Feart-Cearbain, at Tara, died about the same date.⁴⁶ St. Brigid's friend the holy Bishop Broon, of Cuil-Irra, in Connaught, died the 8th of June, A.D. 511.⁴⁷ In the ninetieth year of his age, on the 2nd of November, A.D. 512, or 513⁴⁸ died St. Erc, Bishop of Lileach, and of Fearta-tear-Feig,⁴⁹ but better known as the Bishop of Slane, and a particular friend of St. Brigid. This same year, Dubhtach, of Druim Dearbh,⁵¹ and Bishop of Armagh, departed this life. St. Mac Nissi, whose feast is kept on the 3rd of September, died A.D. 514.⁵² St. Darerca, or Moninne,⁵³ of Killeavy, died the 6th of July, A.D. 517.⁵⁴

Some unreliable accounts have it,⁵⁵ that the first Bishop of Kildare was Lonius. A certain, or rather an uncertain, Ivorus, is stated to have succeeded him. But, nothing trustworthy can be found, regarding the dates for their appointment, or those terms, during which they held office.⁵⁶ Indeed, we must more safely hold, that St. Conleth was the first prelate, called upon to rule this ancient see.⁵⁷ He had lived a holy and anchoretical life at Old Connell, where he edified all who noticed his habits in this place, chosen for

⁴⁰ See his Life at the 17th of March.

⁴¹ See Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., pp. 154 to 159.

⁴² See his Life at the 23rd of June.

⁴³ See his Life at the 17th of February.

⁴⁴ See *ibid.*, pp. 160, 161. See, also, Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus iv., *Annales Ultonienses*, p. 9.

⁴⁵ See his Life at the 23rd of April. He was a disciple of St. Patrick. See Dr. Todd's "St. Patrick, Apostle of Ireland," Introduction, pp. 215, 216.

⁴⁶ The "Annals of Ulster" have his death at A.D. 499, 500 or 503. See Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus iv., pp. 9, 11. The "Annals of the Four Masters" have A.D. 500 (See *ibid.*, tomus iii., p. 137); while those of Clonmacnoise enter it, at A.D. 504. In William M. Hennessy's "Chronicon Scotorum," the date is A.D. 500. See pp. 34, 35.

⁴⁷ The "Annals of the Four Masters" enter his demise at A.D. 499; while, the "Annals of Ulster" have it at A.D. 503. Those of Tighernach state A.D. 504. See Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus ii., *Tighernachi Annales*, p. 127. Also, tomus iv., *Annales Ultonienses*, pp. 10, 11. The "Annals of Clonmacnoise" place it, also, at the latter year.

⁴⁸ See his festival at that date.

⁴⁹ See Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., pp. 166, 167.

⁵⁰ See Abbé Ma-Geoghegan's "Histoire de l'Irlande," tome i., partie ii., chap. ii., p. 286.

⁵¹ See Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., pp. 166 to 168.

⁵² Dr. O'Donovan supposes this to be the

place called Derver, county of Louth.

⁵³ See Dr. Reeves' "Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Down, Connor and Dromore," Appendix T., p. 239.

⁵⁴ St. Moninna, with her disciples, Saints Daria-s-ra, Achea, Brennata, Dimnata, and others, are ranked among St. Brigid's disciples, by some writers. But Colgan thinks, whatever may be said of the rest, that St. Moninna must be considered, rather as the mistress of our saint. See the Irish Life of St. Brigid, cap. 33, 38; St. Ultan's Life of St. Brigid, cap. 18, 44, 51, 78, 116, 124, 132; Animusos, lib. i., cap. 39, lib. ii., cap. 19; the Martyrology of Donegal, and of Marianus Gorman, at the 1st of February, 29th of January, and 2nd of December. See "Trias Thaumaturga," Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigidæ, cap. xiii., p. 623.

⁵⁵ See Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., pp. 168, 169. The "Annals of Tigernach," however, have A.D. 513. See Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus ii., p. 129.

⁵⁶ An ancient register has been cited for this statement, and for succeeding items furnished by Richard Stanthurst, and by Raphael Holinshed. See Holinshed's "Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland," vol. vi. "A treatise containing a plaine and perfect Description of Ireland, with an Introduction to the better Understanding of the Histories appertaining to that Iland;" compiled by Richard Stanthurst. The first chapter, p. 45.

⁵⁷ See Sir James Ware, "De Præsulibus Lageniæ," p. 42.

⁵⁸ See Harris' Ware, vol. i., "Bishops of Kildare," pp. 380, 381.

his retreat. Yet, his missionary duties occasionally called him to mingle with the world. The holy Conleth or Conlaedh, Bishop of Kildare, who had been appointed to fill that office, at the instance of St. Brigid, departed this life on the 3rd of May,⁵⁸ A.D. 519.⁵⁹ His fate must have proved peculiarly distressing to the sensitive soul of the illustrious abbess; for, after he had directed the ecclesiastical affairs of his see and her own religious institute for several years, with great judgment and piety, probably during one of his episcopal journeys, he was torn asunder by ferocious wolves. Yet, his remains were in part recovered, and afterwards placed in a rich shrine.⁶⁰ It seems likely, that veneration, entertained for him by the tender virgin, induced her to have that reliquary prepared, in course of the very few years she survived. Those friends, parted on earth, were yet destined soon to meet, and to enjoy the eternal rewards of Heaven. St. Buite Mac Bronaigh of Monasterboice died on the 7th of December,⁶¹ A.D. 521.⁶² St. Beoadh, Bishop of Ardearne, departed this life on the 8th of March,⁶³ A.D. 523.⁶⁴ St. Brigid may have known most—if not all—the foregoing saintly persons, who were her contemporaries, and who, it seems likely, departed to a better world, before she was called to her happy home beyond the grave.

Among those many miracles, wrought by St. Brigid, this following account is deemed⁶⁵ not unworthy of being recorded. A certain simple rustic⁶⁶ saw a fox, belonging to a king.⁶⁷ This animal was straying one day, near the royal residence.⁶⁸ The countryman supposed it, at first, to have been a wild denizen of the woods; whereas, in reality, it had been domesticated and trained to a variety of tricks, in order to amuse at his castle the king, with his chiefs and attendants. Ignorant about its being a tame creature, the rustic killed it,⁶⁹ in the presence of many witnesses. Immediately apprehended and brought into the king's presence, a serious charge was preferred against him. The king felt very indignant, on learning what had occurred. He declared, in a passion, that man must be put to death, while his wife and children should be reduced to a state of bondage, and, moreover, that his small property should be forfeited. The pious and venerable Brigid heard about this transaction. She felt greatly grieved for the condition of that unfortunate man, thus unjustly condemned to death; but, her active charity and natural benevolence of disposition urged her to make an appeal to the monarch for mercy. Ordering her chariot to be yoked, and offering prayers to God, she journeyed over the adjoining plain, on her way to the king's castle.⁷⁰ Her importunate and fervent prayers were heard by the Almighty,

⁵⁸ See his Life, given at that date.

⁵⁹ See Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., pp. 170, 171.

⁶⁰ This has been very particularly described by Cogitosus. See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." *Secunda Vita S. Brigide*, cap. xxxv., p. 523.

⁶¹ See his Life at this date.

⁶² See Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., pp. 170, 171.

⁶³ See notices of him at this date.

⁶⁴ See Colgan's "Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ," viii. Martii. *Vita S. Beoadi sive Beati*, pp. 562, 563. In the "Annals of Boyle," the death of the two foregoing saints is placed so early as A.D. 499. See John D'Alton's "History of Ireland, and Annals of Boyle," vol. ii., p. 75.

⁶⁵ By Cogitosus.

⁶⁶ In Professor O'Looney's Irish Life of

St. Brigid, this rustic is called a clown of Brigid's people, and he is said to have been engaged cutting firewood. See pp. 39, 40.

⁶⁷ In the Fifth Life of our saint, he is called the King of Leinster.

⁶⁸ It is somewhat amusing to read all the imaginative circumstances, with which Abbate D. Giacomo Certani contrives to invest the relation of this incident, which he found less complexly inserted in his original Latin authorities. See "La Santità Prodigiata. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Quarto, pp. 287 to 295.

⁶⁹ See the account of this transaction in Rev. S. Baring-Gould's "Lives of the Saints," vol. ii., February 1st, pp. 19, 20. There, however, the animal in question is said to have been a tamed wolf.

⁷⁰ From the description given, it is pro-

who directed one of the wild foxes in the wood to approach her chariot, at a swift pace.⁷¹ This animal immediately entered the vehicle, and quietly lay down there, nestling in the folds of our saint's garments.⁷² When the pious woman arrived at the king's palace, she earnestly entreated, the captive might be liberated from his chains, as he was not morally accountable for that act committed. But, the king refused his pardon, and declared, moreover, that the criminal should not be liberated, unless a fox, equal in cunning and performances to that one he had lost, were restored to him. Then, our saint set before the king and his courtiers the fox, which had accompanied her in the chariot, and which appeared to rival the former one in domesticity, tricks, and devices. Seeing this, the king was greatly pleased, and he immediately ordered the captive's restoration to liberty, while the chiefs and multitude present could not but applaud what they had witnessed. Yet, soon after the poor man's liberation and pardon, when St. Brigid returned to her home, that presented fox, astutely mingling with the multitude, contrived to escape once more to his den, in the woods, notwithstanding the pursuit of horsemen and of dogs, over the open country, through which he fled.⁷³ All the people, living in that part of the province, admired what had occurred, while greatly venerating Brigid's sanctity and miraculous gifts. Her fame was daily on the increase, and she was regarded as the special favourite of Heaven.⁷⁴

At one time, a certain rich man, living in a distant province, came to our saint. Among other gifts, he offered her a present of some fat swine.⁷⁵ This man requested, also, that some of Brigid's servants might be sent back with him, to drive those animals from his village, which lay at a considerable distance from her church.⁷⁶ It was situated, according to one account, in the plain of Femhin,⁷⁷ in the Nandesii territory,⁷⁸ and in the province of

bable, this monarch resided at Naas—some ten miles from Killybeg. It is sometimes called Nas-Laighean. See "Miscellany of the Celtic Society." Edited by John O'Donovan, LL.D. Appendix, n. (b), p. 357.

⁷¹ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Secunda S. Brigidæ, cap. xxi., p. 521.

⁷² The Rev. S. Baring-Gould, who relates this occurrence, states, "there came a wolf over the bog racing towards her, and it leaped into the chariot, and allowed her to caress it." "Lives of the Saints," vol. ii., February 1st, p. 20.

⁷³ In the First Life, this incident is related thus, in the Latin version:—

"Tradidit vulpem sylvestrem
Cuidam rustico egenti;
Qui ab sylvam postea evasit
Quamvis eum persequerantur turmæ."

—Vita Prima S. Brigidæ, sec. xxvi., pp. 516, 517. See, also, Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. cxxviii., p. 541. Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. xciii., p. 562.

⁷⁴ This account is also contained in our saint's Fifth Life, and in the usual diffuse style, with adjunct circumstances, not found in her other Lives. Vita Quinta S. Brigidæ, cap. xxxix., pp. 576, 577.

⁷⁵ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Secunda S. Brigidæ, cap. xx., pp.

520, 521.

⁷⁶ In the Third Life of our saint, published by Colgan, we read, "spatio itineris, 14 dierum;" but, in a Carthusian MS. of Cologne, we find, "trium vel quatuor dierum." The latter reading is more in accordance with all other authorities, and with the probable facts.

⁷⁷ Otherwise called Magh-Feimhin, now the barony of Iffa and Offa East, in the south-east of Tipperary County. It was the seat of the O'Donoghues, known as the Eoghanacht of Cashel; but, soon after the English invasion, these were driven from that territory, when they settled in Eoghanacht Uí Donnchadha, now Magunihy barony, in the county of Kerry. See "The Topographical Poems of John O'Dubhagáin and Giolla na Naomh O'Fuidhrin." Edited by John O'Donovan, LL.D., n. 523, p. lxx.

⁷⁸ The Deise or Nan-desi, descended from Fiacha Luighdhe, the elder brother to Conn of the Hundred Battles. Having been expelled from Meath by Cormac Mac Airt, they possessed that part of Munster, extending from the River Suir to the sea, and from Lismore to Credanhead. They occupied the eastern extremity of the present Waterford county. See Dr. O'Donovan's "Leabhar na g-Ceart, or, Book of Rights," n. (k), pp. 49, 50.

Momonía. The place is called Magh Fea,⁷⁹ by St. Brogan Cloen.⁸⁰ Our saint allowed her drovers to proceed with the man, and after a day's journey, they all came to a mountain district, called Grabor.⁸¹ Here, the man found his swine straying, and at once he knew them to have been driven away by wolves,⁸² from his own far distant lands. But, when the servants of St. Brigid went thither, by some wonderful instinct, and as it were, through a reverence for the holy woman, the wolves departed, leaving those swine unharmed. The drovers, receiving their charge, conducted them safely through vast woods and extensive plains, to the farm of their mistress. Here they arrived, it is stated, on that day succeeding their departure, and the herdsmen related all those wonderful facts which had occurred during their absence.⁸³

St. Brigid's great example drew other pious ladies to a cloistered life. The daughter of a certain prince had devoted herself to God, by a vow of chastity. But her father desired her to marry a husband of his choice. On the night appointed for her nuptials, however, even when the marriage feast had been prepared, this maiden fled from her parents, and took refuge with Brigid.⁸⁴ The following morning, the trembling fugitive's father pursued her, with some horsemen. Seeing this cavalcade at a distance, the glorious abbess made a sign of the cross. Then, all were fixed to the earth, until they had repented of their evil intention. Afterwards, these horsemen were liberated from their strange position. Thus was the protected lady delivered from a worldly spouse, and united to a heavenly one, according to her own most earnest desires.⁸⁵

It so happened, on a certain occasion, a person needing it, applied to Brigid for a measure⁸⁶ of honey. Whilst our saint felt acutely, that she had

⁷⁹ Magh-Fea is identified with the present barony of Forth, in the county of Carlow. See O'Mahony's Keating's "History of Ireland," book ii., part i., chap. i., p. 421 and n. 60. However, the real plain is probably Magh-Feimhin.

⁸⁰ According to the Latin version, an account is thus given, in the First Life :—

"Porcum pinguem ipsi datum,
Per campum Magefea dictum (res præ-
clara)
Insecuti sunt lupi,
Usque dum effugiens veniret ad Hu-
achter Gabhra."

—Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Prima S. Brigidæ, § xxx., p. 516.

⁸¹ Abbate D. Giacomo Certani, who relates these miraculous occurrences, states, that this mountain separated the ancient provinces of Meath and Leinster. See "La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Sesto, p. 535. This foreign writer, however, totally mistakes the local position of Grabor—or rather Huachter Gabhra—which seems to have been somewhere near or within the present mountain ranges of Slievemargy, between the county of Kilkenny and Queen's County. For some highly interesting expositions, relating to Gabhran territory, the reader is referred to a learned contribution, "Topographical and Historical Illustrations of the

County and City of Kilkenny," by John Hogan. See "Journal of the Kilkenny and South-East of Ireland Archaeological Society," vol. v. New series, pp. 234 to 251.

⁸² In those early days, such animals infested our woods and wastes, and to them might well apply the poet's lines :—

"Cruel as death, and hungry as the grave,
Burning for blood, bony, and gaunt, and
grim,
Assembling wolves in raging troops de-
scend,
And, pouring o'er the country, bear
along,
Keen as the north wind sweeps the glossy
snow.
All is their prize."

—James Thomson's "Winter."

⁸³ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. cxxix. and n. 78, pp. 541, 545. Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. xciv., p. 562.

⁸⁴ This account occurs in Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Sesto, pp. 529 to 532.

⁸⁵ See, Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. cxx., p. 541.

⁸⁶ In two of our saint's Lives, this "quantum" is called a Sextarius, which was an old Roman measure, holding something

no honey as a present for the applicant, suddenly, the hum of bees was heard under the pavement of that house, in which she resided.⁸⁷ When that spot, from which the humming proceeded, had been examined, a sufficient amount of honey, to relieve the petitioner's wants, was there found. The man received as much as he asked from St. Brigid, and with joy returned afterwards towards his home."

The following miracle, performed by St. Brigid, has been recorded. Cogitosus precedes it with an account, which is of still greater interest, to the Irish historian. The king,⁸⁸ ruling over that part of the country, in which our saint lived, had ordered the construction of a road, which should be able to bear the driving of chariots, waggons and other vehicles, with a large array of horse and foot, for purposes of a social, civil or military nature. He commanded the inhabitants of all districts and territories, under his sway, to be assembled, and to take part in such labour.⁸⁹ That road, he intended to construct in a permanent manner. For such purpose, branches of trees were used, and stones were placed for a substructure. Certain trenches or mounds were formed through a deep and an almost impassable bog, while they were brought through soft and marshy places, where a large river ran. When various subject tribes and families had assembled, the road was marked out in different sections, to be severally constructed, by the clans or people, to whom those portions were respectively assigned. But, when the difficult and intricate river-section fell to the lot of a certain powerful clan, its labouring contingent sought to avoid this most onerous part of the road-making. Compelled, by their superior force, St. Brigid's weaker gang of workmen had to undertake that labour. The more powerful clan unfairly selected an easier section, which was apart from the river. Whereupon, Brigid's kindred came to her, and complained about the harsh and unjust treatment received from their stronger rivals. Our saint told them, that the river should move its course, from where they were obliged to work,

about our pint and a half. In Troy and Avonbury its weight, it is variously estimated, as containing from eighteen to twenty-four ounces. In Horace, allusion is made to "vini sextarius." See lib. i., *Satirarum*, l. l. 74.

⁸⁷ See Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Quinto, pp. 438, 439.

⁸⁸ See, Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Secunda S. Brigide, cap. xxx., p. 522. Vita Tertia S. Brigide, cap. cxxx., p. 541. Vita Quarta S. Brigide, lib. ii., cap. xev., p. 562. As usual, the foregoing miracle, related in Vita Quinta S. Brigide, cap. liv., p. 582, is amplified, with many additional details. It is possible, the following account may refer to the same incident; but, most probably, it relates to a different miracle:—

"Medo erat ei oblatas
Nec detrimenti quidquam passus est
offerens:
Repertus est juxta ipsius domum
Sine defectu vel augmento."

Vita Prima S. Brigide, sec. xli., p. 517.
Ibid.

⁸⁹ Abbate D. Giacomo Certani, who relates this incident, calls him the King of Leinster, and localizes the road-making or embankment in "la Provinciadi Labraide"—but on what grounds may be questioned. See "La Santità Prodigiosa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." Libro Quinto, pp. 404 to 408.

⁸⁹ Most probably at Kildare.

⁹⁰ "According to the ancient Irish annals, and other fragments of Irish history, the ancient Irish had many roads which were cleaned and kept in repair according to law."—Dr. O'Donovan's "Leabhar na g-Ceart, or The Book of Rights." Introduction, p. lvi. Some very curious illustrations and an enumeration of several old roads follow, *ibid.*, pp. lvi. to lx.

⁹¹ *Grumme*, Anglice, *bogs*, are frequently mentioned in the Lives of our Irish saints.

⁹² This may have been the Liffy or the Barrow.

⁹³ This, with other allusions in her Acts, seems to indicate, that St. Brigid's family belonged to Leinster, at least on her father's side.

⁹⁵ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Secunda S. Brigide, cap. xxxi., pp. 522, 523.

and should run through that section, chosen by their oppressors. On the morning, when all were assembled for the work, it was found, the river left its former bed, and that place, for which St. Brigid's friends had been specially drafted; while, its course ran near to that quarter, selected by the numerous and powerful clan, who had thought to circumvent and oppress their weaker fellow-labourers. As a proof of this miracle, attributed to the holy abbess, Cogitosus remarks, the deserted channel and empty valley, which had formerly been filled with water, might be seen, in his time; while, the river itself flowed at some distance from this natural channel, but then a dry and deserted hollow.⁹⁵ Long after the illustrious saint's departure, popular tradition preserved a recollection of the supernatural occurrence, and associated it with some particular conformation of ground,⁹⁶ which probably has not yet disappeared. It seems not unlikely, a river not far from Kildare and some contiguous boggy or low-lying land may afford a clue to discover that dried channel.

Among the number of our saint's miracles, Cogitosus tells us, that the following occurrence is not the least memorable. Three lepers, having asked an alms from St. Brigid, received from her a silver vessel.⁹⁷ Fearing, however, that distributing the proceeds of this gift might prove a cause of contention among them, our saint directed a certain man, accustomed to deal in silver and gold, that he should divide the vessel into three equal parts. One of these was to be the property of each leper. The dealer in precious metals began to excuse himself, by saying, that he could not fairly execute such a commission. Then, holy Brigid, taking the silver vessel, cast it against a stone and broke it, as she intended, into three parts equally valuable.⁹⁸ Wonderful to relate! when these three divisions were afterwards weighed, no single fragment was found to be lighter or heavier than another,⁹⁹ even in the slightest appreciable degree. Thus, without envy or quarrel, these poor men returned joyfully to their homes.¹⁰⁰

We are informed,¹⁰¹ that while the holy abbess and her nuns were engaged in prayer, a certain rich nobleman suffered from a dangerous attack of fever.¹⁰² Setting little account on his temporal possessions, at that time, and being willing to perform a meritorious action, he desired his servants to select and present the best cow from his herd, as a gift for our saint. His servants, however, selected the worst heifer, which could be found; but, on the

⁹⁵ See *ibid.* In the Third and Fourth Lives of our saint, the foregoing account is greatly abridged. *Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ*, cap. cxxxi., p. 541. *Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ*, lib. ii., cap. xvi., p. 562. In the latter lives, it is also stated, that the dry course of the river was to be seen at a time when the authors wrote.

⁹⁷ See Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiousa. Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese." *Libro Quinto*, pp. 436 to 438.

⁹⁸ This miraculous occurrence seems alluded to, when we read, according to the Latin version of St. Brogan Cloen's original Irish:—

"Donarium argenteum, quod non potuit frangere
Faber ærarius (quod præclarum erat Sanctæ)
Pregit Brigida sua manu,
Ut exsiliant in tres partes æquales.

Ponderate erant illæ partes per artificem:
Et repertum est (ecce miraculum aliud),
Quod nulla pars inventa est
Præponderasse alteri."

—*Vita Prima S. Brigidæ*, secs. xxxix., xl., p. 517. See also a similar statement in *Vita Quinta S. Brigidæ*, cap. liv., pp. 580, 581.

⁹⁹ Cogitosus adds, as it were parenthetically, "licet uno obulo, de his inventa est tribus partibus."

¹⁰⁰ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." *Secunda Vita S. Brigidæ*, cap. xxviii., p. 522.

¹⁰¹ In St. Brigid's Sixth Metrical Life.

¹⁰² "Dives habebat opes ager, quod perderet auri,
Copiam & argenti, multarum pondera rerum,
Centones, stimulos, pecora, ac ingentia rura."

night following, the animal, thus selected, was killed by seven wolves.¹⁰³ In the morning, those herdsman not only found the heifer killed, in the midst of other cattle, but even the dead bodies of those seven wolves were scattered near the carcass, which they had not been able to devour. This remarkable occurrence was long remembered in that part of the province.¹⁰⁴ Our saint's great miracles were not alone famous in her own country: for, with the lapse of time, Brigid's name became celebrated through all nations, where the Christian faith had been received.

CHAPTER XIII.

ST. BRIGID'S REPUTED RESIDENCE AT GLASTONBURY—THE EARLY PRACTICE OF WRITING AND ILLUMINATING IN IRELAND—WRITINGS ASCRIBED TO ST. BRIGID—THE CONVENTUAL RULE AND DISCIPLINE, UNDER WHICH HERSELF AND HER NUNS LIVED—HER CHARITY IN RELIEVING THE POOR—HER MODESTY, HER SELF-SACRIFICING SPIRIT, HER LIBERALITY, HER GIFTS OF MIND AND PERSON, HER POWERS FOR HEALING THE SICK AND INFIRM, HER VIGILS, AND HER CARE FOR SUBJECTS.

WE cannot receive as duly authenticated, or even as probable, several assertions of mediæval and more recent writers, who have treated concerning this illustrious virgin. It has been stated, that about the year 488, Saint Brigid left Ireland, and proceeded towards Glastonbury.¹ There, it is said, she remained, until advanced in years, on an island, and convenient to the monastery in that place.² Whether she died there or returned to Ireland is doubted.³ But, it seems probable enough, such a tradition had its origin, owing to this circumstance, that a different St. Brigid, called of Inis-bridge, or of Bride's Island, had been the person really meant. She lived many years on a small island, near Glastonbury, called Brides-hay, *i.e.*, *Brigide insula*.⁴ This latter St. Brigid is said to have been buried, at Glastonbury.⁵ Another cause for a grievous mistake, about St. Brigid's and St. Columkille's⁶

¹⁰³ These animals appear to have been very numerous in Ireland, as also to have been destructive to human beings and to domesticated animals. At so late a period as the beginning of last century, some wolves were to be found. In Ulster, the last wolf known to exist was hunted from Benyevanagh mountain, in Londonderry county, and it was killed in the woods near Dungiven. See "Legend Lays of Ireland," by Lageniensis, No. II., n. i., p. 8.

¹⁰⁴ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Sexta S. Brigidæ, sec. xxxv., p. 569.

CHAPTER XIII.—¹ Whilst it has been falsely supposed, by some Scottish writers, that the great St. Brigid had been buried at Abernethy, in Scotland, an error nearly similar has been propagated through a treatise, "On the Antiquities of Glastonbury Church." Here, it was supposed, that St. Brigid and St. Colum-Kille were buried, on the northern side of its high altar, in a conspicuous stone tomb, and over the monument of John de Cantia, Abbot. See Ussher's "Britannicarum Ecclesiarum Antiquitates," cap. xvii., pp. 466, 467.

² Colgan, referring to this fable, remarks on the ignorance of that writer, who assigned the burial-place of these aforesaid saints to Glastonbury. This city never contained the bodies of our St. Brigid, nor of St. Columkille, Abbot and Confessor.* The latter is even ignorantly named, Colum Killa, after such a manner, as to indicate a female. See "Trias Thaumaturga." Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigidæ, cap. vi., pp. 617, 618.

³ Such is the account, given by an ancient anonymous chronographer of Glastonbury. See Ussher's "Britannicarum Ecclesiarum Antiquitates," cap. xvii., p. 467.

⁴ We find it also called *Parva Hibernia*, and *Bekery*, reminding us of Beg-Eri, off the coast of Wexford, and about three miles and a half mile north-east of that town. See "Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland," vol. i., p. 230.

⁵ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigidæ, cap. vi., p. 618.

⁶ See *ibid.*, pp. 617, 618.

interment at Glastonbury, may be traced, owing to this latter place having been possibly confounded with Down, in Ireland.⁷ This city was called *Dun da-Lethglas*,⁸ in our ancient language. A fable, propagated by some ignorant legend-mongers and scribes, had its probable origin from the circumstance, that our two great Irish Saints had been buried, in the town or fort called *Leath-glas*; while, it is supposed, *Leath-glas* had been incorrectly substituted for *Glaston*.⁹ It is said, this latter designation may be more fully Anglicized, "the glassy city," or "the city of glass."¹⁰

Among other laudable practices, which were followed by the pious and cultivated intelligence of holy Brigid, her nuns and scribes,¹¹ that of writing or copying religious books must deserve especial regard.¹² If not referable to Pagan times, and derivable from eastern climes, or from the Druidic schools,¹³ the long-neglected Celtic art of illumination was, at least, characteristic of the ages of faith in this kingdom.¹⁴ So skilful were our sainted illuminators of old, so wonderful was their work of ornamentation, so elaborate, so interlaced and intertwined, so minute and yet so perfect in all details were the manuscripts of our ancient scribes,¹⁵ that the first Anglo-Norman settlers

⁷ It is true, the old writer expresses some doubt respecting the reliability of his information.

⁸ It is rendered in Latin, *collem* or more correctly, *arcem binorum mediorum catena*, according to Joceline, in his *Life of St. Patrick*.

⁹ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigidæ, cap. vi., p. 618.

¹⁰ The very inexact chronographer brings St. Columkille to Glastonbury, A.D. 504, several years before the great Apostle of Caledonia was born. See Ussher's "Britannicarum Ecclesiarum Antiquitates," cap. xvii., p. 467.

¹¹ The most illustrious artists of modern times have not concealed their admiration for these works of our fathers; they only lament, that it seems to be no longer possible to imitate them. Digby Wyatt and Professor J. O. Westwood have strongly expressed themselves, concerning the beauty and originality of this Keltic art. See J. O. Westwood's "Palæographia Sacra Pictoria." Book of Kells, p. 1.

¹² Among the most elegant and curious illustrations of ancient Irish caligraphy, produced in our day, must be noticed those incomparable drawings of fac-similes, by Miss Margaret Stokes, included in a very large but thin 4to work, intitled, "Descriptive Remarks on Illuminations in Certain Ancient Irish Manuscripts," by Rev. James Henthorn Todd, D.D., F.S.A. London, M.DCCC.LXIX. The monogram copied from the "Book of Kells" is alone a most wonderful art production. Another charming work contains coloured drawings on stone of natural landscapes and interlaced letters or fac-similes, exactly copied from Irish Manuscripts or scenes by Miss Stokes. This is intitled, "The Cromlech on Howth." A Poem. By Samuel Ferguson, Q.C., M.R.I.A. With illuminations from the

Book of Kells and of Durrow, and Drawings from Nature. By M. S. With Notes on Celtic ornamental Art. Revised by George Petrie, LL.D. London, mdccclxi., folio size.

¹³ See some admirable observations, referring to this very subject, in Very Rev. Ulick J. Bourke's "Aryan Origin of the Gaelic Race and Language," &c., chap. xii., pp. 328 to 338.

¹⁴ See an interesting article, on "The Art of Illuminating: as it was practised of old: its revival," appended to Very Rev. Ulick J. Bourke's work, "The Bull 'Ineffabilis' in Four Languages; or, The Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary defined," &c., pp. 103 to 122.

¹⁵ For proof of these assertions, the reader has only to examine some of the many originals in our Dublin Libraries. Failing such opportunity, a magnificent and very large 4to work will satisfy. It is intitled, "Fac-similes of National Manuscripts of Ireland," selected and edited under the direction of the Rt. Hon. Edward Sullivan, Master of the Rolls in Ireland, by J. T. Gilbert, F.S.A., M.R.I.A., Secretary of the Public Record Office of Ireland, and Photozincographed by command of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, by Major-General Sir Henry James, R.E., F.R.S., Director General of the Ordnance Survey, part i. Published by Authority of the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, under the direction of the Master of the Rolls in Ireland. Public Record Office of Ireland, Dublin, MDCCCLXXIV. No less than forty-four beautifully coloured plates, containing several hundred most elegant and accurate specimens of initial letters, are in this part. It includes, likewise, a learned introduction, with historic and descriptive *memoranda*, as also modern versions, for the use of persons unaccustomed to the archaic caligraphy of the manuscript pages delineated.

regarded those vellum pages as the work of angels, and not of men.¹⁶ Giraldus Cambrensis relates, that a tradition existed in his day, concerning a miracle, said to have taken place, during our saint's life-time.¹⁷ On a certain occasion, a scribe, belonging to St. Brigid's monastery, undertook transcription of a book of the Gospels, according to St. Jerome's version.¹⁸ That night, on which he had commenced his task, an angel is said to have appeared. This heavenly messenger bore a certain tablet, upon which a beautiful impression was depicted; at the same time, that angel asked the scribe, if he could reproduce a similar illustration, on the title-page. The writer replied, such an effort exceeded his ability. Then the angel said: "On to-morrow, tell your mistress, she must pour forth her prayers before God's throne, so that your corporal and mental vision may be able to behold accurately, and to understand with due perception, and that your hand may be properly directed, in tracing corresponding characters." The following night, an angel again appeared. He bore the same drawing, and presented many other illustrations. All of these, that scribe carefully impressed on his memory; while, with the greatest exactness, he reproduced those different figures and tracings represented, introducing them in suitable places, throughout his book. It is remarked, St. Brigid continued her prayers, during the progress of this wonderful work, until it issued from the scribe's hands, in a most perfect state.¹⁹ Afterwards, this manuscript was an object of admiration to all persons of taste. It called forth the warm eulogistic commendations of Giraldus Cambrensis,²⁰ who appears to have examined it with great interest and minuteness.²¹

It seems probable, that such a tradition as the foregoing may serve to account for a rumour, regarding our saint having composed "Twelve Books of Revelations." However, it will be found, on enquiry, that no ancient

¹⁶ The late lamented Rev. James Gaffney writes, "The wondrous excellence attained by the Irish in the art of illuminating has never been equalled."—"The Ancient Irish Church," chap. iv., p. 110, n.

¹⁷ See Giraldi Cambrensis "Opera." Edited by James F. Dimock, M.A., vol. v. "Topographia Hibernica," distinctio ii., cap. xxxviii., p. 123.

¹⁸ See "Trias Thaumaturga," p. 607.

¹⁹ See Giraldi Cambrensis "Opera." Edited by James F. Dimock, M.A., vol. v. "Topographia Hibernica," distinctio ii., cap. xxix., p. 124. Alluding to the wonderful "Book of Kells," it has been observed: "Of this very book, Mr. Westwood examined the pages, as I did, for hours together, without ever detecting a false line, or an irregular interlacement. In one space of about a quarter of an inch superficial he counted, with a magnifying-glass, no less 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 tradition should allege that these unerring lines should have been traced by angels."—"The Art of Illuminating: what it was,—what it should be,—and how it may be practised." An Essay, by Digby Wyatt, Architect. Appended to a series of plates executed by W. R. Tymms, illustrative of the Art of Illuminating, as practised in

Europe from the earliest times. Part i., p. 15. London: privately printed, 4to, no date.

²⁰ He remarks: Here do you see the Divinely-impressed face of Majesty; here the evangelistic and mystic forms, some having six, some four, and some two wings; here the head of an eagle, there that of a calf, here the face of a man, and there that of a lion. Should you superficially look, and in the usual manner, with less acuteness, you will see an erasure rather than a ligature; and where nothing but subtilty is found, you little regard the perfection of subtilty. But, if you strain the eye to a more minute examination, and to a keen perception of the very secrets of art, so delicate and refined, so thin and firm, so interlaced and branchy, so vivid are the colours, that you may note intricate illustrations: hence, you should be inclined to pronounce these, not produced by human industry, but rather to regard them as angelic compositions. See cap. xxxviii., p. 123, of the treatise already cited.

²¹ The description, which Giraldus gives, regarding the appearance of this volume in his day, is a very interesting one, as recorded in his work, "Topographia Hibernie, sive, De Mirabilibus Hibernie." Distinctio Secunda, cap. xxxviii. See Camden's "Anglica, Normannica, Hibernica, Cambrica, a veteribus scripta," p. 730.

writers of Saint Brigid's Acts have the least mention about her having written "Revelations," although they record pretty generally, that she had frequent prophetic inspirations.²² Hence, such a treatise must be regarded as spurious, if referred to the authorship of this holy woman. We may assume very fairly, that those "Twelve Books of Revelations"²³ extant are rather attributable to St. Brigid, Queen of Sweden, than to any Irish or Scottish Saint, bearing a like name.²⁴ John Bale appears to have been the first author, who ascribes to our Irish St. Brigid the production in question. He tells us, those "Revelations" were contained in Twelve Books, in the first edition of his work; although, he states, in the second edition, they were comprised in one book.²⁵ However, Bale seems to have misconstrued the meaning of Giraldus, in his treatise on "The Wonders of Ireland." Although this latter writer describes a book in relation to the concordance of the Four Gospels, according to St. Jerome, as having been written for St. Brigid, by a scribe, and under the direction of an angel; still, Cambrensis has no mention whatever, regarding the holy abbess having composed a Book or Books of Revelations. Other authors have followed Bale, in his statement. Eisengrenius²⁶ and Antonio Possevino²⁷ are among these, while Gesner²⁸ and Dempster coincide.²⁹

The holy Patroness of Ireland is said to have written some tracts.³⁰ The principal and best authenticated among these was a Rule, thought to have been composed by her, for the guidance of those female religious, who were members of her institute.³¹ A poem, in the Irish language, on the "Virtues of St. Patrick," is attributed to her; besides, a small treatise intitled,³² "The Quiver of Divine Love,"³³ and an Epistle, in Irish, to St. Aid or Aidus, son of Degil. In it she dissuades him from taking a journey. Colgan

²² "Nec defuit illi spiritus prophetiæ, quo multa futura veluti præsentia indicabat."—"Officium S. Brigidæ." Noct. sec. Lect. vi. Die I. Februarii. "Breviarium Romanum." Pars Hiemalis. Supplementum pro Clero Hibernico.

²³ A very curious and an early printed book, of an exceedingly small 4to shape, is intitled, "Orationes devotissime et multum meritorie: sancte et preclarissime Brigitte vidue et passionis Domini nostri Jesu Christi: certisque orationibus et benedictionibus prestantissimis magnarumque indulgentiarum annexis." Under this title, there is a rude wood-cut representing St. Brigid, Queen of Sweden, kneeling before a crucifix. A short Latin Life, with an account of her Revelations, follows. The prayers which succeed are in Latin, in black-letter, and in ancient type, with contractions. I find no date or colophon, indicating the year when printed, in a copy of this very rare work, kindly lent to me by its owner, Jasper Robert Joly, LL.D., whose private library contains so many unique literary rarities.

²⁴ See John Lesley's work, "De Origine Moribus, et Rebus Gestis Scotorum," lib. iv., p. 149. Romæ, M.D.LXXVIII, 4to.

²⁵ See Bale's "Scriptorum Illustrum Majoris Britannię quem nunc Angliam et Scotiam vocant, Catalogus." Cent. i., f. 28, b. and Cent. xiv., cap. ii., edition, Basil, A.D. 1557.

²⁶ In "Catalogo Testium Veritatis," p.

49, b.

²⁷ In "Apparatus Sacer," tomus v., p. 240.

²⁸ In his "Bibliotheca, seu Scriptorum Catalogus."

²⁹ Dempster, in his "Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Scotorum," lib. ii., n. 144, when treating about St. Brigid, says, that Thomas Stabbes, a Dominican, and Richard Lauinbam, a Carmelite, about the year 1370, publicly expounded, at Oxford, the meaning of those Revelations. The aforesaid renowned philosophers and theologians added commentaries and dissertations. Dempster, also, states, that Alanus de Limma, a Carmelite, edited St. Brigid's Book of "Revelations," about the year 1420.

³⁰ See Dr. Lanigan's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. ix., sect. vi., n. 95, pp. 458, 459.

³¹ Benedictus Hæflenus, in Disquisition Monast., lib. i., tract 6, disquis. 3, declares such a multitude of nuns and nunneries to have been under St. Brigid's rule, that Joannes de Bruella or Mauburnus, Abbot of Liorianensis, in his "Venatorio Canonorum Regularium," did not hesitate to designate our holy abbess, as presiding over 13,000 nuns.

³² It begins with "Denletha do Crich-Rois."

³³ Or sometimes called, "Quiver of Pious Desires," according to the English form of translation.

had in his possession a copy of these latter tracts.³⁴ In addition, there were other works, falsely ascribed to her, as may be seen by referring to Harris' Ware.³⁵

St. Brigid appears to have established different houses belonging to her order, in various parts of Ireland, after, if not before, the foundation of her nunnery at Kildare. Yet, it is no easy matter to determine the dates, when these several establishments were erected, owing to that loose and unchronological manner, in which they are mentioned, throughout her different lives. The monasteries established by St. Brigid conferred great blessings on this country, by making accessible to the people the boon of religious education.³⁶ We are informed, that her Rule was followed, for a long time, by the greatest part of those monasteries, belonging to sacred virgins in Ireland; nearly all of these acknowledging our saint as their mother and mistress, and the monastery of Kildare as the headquarters of their Order. Moreover, Cogitosus informs us, in his prologue to her life, that not only did she rule nuns, but also a large community of men, who lived in a separate monastery. This obliged the saint to call to her aid, and from out his solitude, the holy bishop, S. Conlaeth, to be the director and spiritual father of her religious; and, at the same time, to be bishop of the city. The church at Kildare, to suit the necessities of the double monastery and to accommodate the laity, was divided by partitions into three distinct parts. One of these was reserved for the monks; one for the nuns; while a third compartment was intended to suit the requirements of the laity.³⁷

A controversy had been carried on, between Fathers of the Order, designated Canons Regular of St. Augustine, and the Hermits of St. Augustine, commonly called Augustinians; either party contending, that our saint derived her rule from, or that her order belonged to, a class of nuns, professing adhesion to their respective religious institutes. Colgan would not undertake to decide this question, although he thinks it must be allowed, St. Brigid observed whatever rule St. Patrick introduced, and wished to be propagated, throughout Ireland; for, we have already seen, that her vows were received, or that she was veiled, by Saints Mel or Maccalaus, the disciples of St. Patrick.³⁸ Again, we are told, that neither of the Augustinian institutes, already mentioned, had any existence, for some hundreds of years after St. Brigid's time. Yet, as it is probable, her rule agreed in substance with special regulations, drawn by St. Augustine for those nuns, over whom his sister presided; so, in a certain measure, possibly Brigid's Rule may have been modelled after the Augustinian prescriptions.³⁹ It has been remarked, by Colgan, as he could not pronounce St. Patrick having belonged either to the Hermit Fathers, or to the Canons Regular of St. Augustine, neither could he decide that St. Brigid embraced the rule of one order or the other. He thinks, however, St. Patrick must have adopted and introduced into Ireland the same Apostolic Rule, which St. Augustine observed, and which he propagated throughout Europe and Africa. It has been remarked, however, that although

³⁴ See "Trias Thaumaturga." Appendix Tertia ad Acta S. Brigidæ, cap. ii., p. 610.

³⁵ See, vol. ii., "Writers of Ireland," book i., chap. iii., p. 12, and nn. c, d, e, f, g, h, *ibid*.

³⁶ Pastoral Letter of His Eminence Paul Cardinal Cullen, Archbishop of Dublin, to the Clergy of the Diocese of Dublin, on the Feast of St. Brigid. Dublin: January 25th, 1872, 8vo.

³⁷ See Rev. S. Baring-Gould's "Lives of

the Saints," vol. ii., February 1st, pp. 17, 18.

³⁸ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Secunda S. Brigidæ, cap. iii., p. 519. Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. xviii., p. 529. Quinta Vita S. Brigidæ, cap. xxviii., xxix., pp. 573, 574. Sexta Vita S. Brigidæ, secs. xii., xiii., p. 584.

³⁹ See Dr. Lanigan's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. ix., sect. vi., n. 94, p. 458.

our saint presided over numerous holy communities of men and women, yet comparatively few of her disciples are mentioned by name.

Like those holy ones mentioned in the Apocalypse,⁴⁰ we learn from the different Acts of St. Brigid, already cited, that our saint assumed a white veil, while she wore a white cloak or dress.⁴¹ These garments, likewise, must have been the distinguishing habit of her nuns. In view of such well-attested distinction, it seems unaccountable, that the Order of Brigitines, established in the Dioceses of Kildare and Leighlin, during the present century, and assuming our holy abbess as their great patroness, should use a black dress, for a characteristic of their conventual life.

The illustrious Patroness of Kildare gave a Rule to her nuns; and thus, she is justly numbered among the founders of religious orders.⁴² The Life of Ciaran of Clonmacnoise states,⁴³ that the Order of Bright was one of the eight religious orders, that were in Erin.⁴⁴ It is to be regretted, that we cannot now recover the Rules of this order, which doubtless must have been replete with wisdom. Various accounts, contained in former religious rules established in Ireland, are interesting, as serving to convey an idea of ancient conventual or monastic modes for living.⁴⁵ It is thought, even although St. Brigid might have embraced a Rule, existing before her time; yet, it may have been altogether changed, or greatly modified, as she is believed to have written a special Rule⁴⁶ and to have established a particular institute for holy women in Ireland.⁴⁷

The poor and the destitute are the chosen friends of Christ. Our Divine Redeemer has declared, that He will accept and reward hereafter, as done unto Himself, whatsoever we do to the lowliest among them. St. Brigid saw the image of Christ reflected in every suffering waif of humanity. By charity, our Divine Lord wishes His disciples to be known, and He tells us, that at the last accounting day, He shall cast from among His children those, who, during life, refuse to hear the prayers of God's poor. The tender soul and compassionate disposition of our abbess were ever sympathetic to the cry of supplication or distress. Only her own spirit or the angel of God could record Brigid's many miracles.⁴⁸ Her Sixth Metrical Life contains an account, concerning these following miracles, not found related in the holy woman's other Lives. A shepherd boy, who had lost some sheep, or swine, belonging to his father, feared displeasure. He besought our saint to intercede for him, and to obtain a pardon for his neglect. This she undertook to accomplish, and, in addition, she miraculously procured the restoration of that full number of animals, which had been missing.⁴⁹ While she prayed in

⁴⁰ See Apoc. iv., 4.

⁴¹ At the time of her religious reception or profession, it is stated, that the prelate who officiated "induit illam veste candida et pallio albo."—"Officium S. Brigidæ." Noct. sec. lect. v. Die I. Februarii. "Breviarium Romanum." Pars Hiemalis. Supplementum pro Clero Hibernico.

⁴² See Rev. S. Baring-Gould's "Lives of the Saints," vol. ii., February 1st, p. 17.

⁴³ Chapter xlvii. is quoted. It is stated in this Life "Prima regula fuit S. Patricii, Secunda S. Brigidæ, Tertia S. Brendani," &c. Vita S. Kierani Cluanensis, cap. xxvi.

⁴⁴ See Drs. Todd's and Reeves' "Martirology of Donegal," pp. 36, 37.

⁴⁵ The large folio vellum MS. in the R.I.A., No. 40, b, known as the "Leabhar

Breac," contains a Rule of the Cele De or Culdee from Modruan. The xxii. vol. of O'Longan MSS. in the R.I.A. contains three anonymous Quatrains, in the second of which there is a curious reference to the habits of the Cele De, or Culdee order, p. 322.

⁴⁶ This is stated, in the Acts of St. Kieran, Abbot of Clonmacnoise.

⁴⁷ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigidæ, cap. x., p. 620.

⁴⁸ Such is a statement, found in Professor O'Looney's Irish Life of St. Brigid, pp. 47, 48.

⁴⁹ See the Bollandists' "Acta Sanctorum," tomus i., Februarii die i. Vita iii. S. Brigidæ, cap. i., sec. 6, p. 142.

the church, at another time, a multitude of poor persons came to her asking for food. Among the rest, she saw a boy, who was deaf, dumb and lame. At a word, spoken by the compassionate virgin, he felt relieved from his three several privations, to the great admiration of a multitude present.⁵⁰ A woman, greatly prostrated with dropsy, besought the charity of our saint, to relieve her from this distressing infirmity. Brigid made a sign of the cross over her; the swelling immediately decreased, and the patient was restored to a perfectly sound state of health.⁵¹

Like that peerless Mother of our Lord, to whom she has been compared, Brigid was beautiful with the beauty of Heaven and earth mingled together, with eyes sweet and dove-like, and with a countenance most soft and pure. She was both lovely to see, as well as perfect, in heart and in soul.⁵² Nor did the lapse of years steal away any single grace or charm, for her heart and feelings were ever freshened with religious inspiration. The biographers of this illustrious saint are unmeasured in terms, used to describe her virtues and merits; but, they do not exaggerate her praises, however they may dilate on various miracles, attributed to her powerful intercession. We are told, how this wondrous pearl of virginity neither deflected to the right or left, but always pursued a just and virtuous course. She never spoke without blushing, a sign of her great modesty.⁵³ She never yielded to carnal illusions; for no person could be more chaste and continent.⁵⁴ She considered her prestige and virtues to have been gifts coming from Divine Providence. She examined her acquirements and merits, according to those severe judgments, pronounced by a mind, filled with prudence and true faith; while, she took little heed of popular applause or flattery. She considered ill-regulated public opinion and mere human praise, as tending only to produce vanity and selfishness, or as savouring of a worldly spirit. Her whole desires consisted in not appearing to be holy, while she aspired to the most exalted degree of sanctity. And, as Brigid ever willed a most perfect conformity to the decrees of Heaven, so did Divine mercy bestow on her countless treasures of grace; for, according to Holy Scripture, to every one possessing them shall yet be given, and they shall abound, while to those wanting them, what they seem to possess shall be taken away.⁵⁵ So excellent did Brigid appear in the sight

⁵⁰ See *ibid.*, sec. 8.

⁵¹ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Sexta S. Brigidæ, secs. vi., viii., xxix., pp. 583, 588. Two additional miracles, for which I do not find a corresponding authority, are thus related in Vita Prima S. Brigidæ, secs. xiii., xlii., pp. 515, 516, 517, *ibid.*

"Prima vice, qua missa est
Tempore verno in curru vimineo,
Nihil diminuit de prosperitate hospitii,
Nec diminuit ejus substantiam.

"Tradidit liquorem seu lac cuidam rustico,
Quando erat necesse,
Et repertum est nec crescere
Nec quidquam diminui."

In the same tract, we find the following lines, which do not admit of easy explanation :—

"Accesserat ad prelium Coemginus celebris

Nivem per tempestatem agitat ventus :
Glimmalache sustinuit crucem ;
Ita ut repererit requiem post tribulationes."—Sec. xi., *ibid.*

Colgan observes, in a note, as St. Coemgen died A.D. 617, according to the "Annals of the Four Masters," that it should follow, matters here related concerning him must have happened before his death. See n. 6, p. 518, *ibid.*

⁵² See that most elegantly illuminated, exquisitely written, and devout narrative, by a gifted lady, intitled, "Prince and Saviour : the story of Jesus simply told for the Young," by Rosa Mulholland, pp. 13, 14. New and enlarged edition. Dublin : M'Glashan and Gill, 1876, 12mo.

⁵³ See Professor O'Looney's Irish Life of St. Brigid, pp. 41, 42.

⁵⁴ See *ibid.* This Life also remarks, that she never washed her hands, or her feet, or her head in the presence of men.

⁵⁵ St. Matt. xxv., 29.

of God, that He was pleased to manifest her sanctity by the performance of most renowned miracles.⁵⁶ These are abundantly instanced, throughout her acts. Whenever liberality is hoped for, it will usually be fully tested; and, an opinion of unrestricted and active charity must inevitably draw together needy and afflicted, towards benevolently-disposed persons. Hence, it happened, that so many poor and infirm individuals flocked to St. Brigid, not only from her own locality, but from most distant places. Those were allured by a report of her virtues and charities, while, they hoped relief under privation from their various distresses. When our saint had satisfied the wants of one pauper, she was ready to perform a like charitable office for a petitioner succeeding; while the same generous disposition was manifested towards all, without personal favour or exception. However her bounty had been extended to the whole flock, notwithstanding her charity was still moderated, according to various necessities; she gave abundantly to those most in need, more restrictedly to those in middling circumstances, and a little was only distributed to those needing little. Yet, no gift of hers could be considered small, when her hands administered relief, and her warm heart became the prompter of her largesses.⁵⁷ Again, she was very humble, and she attended or was accustomed to the herding of sheep, as an occupation, and to early rising,⁵⁸ as conducive to health. This her life proves, and Cuimin of Coindeire states, in his poem,⁵⁹ referring to her great perfections. She spent indeed many years, diligently serving the Lord, performing signs and miracles, curing every disease and sickness. Her vigils were incessant, and she watched over those subjects committed to her charge, with extraordinary care and tenderness. Her numerous miracles are compared to the grass of the field, because it grows in such abundance, by one of her many eulogists. Those wonders, recorded in her various Acts, would seem to confirm such a statement.⁶⁰ She is specially ranked among the friends⁶¹ and

⁵⁶ See "Breviarium Romanum." Pars Hiemalis. Officia Propria Hiberniæ Sanctorum, quæ a Clero Hibernico recitantur. Die i. Februarii. Officium S. Brigidæ. Noct. sec. lect. vi.

⁵⁷ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Quinta S. Brigidæ, cap. xxxviii., liii., pp. 576, 580. In the Latin version of the Vita Prima S. Brigidæ, secs. v., vi., vii., p. 515, her panegyric is thus pronounced:—

"Non erat cum hospitibus aspera :
Benigne tractabat leprosos miseros,
In campo extruxit suam civitatem,
Post obitum patrocinator multitudini
populorum.

"Non erat armentaria montana :
Nata est in medio campo ;
Bona est scala populis,
Ad intrandum in regnum filii Mariæ.

"Præclara erat congregatio Brigidæ :
Præclarus concentus Placentinus, quem
canebat.
Circa solum Christum erat sollicita :
Res hæc erat competens advenien-
tibus."

⁵⁸ "See Mac Firbiss' List of Bishops' Sees, &c., *voce* Cuil Corra." This jotting is in a note, appended to this passage, in Wm. M.

Hennessy's copy of the Donegal Martyrology, most obligingly lent to the writer, by its learned owner.

⁵⁹ This begins with "Patrick of the fort of Macha loved," &c. Thus he says:—

"The blessed Bright loved
Constant piety, which was not pre-
scribed ;
Sheep herding and early rising—
Hospitality towards men of virtues."

⁶⁰ See the "Martyrology of Donegal," at the 1st of February. Vita S. Brendani. St. Cumincus of Connor, in his poem, "On the Characteristic Virtues of Irish Saints," as translated into English, says:—

"Bridget of the benedictions loved
Perpetual mortification beyond woman-
hood.
Watching and early rising,
Hospitality to saintly men."

See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigidæ, cap. xii., p. 622, and Rev. Dr. Kelly's "Calendar of Irish Saints," p. 161. A somewhat different Latin translation is given for the foregoing lines, by Colgan, at p. 606 of "Trias Thaumaturga."

⁶¹ See "Breviarium Romanum." Pars

disciples⁶² of our great Irish Apostle, St. Patrick ; and, among his numerous religious daughters, not one was more distinguished for great force of character, for high intellectual accomplishments, and for sublime spiritual gifts.

CHAPTER XIV.

VISION OF ST. BRIGID REGARDING HER APPROACHING DEATH—HER PREPARATION—ST. NENNID ADMINISTERS THE LAST SACRAMENTS TO HER—THE YEAR AND DAY OF ST. BRIGID'S DEPARTURE—THE PLACE WHERE IT OCCURRED—KILDARE AND ITS RELIGIOUS FOUNDATIONS—ST. BRIGID'S SHRINE AND RELICS—HONOUR PAID TO HER MEMORY.

WE are informed, St. Brigid had a revelation, four years before her death, that the time for her departure out of this world was approaching, and that she also had a prophetic knowledge, respecting the place of her resurrection.¹ This intuition was to her a source of joy. She had now attained a venerable age.² Accordingly, she prepared for her approaching end, by redoubling prayers, watchings, fastings and charities. Although her remote preparation for death had commenced, at a very early period, by the practice of virtue and good works ; yet, towards the close of life, as if all she had hitherto done were of no account, in her estimation, she became devoted almost uninterruptedly to heavenly aspirations and contemplation. To her mind and to her memory, often recurred this thought, that a life-time spent in pious preparation gave a suitable guarantee for a holy death. She endeavoured to watch carefully, during her journey through life, that she might not be confounded by her spiritual enemies, when touching the portals of death. Nor was her solicitude confined to her own spiritual interests. Being bound to render an account for those religious females entrusted to her charge, she was vigilant in her official position. This was manifested, by her unceasing solicitude and through her frequent exhortations. Her prayers had a retrospective and a prospective aim, on behalf of those dear sisters, who were to remain behind in this world of pilgrimage. While in the flesh, she loved them, not according to the maxims or practice of worldlings, but in a religious and holy spirit.³

Having regulated the religious state of her city and nunnery, as also of various establishments, subject to her rule, throughout Ireland ;⁴ we are told, in her Fourth Life, that she expressed to her sisters a desire to visit before death the sepulchre and relics of her holy patron, Archbishop Patrick. Brigid knew, also, it relates, that she should not return alive to the

Himialis. Officia Propria Hiberniæ Sanctorum, quæ a Clero Hibernico recitantur. Die I. Februarii. Officium S. Brigidæ. Noct. sec. lect. vi:

⁶² See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Quinta Appendix ad Acta S. Patricij, cap. xxiii., p. 269. Yet, only in a mediate or remote sense must we regard her, as having been one of those virgins, veiled by St. Patrick.

CHAPTER XIV.—¹ See "The Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. x., p. 133.

² See Bishop Challoner's "Britannia Sancta," part i., February 1st, p. 94.

³ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Quinta S. Brigidæ, cap. lvi., p. 581.

Also, Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. xcvi., xcix., p. 562, *ibid.*

⁴ From the words of her Fourth Life, Ce'lgan infers, that St. Brigid wrote a special rule and founded a particular institute for holy women ; otherwise, he does not think it likely, that various houses could be represented, as being subject to her care. This position he endeavours to establish, by citing various authorities. See *ibid.*, Appendix Tertia ad Acta S. Brigidæ, cap. ii., p. 610. And, Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, n. 23, p. 566. See, also, the Bollandists' "Acta Sanctorum," toms i. Die i. Februarii. Vita iv. S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. xii., sect. 81, p. 171.

usual city of her residence. It is said, St. Patrick, at the time of his death, had commanded our saint to bless all Ireland, thirty years afterwards, and that in consequence of this desire, she now made a tour over the whole island, blessing every part of it.⁵ Having arrived in the province of the Ultonians,⁶ in the northern part of Ireland, she was there seized, it is stated, with her last illness. It is generally believed, that she died thirty years after the departure of St. Patrick.⁷

St. Conleath, Bishop of Kildare, departed this life on the 3rd of May, 519;⁸ and, St. Brigid did not long survive him.⁹ She was already descending the vale of years, and infirmity began to grow upon her; although, we are not given to understand, what had been the nature of that sickness, which caused her death. At its approach, however, she had a conference with one of her nuns, named Darlugdacha, to whom she confided a charge over her community, after the event of her own expected departure.¹⁰ St. Bridget also declared her successor should survive only one year, and depart this life on the 1st of February; so that thus, both their names should be venerated, on this same day.¹¹ Therefore, as they were united in affection during life, in like measure, after death, their memories were conjointly held in honour. It would seem beyond the power of tongue or pen, to describe the wonders of Brigid's daily existence. Many miracles and incidents already recorded, concerning this holy abbess, and several not mentioned in this her life, will be found in the Acts of various other Irish saints.¹²

She was now about to cease from her toils and to enjoy everlasting rest; but, whether decay or decrepitude, awaited her closing years, seems to be altogether unknown.¹³ When the last day of our most illustrious and holy virgin in this life had approached, and after a long pilgrimage, Brigid was beckoned to her reward. Then, while sailing on the British sea,¹⁴ by force of the winds, or rather by God's providence, St. Ninnid was wafted to the Irish coast.¹⁵

⁵ See Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiosa." Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese. Libro Sesto, pp. 583, 584.

⁶ This is Latinized Ultonia and Ulidia. In Irish it is written *ultra, ultrais, and ultrao.*

⁷ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Quarta Vita S. Brigide, lib. ii., cap. xcix., p. 562.

⁸ The Annales Ultonienses record, at A. D. 519, the death of Conlaed, Bishop of Cille dara, p. 13. See Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus ii.

⁹ See "The Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. x., p. 134.

¹⁰ See Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiosa." Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese. Libro Sesto, pp. 559 to 561.

¹¹ See Colgan's "Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ," Februarii I. Vita S. Derlugdachæ, p. 230. Also, the Acts of St. Derlugdacha hereafter subjoined, and on the 1st of February.

¹² These are introduced by Colgan in his "Appendix Secunda, seu Supplementum Actorum S. Brigide, ex aliorum Sanctorum vitis & aliis hystoriis." He quotes the Fourth Life of St. Patrick, by St. Eleran, the supposed author (cap. 94), the Sixth, by Jocelin (cap. 94, 95, 188, 189). The Tripartite

Life, by St. Evin (pars iii., cap. 4, 6), Life of St. Moninna or Moduenna (cap. 3), Capgrave's Life of the same Saint (cap. 14), Life of St. Albeus, *Cod. Kilk.* (cap. 23), another Life of the same Saint (cap. 18, 19), Life of St. Finnian of Clonard (cap. 15), Life of St. Tighernach (cap. 2, 10), O'Donnell's Life of St. Columkille (lib. i., cap. 9), Supplement to the Life of St. Kieran of Clonmacnoise (cap. 26), Life of St. Gildas (cap. 9), Life of St. Brendan, *Cod. Kilk.* (cap. 50), Life of St. Aid, bishop (cap. 16, 20), Life of St. Maidoc (cap. 62), Life of St. Moling (cap. 22), Life of St. Kieran, of Saigir (cap. 30), Life of St. Kieran, of Clonmacnoise (cap. i., 47), Life of St. Columba (cap. 4, 5, 66, 241), Life of St. Moelruan (cap. 42), Life of St. Corbmac (cap. 9), Life of St. Fintan, hermit (15th Nov.) See "Trias Thaumaturga," secs. i. to xxii., pp. 602 to 606.

¹³ See "The Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. x., pp. 133, 134.

¹⁴ In Professor O'Looney's Irish Life of St. Brigid *innob' laim roan, i.e., "Ninidid of the undefiled hand,"* is said to have come from Rome of Letha, pp. 47, 48.

¹⁵ See Abbate D. Giacomo Certani's "La Santità Prodigiosa." Vita di S. Brigida Ibernese. Libro Sesto, pp. 584 to 566.

Afterwards a large fish was caught, and brought to him. When it had been cut up into parts, according to the legend of his life, that key belonging to the leek of his manacled hand was found within its body. Finding all these events to have happened by Divine appointment, with sorrow of heart, the pious Ninnidius said: "It is not meet, that a mortal should any longer oppose designs of the living God, and of Omnipotent power." Hearing about St. Brigid's infirmity, he went to visit her; and, at the hour of her departure, as she had already predicted, the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Eternal God, she received from the undefiled hand of holy Ninnidius.¹⁶

There are many different opinions of writers, as to St. Brigid's exact age, at the time of her demise. Henry of Marlborough¹⁷ tells us, that she was born A.D. 468, and that she died on the 1st of February, A.D. 523. Consequently, she could only have been fifty-five years old, at her decease. But, no other writer sets her age down at less than seventy years, when she died.¹⁸ This latter seems to be the most generally received opinion. Our Martyrologies¹⁹ and Annals²⁰ concur. The seventy-first²¹ and the seventy-fourth year for her death-period have been stated. Thus, the "Martyrology of Donegal"²² has noticed, that she yielded her spirit, after having completed seventy-four years, A.D. 525.²³ The author of St. Brigid's Fourth Life has regarded her death, as occurring, thirty years after that of St. Patrick,²⁴ and in the eightieth year of her age.²⁵ Colgan, too, thinks this probable, on account of the latter authority being so ancient and so respectable. She is even conjectured—but without correctness—to have attained her eighty-seventh year.²⁶

¹⁶ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. lxiii., p. 559. Also, Quinta Vita S. Brigidæ, cap. lviii., p. 582.

¹⁷ In his Annals. This, however, is not to be found in his "Chronicle of Ireland," published in 1809 at Dublin, by the Hibernia Press Company.

¹⁸ This is the opinion of Ussher in his "Primordia Ecclesiarum Britannicarum," cap. xviii., p. 884, and in his "Index Chronologicus," A.D. 523, as also of Sir James Ware, "De Scriptoribus Hiberniæ," lib. i., cap. ii., p. 9.

¹⁹ The "Martyrology of Tallagh," compiled by St. Ængus and St. Maelruan, in the ninth century, has this record: "Calendis Februarii. Dormitio S. Brigidæ, lxx., anno ætatis sue." See Rev. Dr. Kelly's edition, p. xiv.

²⁰ The Annals of Ulster, or of Senat Mac Mognus, cited by Ussher, agree, where at A.D. 523, we read: "Quies S. Brigidæ anno lxx. ætatis suæ." This is also Colgan's own opinion. See *Annales Ultonienses*, p. 3. Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," toms iv.

²¹ According to the computation of Friar Clyn, that she was born A.D. 439, and of Hanmer, that she died A.D. 510, she must have departed in her seventy-first year.

²² See Rev. Drs. Todd's and Reeves' edition, pp. 36, 37.

²³ In a comment, Dr. Todd adds at this date, A.D. 525: "The more recent hand has corrected this date to 522, adding in the margin, this note: 'ex ii. binario numero

fecit quinarium literam transcriptoris error; i.e., the transcriber mistook dxxii. for dxxu."

²⁴ This story, about such a term of years intervening between the deaths of the two saints, has been taken from that spurious tract, called St. Patrick's Testament, in which we find the favourite division of our Apostle's years into thirties. To these was added another thirty, at the end of which St. Brigid was to bless Ireland. Hence, it got into the Fourth Life of St. Brigid, and it became popular. Marianus Scotus, having assigned St. Patrick's death to A.D. 491, placed, agreeably to this supposition, that of St. Brigid in 521; while, the sticklers for A.D. 493, following the same principle, fixed it at A.D. 523. One of these was Bollandus, when commenting on the Acts of St. Brigid; but, his successors, Henschennius and Papebrochius, rejected these thirty years, and made out another calculation. This, however, cannot be admitted; for, in their observations on St. Patrick's Acts, they assign St. Brigid's departure to A.D. 506 or 517. See Dr. Lanigan's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. ix., sec. vi., n. 87, p. 457.

²⁵ For this statement, there appears to be little probability. Yet, an Irish Life of St. Brigid concurs in the previous calculations.

²⁶ At the year 523, we find entered in William M. Hennessy's "Chronicum Scottorum," the Dormition of St. Brigid in the 87th year of her age, or 77th as some assert, pp. 40, 41.

The year or epoch of St. Brigid's death has been variedly calculated or recorded. Thus the "Annals of Boyle" have it so early as A.D. 504.²⁷ Dr. Meredith Hanmer says her death occurred, A.D. 510.²⁸ The rest of St. Brigid is noted at 514, in the Annals of Innisfallen.²⁹ Other authorities place it, at A.D. 518.³⁰ From a calculation which he makes, as to the year of St. Patrick's death, being 458, and St. Brigid's decease taking place sixty years afterwards, Nennius would consequently assign her departure, to the year 518.³¹ Again, the year 520 has been mentioned.³² The year 521 is set down by certain writers.³³ The year 523, however, is a very generally accepted date for her demise.³⁴ Thus, Colgan endeavours to show by various authorities, computations and inferences, that A.D. 523, was the true date for her death.³⁵ These dates, A.D. 506 and 517, appear to have been given, from a supposition, that St. Brigid survived St. Patrick exactly thirty years;³⁶ and, as the year of the Irish Apostle's death has been disputed, in like manner, differences as to computed dates for St. Brigid's have consequently occurred.³⁷ The year 523 or 524 is entered in the "Annals of Ulster."³⁸ These, also, go by the title, "Annals of Senat-mac-Magnus," and are cited by Ussher.³⁹ Moreover, the "Annals

²⁷ See "Annales Bucliani," or "Annals of Boyle." Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus ii., p. 3.

²⁸ See "Chronicle of Ireland," p. 91. Still Colgan thinks, the year 518 should have been inserted in Hanmer's work, but for a casual error.

²⁹ See Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus ii., p. 5.

³⁰ Thus, Sigbert in his "Chronology," Felix in his "Martyrology," at 1st February, John Capgrave in his "Vita S. Brigidæ," cap. ult., Giraldus Cambrensis, in "Topographia Hibernica," dist. iii., cap. 17, "Annales Vaverliensis," &c., date her demise.

³¹ Yet, Dr. Lanigan does not consider 458 to have been the true date for St. Patrick's death; and, as the antecedent is false, so must be the consequent, viz., that St. Brigid died A.D. 518. See "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. ix., sec. vi., and n. 84, pp. 455, 457.

³² The "Chronicon Rudimentum Novitiorum," at A.D. 520, has noted St. Brigid's death. It states, during the second year of the Emperor Justin, that our saint died in Scotia, being born there, and of noble parents.

³³ Thus, Marianus Scotus, Florence of Worcester, Baronius, Masseus, Spondanus, Gordon, Rosweyde, Miræus, Ware. The "Annales Cambrie," edited by Rev. John Williams ab Ithel, concur, p. 3.

³⁴ Ussher, Colgan and Bollandus prefer it. See, also, Rev. Thomas Innes' "Civil and Ecclesiastical History of Scotland," book ii., p. 128.

³⁵ He prefers this, for various reasons. First, Henry of Marlborough, Ussher, Ware, &c., are of accord regarding it. And, St. Brigid lived thirty years after St. Patrick's death; accordingly, St. Patrick, dying in 591—but as Colgan thinks 593 was the true year of his decease—this latter conclusion should place the death of St. Brigid at A.D.

523. Secondly, According to different authorities, St. Columkille was born four years before St. Brigid's death. As the former is said to have died on the 9th of June, A.D. 596, in the seventy-seventh year of his age, and as he is related to have been born on the 7th of December, St. Columba's nativity must have been cast about the end of A.D. 519. The fourth year after such a date would be A.D. 523, and consequently that assigned for St. Brigid's death. Thirdly, According to certain Irish tracts, St. Brigid was veiled and died on Wednesday; while, all authorities agree, she departed this life on the 1st of February. Now, if we admit her being contemporaneous with the Emperor Justin, Pope Hormisdas and Murchertach, King of Ireland, the 1st of February fell on Wednesday, in the year 523. The hymn in praise of St. Brigid, composed by St. Brogan Cloen, must have been written in this case soon after her death; for, Alild, son of Dunlang, reigned in Leinster, when it was written. This prince died A.D. 526. See "Trias Thaumaturga." Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigidæ, cap. vii., p. 619. The learned Dr. O'Connor also agrees in this opinion with Colgan, in his edition of the "Annals of Ulster," n. 3, p. 13. "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus iv.

³⁶ Thus, Tillemont justly remarks, that Henschenius and Papebrochius have not adduced any weighty proof for these dates. See "Memoires pour servir a l'Histoire Ecclesiastique," tome xvi., p. 470.

³⁷ See Dr. Lanigan's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. viii., sec. ii., n. 25, pp. 382, 383, chap. ix., sec. vi., n. 87, p. 457.

³⁸ See Dr. O'Connor's "Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores," tomus iv., p. 3. At A.D. 523 is noted, likewise, the "Bellum Cainri filii Neill."

³⁹ See "De Primordia Britannicarum Ecclesiarum," cap. xvii., p. 884.

of the Four Masters," quoting some other old chronicles, and the "Annals of Ulster," referring to more ancient authorities, have A.D. 525.⁴⁰ Ussher observes, that some books referred to in the Ulster Annals mark St. Brigid's death, as occurring at 525, which date has been followed by the Four Masters. This latter year seems to agree best, with what Nennius relates, regarding St. Columkille's birth, which took place four years before St. Brigid's departure.⁴¹ The "Annals of Ulster," citing the book of Mochoth, again give A.D. 527. This latest mentioned date is omitted in Colgan, but instead of it, he produces the same authority, noticing "Dormitio S. Brigidæ secundum codicum monachorum," A.D. 528. The original authority seems to have been identical, in both the latter instances, with the difference of a date, in distinct copies.

The English Martyrology, at the 1st of February, has A.D. 540. The author of St. Brigid's Fourth Life enters A.D. 548, as Colgan thinks, through a copyist's error, and from the mention of contemporaneous persons. With the angels, present at her couch, and waiting to bear her soul to Paradise, the holy abbess was prepared for her final summons.⁴² She earnestly desired to receive the sacraments for the dying. Finding her final hour fast approaching, Holy Viaticum⁴³ was administered to her by an attendant priest, named Nennidh,⁴⁴ who appears to have been attached to the service of her nunnery.⁴⁵ He belonged probably to the clergy residing at Kildare.⁴⁶ Muriertach Mac Erc,⁴⁷ King of Ireland, then lived at Tara, as the Fourth Life states. Irish historians state this monarch to have died in the year 527, after a reign of twenty-four years.⁴⁸ He was succeeded in the sovereignty of Ireland by Tuathal Maelgarbh, who was slain—after a reign of eleven years—in the year 538. St. Brigid's death took place, it is noted, during the first year of the Emperor Justinian's reign.⁴⁹ Hormisdas is said to have been Pope at the time, and he sat in the chair of St. Peter, from A.D. 514 to A.D. 523,⁵⁰ when he died.⁵¹

⁴⁰ See Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., pp. 170 to 173.

⁴¹ See "Britannicarum Ecclesiarum Antiquitates," cap. xvii., p. 467.

⁴² Applicable to the calm tranquillity of that departure are these lines by the Rev. M. J. Mac Hale intitled, "By the Bedside," as found in "The Illustrated Monitor," vol. ii., No. 30, p. 70:—

"Swiftly, swiftly now the soul is flying,
'Dying, dying,'

Are the words the watchers speak,
While the shade of death is shading
All the patient face, and fading
All the rose-tints from the cheek.
Yet, there comes no sound of wailing,
No blinding burst of hopeless grief;
The soul is calm, if strength be failing,
The Lord Himself hath sent relief."

⁴³ See Rev. M. J. Brennan's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland." Fifth Century, chap. iii., p. 51.

⁴⁴ See Rev. P. J. Carew's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," chap. vi., p. 241.

⁴⁵ He is called simply *vir* and *sacerdos* in the Fifth Life of St. Brigid, without any allusion to his having embraced the monastic profession. In the Fourth Life of our Saint, it is said, he went to Britain, while another account tells us he journeyed to Rome. See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Quinta Vita S. Brigidæ, cap. lvii., lviii., pp. 581,

582. *Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ*, lib. ii., cap. lxiii., p. 559.

⁴⁶ See Dr. Lanigan's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. ix., sec. vi., n. 82, p. 456.

⁴⁷ Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., pp. 174 to 177, 180, 181.

⁴⁸ A very curious account, regarding this monarch and his family connexions, will be found in "The Irish Version of the Historia Britonum of Nennius," edited by Rev. Dr. James Henthorn Todd, and the Hon. Algernon Herbert, pp. 178 to 193, with accompanying notes.

⁴⁹ Justinian began his reign in the year 527, according to Baronius, and most other authors. Colgan thinks rather the name of Justin, who began to reign in 518, should be substituted for that of Justinian. See "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. cxix., p. 562.

⁵⁰ Yet, in William M. Hennessy's "Chronicon Scotorum" his death is placed at A.D. 520. This, however, is corrected in a note by O'Flaherty to A.D. 523, and his death is assigned to the 6th of August. See pp. 40, 41, and n. 4, *ibid*.

⁵¹ Wherefore, if St. Brigid departed during his time, she must have died, rather during the first year of the Emperor Justin's reign, A.D. 518, than during the first year of the Emperor Justinian's rule, A.D. 527.

It has been stated, likewise, that twice six Sovereign Pontiffs of Rome lived contemporaneously with St. Brigid.⁵² This statement, however, does not seem to accord with exact chronology.⁵³ An attempt to correct it hardly adjusts the inaccuracy.⁵⁴ It is possible, and even probable, St. Brigid lived in the time of eight successive Popes, supposing her to have died A.D. 518 or 523, and in the seventieth year of her age.⁵⁵ The Fourth Life of St. Brigid unpardonably asserts, that the holy abbess died A.D. 548. This date, if not the error of a scribe, defers her death to nearly the middle of the sixth century.

Nearly all the holy woman's Acts are concurrent, that the illustrious Patroness of Ireland departed this life on the 1st of February.⁵⁶ It is an honoured day in the Irish Church.⁵⁷ After having obtained a glorious victory, over the powers of darkness and the illusions of this world, she now reigns eternally and conspicuously among the celestial choirs of Heavenly Jerusalem, with the Patriarchs and Prophets, the Apostles, Martyrs, and spotless Virgins, with the Angels and Archangels of God.⁵⁸ Crowned with a diadem of effulgent

⁵² It is set down in these lines :—

"Illis temporibus bis senos legimus esse Pontifices summos Roma vivente puella," See *Sexta Vita S. Brigidæ*, sec. lvi., p. 594. Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*."

⁵³ See Berti's "*Ecclesiasticæ Historiæ Breviarium*," pars i. *Quantum Ecclesiæ Seculum*, cap. i., pp. 131, 132. *Sextum Ecclesiæ Seculum*, cap. i., pp. 149, 150.

⁵⁴ Instead of the words "*bis senos*," Colgan thinks we should read, "*Bis ternos Pontifices*." For, he says, St. Brigid died in the seventieth year of her age, according to authorities, cited in the Fourth Appendix to her Acts (cap. vii.), or in the eightieth year of her age, according to her Fourth Life (lib. ii., cap. xcix.), and other authorities; which latter tract Colgan thinks the author of her Metrical or Sixth Life followed. According to the author of her Fourth Life and others, she died in the time of Pope Hormisdas, and in the first year of the Emperor Justin's reign (A.D. 518); or more truly, perhaps, in A.D. 523, as Colgan endeavours to show, in the Fourth Appendix to our Saint's Acts. See "*Trias Thaumaturga*," *Sexta Vita S. Brigidæ*, n. 15, p. 598. Also, Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigidæ, cap. vii., p. 619.

⁵⁵ If it be supposed, that she died in the seventieth year of her age and A.D. 518, St. Brigid must have been born, about the year of Christ 449. If she died in the seventieth year of her age, and A.D. 523, she should have come into this world, about the year 454. In either case, she must have been born during the Pontificate of St. Leo the Great. But, from this latter Pontiff to the dates 518 or 523, while Hormisdas was Pope, including both of these Sovereign Pontiffs, in the chair of St. Peter sat Leo, Hilary, Simplicius, Felix, Gelasius, Anastasius, Symmachus, and Hormisdas—eight in all; not including the Anti-pope Laurence, who flourished A.D. 498. But, if we suppose

St. Brigid to have died in the eightieth year of her age, and of Christ 518, as the authors of her Fourth and Sixth Lives seem to indicate, she must have been born, about A.D. 439, during the Pontificate of St. Sixtus III. This Pontiff sat in the chair of St. Peter, from 432 to 440. If we join the latter to the other eight, already enumerated, we shall have the number thrice three or nine Pontiffs, reigning, during St. Brigid's life-time; and following the last computation. Colgan thinks the emendation he makes must represent the true meaning of the author who composed her Sixth Life. He followed the writer of the Fourth Life. If this latter were Animosus' work, it is indicated as having been read in the Metrical Prologue. See *ibid.*, n. 15, p. 598.

⁵⁶ See the various offices of our saint. The Roman Breviary of, 1522, *Petrus de Natalibus*, and "*Chronica Generalis Mundi*," state, that St. Brigid flourished during the Emperor Justin's rule. See "*The Life of St. Brigid*," by an Irish Priest, chap. x., p. 133.

⁵⁷ "*Decessit autem venerabilis Brigida prima die mensis Februarii, suæ benignitatis & misericordiarum remunerationem in perpetuum possidens Deum: Qui in unitate trinus, & unus in trinitate, vivit & gaudet & gloriatur, ipse quidem vita gaudium & gloria sanctorum omnium, per omnia sæcula sæculorum. Amen.*" *Quinta Vita S. Brigidæ*, cap. lviii., lviii., pp. 581, 582. Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*." This great feast of St. Brigid appears from remote times to have been celebrated with solemn public services and panegyrics in the ancient Irish churches. See Professor O'Looney's Irish Life of St. Brigid, pp. 1 to 4, 49, 50.

⁵⁸ After having given the day of our saint's death, at February i., Cogitosus concludes his Acts, in the following sentences: "*Veniam peto a fratribus et lectoribus qui causa obedientiæ coactus, nulla prærogativa scientiæ suffultus, pelagus immensum virtutum S.*

glory, and rejoicing in the possession of those eternal rewards, she had so richly merited after her departure from earth; she beholds for ever the ineffable presence of the Godhead, unceasingly and effectually interceding for her favoured island, and for her devout clients, with the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, world without end.⁵⁹

An Irish Life of St. Brigid, and also the "Annals of Roscrea," state, that this holy woman died on a Wednesday. It has been remarked,⁶⁰ that the circumstance of our saint's decease occurring on such a day, if true, should bring her death in all probability into A.D. 523. The 1st of February fell on that day, during this year.⁶¹ It has been added, that St. Brigid took the veil, also, on a Wednesday, and building on this notation, which Ussher was either ignorant of, or overlooked, Colgan argues, that the death of our pious abbess cannot be applied to any year, later than 523. This, however, rests on a passage,⁶² not very trustworthy, as found in the Fourth Life of St. Brigid.⁶³ Yet, Dr. Lanigan doubts the accuracy of this relation, which appears to have been an imitation of certain presumed coincidences in St. Patrick's Life and in her own Acts. He thinks A.D. 525, a still more probable date for her death, than 523; which latter year, however, he says is the only one that can stand any competition with it. But, between both these dates, he leaves the reader free to form an opinion. Any other dates proposed, he deems not worthy of serious consideration.⁶⁴

The place, whence our holy abbess departed to her true country and home, has been diversely represented.⁶⁵ Especially towards the closing years of her life, Kildare was the permanent place for her residence, and the almost unanimous echo of tradition declares it to have witnessed her exit from this world. Our historic records furnish sufficient evidence in attestation. Notwithstanding a contrary assertion, hazarded by the author of St. Brigid's Fourth Life, that she died in the northern province; this mooted question hardly admits of controversy.⁶⁶ Such a statement, regarding her first interment at

Brigidæ, et viris fortissimis formidandum, his paucis rustico sermone dictis virtutibus de maximis et innumerabilibus cucurrerim. Orate pro me Cogitoso nepote culpabili et ut oratione vestra pio Domino me commendetis exoro, et Deus vos pacem Evangelicam sectantes, exaudiat." See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Secunda Vita S. Brigidæ, cap. xxxvi., p. 524. See, also, Messingham's "Florilegium Insulæ Sanctorum."

⁵⁹ See, Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Secunda S. Brigidæ, cap. xxxvi., p. 524. Vita Tertia S. Brigidæ, cap. cxxxi., p. 542. Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. c., p. 563. Vita Quinta S. Brigidæ, cap. lvi., p. 582.

⁶⁰ By Dr. Lanigan.

⁶¹ See "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. ix., sec. vi., n. 88, p. 457.

⁶² We find in it nothing but confusion. St. Brigid's death is said, also, to have occurred, during the reign of Justinian, and in the year 548. These periods are very different from that epoch of Hormisdas. See Ussher, "De Britannicarum Ecclesiarum Primordiis," cap. xvii., p. 884.

⁶³ There we are told, she died during the Pontificate of Pope Hormisdas, and therefore prior to the month of August in said year.

See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. 99. p. 562.

⁶⁴ See, Dr. Lanigan's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. ix., sec. vi., and nn. 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, pp. 454 to 458.

⁶⁵ No reliance is to be placed upon Meredith Hammer's statement regarding St. Brigid, that "about the year 524 she was translated from the Hebrides into Dune, and resteth by Saint Patrick's side, as formerly hath been declared in his Life. Ireland hath given her this epitaph:—

"Flos patriæ pietatis amans, virtutis alumna,
Sidus Hibernorum, Brigida Virgo fuit."

See, "Chronicle of Ireland," p. 91.

⁶⁶ According to Colgan, it is probable, the bodies of these saints were not together in Down, previous to A.D. 823. Hence, he infers, that neither St. Brigan, nephew to St. Patrick, on the sister's side, nor St. Columkille, who died in 597, nor St. Ultan, who departed A.D. 656, nor St. Aileran, the Wise, who died in 664, could have been the author of St. Brigid's Fourth Life, for reasons which he assigns.

Downpatrick, appears to have been falsely based, on a subsequent opinion about her remains being there, with those of St. Patrick and St. Columkille. It must have been entertained, only at a comparatively recent date. Hence, originated the account, presented by the author of her Fourth Life,⁶⁷ that she died at Downpatrick, or in its immediate neighbourhood.⁶⁸

As in the time of Crimthann, Dunlaing and Illand, so under successive princes of Leinster, Kildare continued to enjoy ecclesiastical immunities, and to rejoice in a repetition of ecclesiastical endowments.⁶⁹ To the beginning of the ninth century, it was in an exceedingly flourishing condition. After this period, war, rapine, fire, and violence, stain the annals of Kildare ;⁷⁰ yet, learning and sanctity were not wholly banished from its cloisters, to the



The Grey Abbey, Kildare.

period of the Anglo-Norman invasion. Even after stranger lords took possession of the city and its appurtenances, two fine religious foundations

⁶⁷ Colgan thinks it highly probable, that Animosus was the author of this Life, rather than any other anonymous writer, among the many, who are said to have attempted St. Brigid's Acts, especially when some circumstances seem to favour the inference, while no good reason establishes a contrary conclusion. According to what Colgan himself supposes, the incidents of name, time and place should tell in favour of Animosus or Annichod, as being the author, and that he lived after A.D. 823, and before 1097. Colgan has not been able to detect any date, for drawing a different conclusion. See "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, n. 2, p. 564.

⁶⁸ There are many authors, who affirm that St. Brigid had been interred at Down, in the first instance ; but, these writers rather belong to a comparatively modern period.

Among others, John Brampton and Henry of Marlborough, in their Annals, relate, that her remains reposed there with the bodies of Saints Patrick and Columkille. At the year 1177, Roger Hovenden, in his Annals, has a similar statement. Again, the author of the Annals of Glastonbury says of St. Brigid, that having returned to Ireland, she rested soon afterwards in the Lord, and was buried in the city of Down. David Roth, Bishop of Ossory, in his Dissertation on St. Brigid, pp. 151, 152, and Ussher, in his Index Chronologicus, A.D. DXXIII., and "De Ecclesiis Britannicarum Primordiis," cap. xvii., p. 888, are of accord, on this latter point.

⁶⁹ See Rev. Dr. Todd's "St. Patrick Apostle of Ireland." Introduction, pp. 16 to 18.

⁷⁰ See an interesting summary of its his-

were effected; since, Lord William de Vesey, A.D. 1260, established a friary for the Franciscan Order, which is now popularly known as the Grey Abbey. It is situated on the south side of the town, near a high road, and surrounded by an extensive and a crowded graveyard, covered with humble graves and having several head-stones inscribed. A high hawthorn-fence separates it from the road, the only good enclosure surrounding it. A farm-house and out-offices are at one side, and several fine ash-trees are thickly interlaced, to lend some adjoining paddocks shelter. An iron-gate forms an entrance from the road, but the off-fences are broken down, while cattle range among the graves and ruins. These latter traces of the fine old abbey are fast crumbling away. They seem to indicate two chief divisions; namely, the Friary proper, and its church, in immediate proximity. The entire length of the building appears to have been 35 yards, from east to west; and, 8 yards in width, interiorly. The south side-wall is much broken; the north side-wall at the church portion was propped by four buttresses, apparently built to give strength, at a period long after the Church had been quite completed. Six lancet-headed windows were in the north wall. A large and pointed window occupied the east gable. A long vault, extending from the monastic house northwards, is yet traceable, under the graves; while, extending southwards, on the off-side, are some fragments of foundations.⁷¹ These appearances indicate, that the plan of this building, at one time, was nearly cruciform.⁷² Half of the west gable is entirely gone.⁷³ In the year 1290, William de Vesey built a house for Carmelites or White Friars, and a few members of this order yet occupy a dwelling standing on the site.

After death, our saint's relics were placed on one side of the altar in her church.⁷⁴ They were deposed in a monument, adorned with beautiful workmanship. Gold and silver, superimposed, formed artistic decorations for her shrine, as also for that of St. Conleath.⁷⁵ This latter tomb occupied a position on the other side of the principal altar. Many miracles were wrought before the shrine of our holy abbess, after her death.⁷⁶ It is related, that on her festival day, multitudes flocked to Kildare from different provinces; some went to recover health through her intercession, others to offer gifts at her shrine, while some attended to witness magnificent ceremonies there performed. Again, others were induced to be present through less devotional and more worldly motives.⁷⁷ In such convocations, we may find probably, a prototype of the later "patrons," or "patterns," so common in other parts of the country. It is incorrectly stated,⁷⁸ in the Fourth Life of St. Brigid, that immediately after her death, she was buried with great honour and solemnity in the same tomb, with the most holy Archbishop Patrick.⁷⁹ It is

tory, in Archdall's "Monasticon Hibernicum," pp. 322 to 331.

⁷¹ The accompanying illustration, engraved by George A. Hanlon, from a drawing on the wood, by William F. Wakeman, was taken as a sketch, on the spot, by the author, December, 1875.

⁷² Unless, indeed, the vault extending northwards had no connexion with an upper house, and had been intended solely for interments.

⁷³ Some fine carved stones were removed from the Grey Abbey many years ago, and were used to build the Chapel of Miltown, some few miles from Kildare.

⁷⁴ See Rev. P. J. Carew's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," chap. vi., p. 242.

⁷⁵ Colgan does not hesitate in his opinion, that St. Brigid was first buried at Kildare. Bollandus also accords on this point, in his *Commentarius Prævius ad Vitam S. Brigidæ*. "Acta Sanctorum," tomas i. Die i. Februarii, secs. vi., vii., pp. 106 to 108.

⁷⁶ According to Professor O'Looney's Irish Life of St. Brigid, pp. 47, 48.

⁷⁷ See Cogitosus' "Vita S. Brigidæ," cap. xiv. This account sufficiently relates a supposition, offered by the author of her Fourth Life, that our saint had been at first buried in Downpatrick.

⁷⁸ See Martin Haverty's "History of Ireland," chap. ix., p. 80.

⁷⁹ After the first interment of St. Brigid, at Kildare, according to Cogitosus, that her

further intimated, such juxtaposition of their bodies, after death, had been a result of their wishes whilst alive. In that tract, it is expressly noted, their remains were interred, in the city of Ultonian territory, called Dun-da-Lethglaisse, or Dun-da-Lethglass,⁸⁰ and which was situated near the sea.⁸¹ It existed from the time of St. Patrick, as an ancient episcopal residence.⁸² In former times, this city had been named Aras Kealtuir, after a celebrated hero or champion, called Kealtuir.⁸³ He is numbered among the principal heroes of Ireland, and he was a contemporary with Connor Mac Nessa, King of Ulster.⁸⁴ Notwithstanding this account of our saint's death and burial, the author of her Fourth Life remarks, that the privileges, honour, and distinction, due to Kildare city in the province of Leinster, were recognised for ages after the Blessed Brigid's death, in connexion with her name and memory.⁸⁵ These facts serve, likewise, to impress us with the moral of all historic experience, that great names serve to make celebrated, through all time, localities, which without such connexion, should otherwise leave little to interest human sympathy, or awaken popular feeling. Fond memory recalls deeds that have been done there, and that have not passed away to unhonourable oblivion.

CHAPTER XV.

MIRACLES WROUGHT AT KILDARE AFTER ST. BRIGID'S DEATH—THE FALCON—ST. BRIGID'S RELICS ARE REMOVED TO DOWN—REMARKABLE DISCOVERY OF THE BODIES OF ST. PATRICK, ST. BRIGID AND ST. COLUMKILLE IN THAT CITY—SOLEMN TRANSLATION TO A MAGNIFICENT TOMB—KILDARE AND ITS TRADITIONS—DESECRATION OF HOLY REMAINS AT DOWN—REPUTED REMOVAL OF ST. BRIGID'S HEAD TO AUSTRIA, AND AFTERWARDS TO LISBON.

NOT only during the lifetime of St. Brigid did she perform miracles, but even after release from her corporeal prison, many wonders, attributed to her merits and to Almighty power, took place within and without that monastery, where her venerable remains were deposited.¹ Of some miracles, Cogitosus

remains were afterwards translated to Down is admitted by Colgan. There they had been interred, in the same place with those of Patrick and Columkille. Although the occurrence of translating her remains to Down is unquestionable; yet, the time when it took place is altogether unknown. See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigidæ, cap. vi., p. 618.

⁸⁰ Afterwards Dun Patraic, Down, or Downpatrick. It comprised the greater part of ancient Ulidia or Dalaradia. In the reign of Edward II. it was formed into two counties, namely Down, and the Ards or Newtown; but, in the time of Queen Elizabeth, both were formed into the present county Down, which got the name from its chief town, Latinized "*Dunum*." See John O'Hart's "*Irish Pedigrees*;" or the *Origin and Stem of the Irish Nation*," part v., chap. vi., p. 254.

⁸¹ It is in eastern Ulster. Down is chiefly celebrated, on account of three most illustrious saints of Ireland, having been there

entombed, viz., St. Patrick, St. Brigid and St. Columkille. Besides, it became the burial-place of many other holy persons, but less renowned. It was, also, the birth-place of the subtle Doctor Joannes Scotus, according to Cavellus, Thadæus, Wadding, Arturus, &c. See Cardinal Bellarmin, "*Operum*," toms vii. De Scripturibus Ecclesiasticis. Seculum xiv., pp. 461, 462.

⁸² See Sir James Ware's "*De Hibernia et Antiquitatibus ejus*," cap. xxvi., p. 178.

⁸³ He flourished, about the time of our Lord's Incarnation, and in the beginning of the Christian era.

⁸⁴ The father of Kialtuir was called Cruitheachyr. This latter was a favourite and companion of Connor Mac Nessa.

⁸⁵ See, Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," Vita Quarta S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. xcix., and nn. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, *ibid*.

CHAPTER XV.—¹ Immediately before the narrative of her death, the author of her Fourth Life says: "*Hic, Fratres charissimi,*

not only heard, but he was even an eye-witness. His account shows, that he flourished at a very early period, and as already mentioned, in a previous part of this biography. The abbot or president, over St. Brigid's great and renowned monastery,² sent stone-cutters and workmen to search out and prepare a mill-stone, wherever it could be discovered. Without much foresight, these men proceeded to the top of a rocky mountain, where they selected a large and suitable stone. The ascent to this place was exceedingly difficult of approach.³ Having shaped the stone into a round form and perforated it, to serve the purpose for which it had been intended, the prior was sent for, and he came with some men and oxen to remove it. But, the animals could not be driven up the rough ascent. With difficulty the prior approached it, attended only by a few companions. With the workmen and attendants, he began to consider how the mill-stone could be removed from the mountain brow, for it was found impossible to bring the yoked oxen over that rugged and broken ground. In despair of accomplishing their object, some said, that the stone should be abandoned, and that those who fashioned it, had wrought in vain: but, their president, more prudently thinking or inspired, replied with strong faith: "By no means abandon your effort, but lift the mill-stone like men, and precipitate it from the top of this mountain, in the name and through the intercession of our most holy Brigid. For, unless she, to whom nothing is impossible, according to what is said in Scripture, about all things being possible to the believer,⁴ bear it to that place, whence the oxen shall be able to draw it, not any artifice or strength of man can bring this mill-stone over the rocky ground." Then, with trusting faith, the men heaved it into the valley beneath, while they stood above on the rock, to watch its progress. The stone slid over the edges of the cliffs gradually, until it came to a marshy spot below the mountain. There, on account of its humidity, neither men nor oxen could tread. Strange to say, the stone glided to that very place, where the animals stood, and without the least fracture, it was brought by oxen and men to the mill. There it was exactly fitted, to serve its purpose.

To render this incident more miraculous, the same mill-stone, thus wonderfully directed by St. Brigid, refused to perform its office, when the grain of a certain neighbouring magus had been brought to the mill, by a rustic. Ignorant regarding its owner, the miller put that grain between the mill-stones; yet, all his efforts, seconded by water-power and by the pressure of a strong current,⁵ could not grind with the stone, already particularized. At

miraculis & virtutibus beatissimæ Matris Brigidæ scribendi vel narrandi terminum ponimus: quia dignum aliquid poni in chartis, quotidie novum semper de ea sola jam invenissemus. Non enim modo cessant, neque cessabunt usque ad finem sæculi talia miracula per eam a Deo, qualia audistis per eam in vita sua. Per hæc autem pauca quæ scripta sunt lecturi, et audituri, qui scitis, qualis et quanti meriti apud Deum omnipotentem gloriosissima Virgo fuerit, scire potestis."—Quarta Vita S. Brigidæ, lib. ii., cap. xii., sec. 80. Bollandists' "Acta Sanctorum," tomus i., Februarii Die i., p. 171.

² Cogitosus adds, "de quo, in hujus opusculi principio, brevem fecimus mentionem," &c. As Cogitosus does not expressly name any person—which is to be regretted—to

whom these observations would seem applicable, it can only be reasonably conjectured, that allusion is made to the contemporaneous abbot over a monastery of religious men, then in Kildare, and who was included among those brethren, to whom our saint's life is dedicated. See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Secunda Vita S. Brigidæ. Prologus and cap. xxxii., pp. 518, 523.

³ It is likely, the Red Hills, near Kildare, are here alluded to, or possibly the Hill of Allen. The old map of Kildare county, published by John Noble and James Keenan in 1752, gives a very curious outline of the Red Hills, as also of the Hill of Allen, within the Isle of Allen, and altogether surrounded with bog.

⁴ See St. Mark ix., 22.

⁵ Near the town of Kildare runs a consi-

length, the astonished spectators discovered, how this grain belonged to a magus, and they no longer doubted, that mill-stone refused to grind this Gentile's corn, because of a miraculous efficacy conferred on it, through St. Brigid's merits. When this corn of the magus had been removed, and that of the monastery had been substituted, the mill-stone began to move without any impediment, and in its usual manner. After a certain interval had elapsed, it happened, that the mill itself was burned; and, it was deemed remarkable, that not only every object therein had been consumed, but even the mill-stone, which corresponded with that one, which had been brought thither, through St. Brigid's special interposition. This latter relic was found, however, whole and uninjured, among the smoking ruins, after the fire had been extinguished. Such a circumstance being deemed miraculous, the recovered stone in question was afterwards brought to the monastery, where it was conspicuously placed, near the gate of that interior fort,⁶ by which the church was surrounded.⁷ Through veneration for St. Brigid, many came to visit it, and the faithful, who touched this relic, were healed of several diseases, which afflicted them.⁸

A curious story has been told about a falcon, which was thought to have frequented Kildare, and to have constantly taken its station on the very top of the ecclesiastical tower,⁹ from St. Brigid's time to the twelfth century. Wherefore, the people called it St. Brigid's bird, and held it in great veneration. In the presence of some civilians and soldiers, this bird was seen chasing from air to earth some wild birds and water-fowl, over the plain of Kildare. It had been accustomed or trained to this sport. The bird would not allow any rival to remain about Kildare Church; yet, at a certain season of the year, during breeding time, it was accustomed to retreat among the mountains of Glendalough.¹⁰ After the usual interval, it returned, nestling

derable stream, which yet affords an excellent mill-race at Tully. This probably is the current to which allusion is made. By a south-west course it falls into the River Barrow, to the north of Kilberry, where an interesting group of ecclesiastical and civil remains may be seen.

⁶ This was probably a *Caisel*, which, owing to the ancient and modern encroachments for roads and buildings surrounding the present old church and round tower at Kildare, has long since disappeared.

⁷ Lately has appeared a magnificent illustrated work, which had long occupied the time and thoughts of a distinguished and munificent Irish nobleman, whose loss to native art, science and literature has been deservedly lamented. Before death, however, he had made provision for its editorship by a lady, combining in the rarest degree faculties of artistic taste and antiquarian knowledge. The Pagan and Christian remains of Ireland are exquisitely produced in photographic autotypes, lithographs, and wood-engravings, in a style leaving nothing to be desired. Miss Stokes, in her truly learned introduction to "Notes on Irish Architecture," by Edwin, Third Earl of Dunraven, has pointed out the differences existing, to mark the independent purposes for which the Pagan *caisel* or stone-fort and the Christian *caisel* or enclosure had been erected, "while their

similarity in structure seems to point to the same degree of knowledge in the builders," vol. i., p. xviii.

⁸ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Vita Secunda S. Brigidæ, cap. xxxii., xxxiii., xxxiv., and n. 16, pp. 523, 526.

⁹ Doubtless, the existing round tower is the one alluded to.

¹⁰ This romantic spot is agreeably alluded to in the following lines:

"Where, girt by many a mountain
grey,
Rolled in itself unsociably,
The Valley of the Lakes displayed
Its shrines, embrowned in thickest
shade
Of circling mountains; that appeared,
With rude stupendous height, to
guard
This hallowed region of repose.
Here in dark horror Lugduff rose,
The southern sentinel;—Beside
Towered Derrybawn, in waving
pride;
Between them, o'er its rocky bed,
By wood embrowned a torrent sped;
While with contrasted brightness fell,
From hills, that westward bound the
vale,
Glancola's cascade;—And North,
Broccagh his mountain mists sent
forth;

in an almost tame state, within the ecclesiastical buildings. The bird remained always undisturbed by their pious inmates. At the time of King John's departure from Ireland, this extraordinary bird of ages, and which had ever been regarded with pride by the Kildare people, was killed by a rustic. He struck it with his staff, whilst incautiously exposed to a fate, for which it seemed unprepared. From this incident, Giraldus Cambrensis draws the common-place moral, that in the most prosperous condition of things, danger may be at hand, and that we should not trust life, which is daily exposed to mischances, however pleasant and agreeable may be our state.¹¹

It seems sufficiently probable, that the remains of the venerable abbess were at first interred within the church of Kildare; where her nuns for some ages, to honour her memory, kept a fire always burning. Hence, that convent was called the House of Fire.¹² It is supposed, that about A.D. 835, or probably before, when Kildare begun to suffer from the hostile Danish incursions,¹³ the relics of our saint were removed to Down¹⁴ for greater security, and to guard them from Pagan profanation. Here, they were deposited, with those of St. Patrick and of St. Columba. We can have little doubt, they were for a long time carefully preserved, and greatly honoured by the faithful. Yet, the Northmen frequently attacked, plundered, and burned this town. These ravages were continued, during the tenth, eleventh, and even the twelfth century.¹⁵ It seems probable, the harrassed townspeople were obliged, through motives of precaution, to remove and bury in the earth those precious remains consigned to their charge. Probably, the secret of their entombment had been confided, only to a few ecclesiastics, and these might have perished, during the tumults of that time. It would appear, that a tradition, regarding where the illustrious saints had been buried, passed out of popular recollection in Down,¹⁶ after the lapse of some centuries. What is still more astonishing, a knowledge, concerning where St. Patrick's, St. Brigid's, and St. Columkille's relics had been deposited, was even obliterated, from the minds of the faithful, and in a city, where those holy persons were ever held in such extraordinary veneration.

About the year 1185,¹⁷ however, the first year of King John's arrival in Ireland,¹⁸ when Malachy III.¹⁹ was bishop over Down, this holy man was accustomed to offer up his prayers to God, that a discovery of the above-mentioned saint's relics might be made by him.²⁰ It so happened, one night,

But in the east, no envious height;
Shut out the golden flood of light."

—John D'Alton's "Dermid; or Erin in the Days of Bora."—Canto v., sec. xi., pp. 131, 132.

¹¹ See Giraldi Cambrensis "Opera," tomus v. Edited by James F. Dimock, M.A. Topographia Hibernica, dist. ii., cap. xxxvii., pp. 122, 123.

¹² See Rev. S. Baring-Gould's "Lives of the Saints," vol. ii. February 1st, p. 22.

¹³ "Cependant vers le milieu du neuvième siècle un peuple sorti des forêts de la Scandinavie, les Danois, abordèrent en Irlande; ils en occupèrent une partie sans beaucoup de peine; la lutte contre eux devient cependant vive et obstinée."—Gustave de Beaumont's "L'Irlande, Sociale, Politique et Religieuse," tome i. Introduction Historique, chap. i., sec. ii., p. 8.

¹⁴ She was buried at Dun, or Downpatrick,

in one tomb with Patrick; and where Colum Cille was afterwards interred. See Drs. Todd's and Reeves' "Martyrology of Donegal," pp. 36, 37.

¹⁵ See "The Irish Penny Magazine," vol. i., No. 43, p. 338.

¹⁶ An interesting account of this ancient city, supposed to be the Dunum mentioned by the geographer Ptolomy, is found in Walter Harris' "Ancient and Present State of the County Down."

¹⁷ See Rev. S. Baring-Gould's "Lives of the Saints," vol. ii., February 1st, p. 22.

¹⁸ See l'Abbé Mac-Geoghegan's "Histoire de l'Irlande Ancienne et Moderne," for an account of his visit, tome ii., partie iii., chap. i., pp. 33, 34.

¹⁹ See Harris' Ware, vol. i., "Bishops of Down," p. 196.

²⁰ See an account of this discovery, in Ussher's "De Britannicarum Ecclesiarum Primordiis," cap. xvii., pp. 889 to 892.

while engaged in fervent prayer and within the church of his cathedral city, Malachy saw a ray of light, like a sun-beam, extending itself through the church.²¹ Finally, it settled over the graves of those inhumed saints. The bishop was exceedingly rejoiced at this vision, and he prayed more earnestly, that the ray of light might remain, until he had discovered the relics. Then rising, and having procured necessary implements, he went to the illuminated spot and dug beneath. In fine, he disinterred the bodies of the three saints. The tomb or grave of St. Patrick was fixed in a central cave or compartment, with the remains of St. Bridget and St. Columba, on either side.²² He then withdrew these precious relics, and placed them in three separate coffins. Afterwards, he buried them in that same spot, which he took care to mark with great exactness. Malachy related the particulars of his vision, to John de Courcey, the conqueror of Down. This renowned warrior, being distinguished for his zeal in the cause of religion, concurred with the bishop, that a message should be despatched to Rome, with an humble supplication, addressed to the Sovereign Chief of the faithful, Urban III. His sanction, for a solemn translation of those relics, was requested. To this petition, Pope Urban assented, and immediately he despatched Vivian, Cardinal Priest of St. Stephen, as his Legate to Ireland. The public translation of the relics took place, on the 9th of June, 1186, the festival of St. Columkille. With all due reverence and great solemnity, those remains were removed from the place of their deposition to a more conspicuous position, assigned for their reception, within the cathedral church.²³ Fifteen bishops, many abbots, provosts, deans, archdeacons, priors, with other clergy and the laity, assisted on this solemn occasion.²⁴

Speaking of Kildare city,²⁵ in Leinster, which had become so renowned, owing to its connexion with our glorious abbess, Giraldus Cambrensis says, that foremost, among many miraculous things worthy of record, was St. Brigid's inextinguishable fire.²⁶ Not, that this fire itself was incapable of being extinguished, did it obtain any such name, but, because nuns and holy women had so carefully and sedulously supplied fuel to feed its flames, that from St. Brigid's time to the twelfth century, when he wrote, it remained perpetually burning through a long lapse of years.²⁷ What was still more re-

²¹ See an interesting account of this whole matter in Rev. Sylvester Malone's "Church History of Ireland," chap. iii., pp. 95 to 97.

²² See Giraldi Cambrensis, "Opera," vol. v. Edited by James F. Dimock. Topographia Hibernica, dist. iii., cap. xviii., pp. 163, 164.

²³ "The bodies of St. Patrick, St. Columb, and St. Bridget were translated at Down, by the Pope's Legate; and the staff of Jesus was carried in triumph from the Cathedral of Armagh to Christ Church, Dublin, the adventurers hoping that it would promote their interests."—Taffie's "History of Ireland," vol. i., p. 42.

²⁴ This account nearly agrees, in every particular, with one contained in the Office of this Translation, printed at Paris, A.D. 1620. The Cardinal Legate, however, is named John, in the latter compilation. Ussher calls him Vivian. See, "De Britannicarum Ecclesiarum Primordiis," cap. xvii., p. 891.

²⁵ The town of Kildare and its immediate surroundings, together with St. Brigid's well, near Tully, is shown on the "Ordinance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Kildare," Sheet 22.

²⁶ Singularly applicable are the lines, found in that magnificent poem, "The Fire Worshippers," one of Moore's happiest inspirations, and allegorically referring to Ireland.

"And though for ever past the days
When God was worshipp'd in the blaze
That from its lofty altar shone;—
Though fled the priests, the vot'ries gone,
Still did the mighty flame burn on,
Through chance and change, through
good and ill,
Like its own God's eternal will,
Deep, constant, bright, unquenchable."

—"Lalla Rookh."

²⁷ To this remarkable circumstance allusion has been made, and it has been immor-

markable, notwithstanding great heaps of wood, that must have been piled upon it, during such a prolonged interval, the ashes of this fire never increased.²⁸

What is furthermore remarkable, from the time of St. Brigid and after her death until the twelfth century, an even number, including twenty nuns, and the abbess, had remained in Kildare nunnery. Each of these religious, in rotation, nightly watched this inextinguishable fire. On the twentieth night, having placed wood on its embers, the last nun said: "O Brigid, guard thy fires, for this night the duty devolves on thyself." Then the nun left that pyre, but although the wood might have been all consumed before morning, yet the coals remained alive and inextinguishable. A circular hedge of shrubs or thorns surrounded it, and no male person dare presume to enter within that sacred enclosure, lest he might provoke Divine vengeance, as had been experienced by a certain rash man, who ventured to transgress this ordinance. Women only were allowed to tend that fire. Even these attendants were not permitted to blow it with their breath; but, they used boughs of trees as fans for this purpose. Young goats could not even penetrate the enclosure, through St. Brigid's miraculous intervention. At Kildare, also, were to be seen most beautiful plains, which were called St. Brigid's pastures, and no one dared disturb them with the plough.²⁹ Besides, it was considered almost miraculous, although animals of all the surrounding districts grazed on these lands,³⁰ from the rising to the setting sun, on the following morning this herbage seemed luxuriant as ever.³¹ The same remarks well apply to the celebrated racing ground of the Curragh,³² in the nineteenth as well as during the twelfth century.

It is mentioned, that a certain archer, belonging to Count Richard's family, had dared to leap over the hedge, and to blow with his breath St. Brigid's fire, at Kildare; but, immediately he leaped back frantic, and whoever accosted him, this archer blew into the person's face, in like manner, while stating, that he had thus profaned the saint's sacred fire. In this demented state, he ran through houses of the whole town. Being seized and bound by his companions, he begged them to conduct him towards the first water they could meet, and here drinking an incredible quantity, he immediately expired. When another man had put his leg over the hedge, surrounding this fire, and had been suddenly drawn back by his companions, both his foot and thigh became withered. So long as he lived, that person remained lame and paralysed.³³ This, however, was not the only instance of Divine judg-

talized, in some beautiful lines, written by "the poet of all circles and the idol of his own." See Moore's "Irish Melodies."

²⁸ See Giraldi Cambrensis' "Opera," tomos v. Edited by James F. Dimock, M.A. *Topographia Hibernica*, dist. ii., cap. xxxiv., pp. 120, 121.

²⁹ Allusion is no doubt made to the Curragh, "a fine undulating down, about six miles in length and two in breadth," and it is "unequaled, perhaps, in the world for the exceeding softness and elasticity of the turf."—Mr. and Mrs. Hall's "Ireland: its Scenery, Character," &c., vol. ii., pp. 258, 259.

³⁰ To these pastures are applied the lines of Virgil:—

"Et quantum longis carpent armenta diebus

Exigua tantum gelidus ros nocte reponet."

—Georgica, lib. ii., ll. 201, 202.

³¹ See Giraldi Cambrensis' "Opera," vol. v. Edited by James F. Dimock, M.A. *Topographia Hibernica*, dist. ii., cap. xxxv., xxxvi., pp. 121, 122.

³² The old map of Kildare county by John Noble and James Kernan presents a picture of the great racing contest in 1751, on the Curragh of Kildare, between Black and All Black—so celebrated in Oliver Goldsmith's "Citizen of the World," letter v.—with Bajazet. This illustration also shows the equestrian costume of that period.

³³ See Giraldi Cambrensis' "Opera," Edited by James F. Dimock, M.A. *Topographia Hibernica*, dist. ii., cap. xlviii., p. 131.

man, seated on a seven-armed profaned St. Brigid's sanctuaries. For Earl Strongbow himself had his desecrated thoughts desecrated by a recollection of his fugitives towards our illustrious saint! Many of the medieval traditions, regarding holy Brigid's veneration at Kildare, have not been preserved, save only in an imperfect or in a fragmentary fashion. The inhabitants, however, yet relate some legends concerning her.

In the year 1550, Henry of London,⁴³ Archbishop of Dublin,⁴⁴ ordered St. Brigid's fire at Kildare to be extinguished. This is said to have been done, so that all occasion for superstition might be removed.⁴⁵

At the time when Richard Stanihurst⁴⁶ wrote, in the sixteenth century,⁴⁷ it would seem, that Down had fallen from its more ancient splendour, and had sunk to the proportions of a village.⁴⁸ The English Martyrology,⁴⁹ which has allusion to the twelfth century translation of the bodies of our three great patron saints,⁵⁰ mentions an inscription, likewise, as having been carved on their tombs.⁵¹ It relates, that their monument continued in Down,⁵² to the time of Henry VIII., King of England. To the great regret of the Irish Catholic people, it was destroyed about this latter period.⁵³ Such destruction occurred during that time, when Lord Leonard Gray was governor over Ireland, and in the year 1538.⁵⁴ It is stated, however, that St. Brigid's head was saved by some of the clergy, who carried it to Neusatz, in Austria; and thence, in 1537, it was taken to the church of the Jesuits, at Lisbon, to whom the Emperor Rudolf II. gave it.⁵⁵

⁴³ "The name of the Earl of Down is the greatest display of the degraded and low that had come to Ireland since the time of the Norse tyrant Torgestus. According to the medieval tale he had broken down his first, through the murders of an English nobleman, and of the other saints, whose sanctuaries he had desecrated. They avenged that on his death-bed, the Earl imagined that he saw St. Brigid, the holy Abbess of Kildare, in the act of welcoming him, for having profaned her churches in Leinster."—Gilbert's "History of the Visitation of Ireland," chap. vi., p. 21. See also, Notes to chap. vi., p. 238, &c. The same circumstance is related in Dr. J. Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. iii., p. 25, at A.D. 1175.

⁴⁴ See an account of him in Harris' Ware, vol. ii., "Archbishops of Dublin," pp. 313 to 320.

⁴⁵ He occupied this see from A.D. 1513 to 1525, when he died, about the beginning of July.

⁴⁶ See Rev. S. Baring-Gould's "Lives of the Saints," vol. ii., February 1st, p. 22.

⁴⁷ See an account of him and of his writings in S. Austin Allibone's "Critical Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors," 2d. ed., vol. iii., p. 2225.

⁴⁸ This writer was born in Dublin about the year 1545 or 1546, and he died at Brussels, A.D. 1615. See *ibid.*

⁴⁹ Stanihurst adds: "nunc tantum villula, cum veteris structure parietibus apparet, in qua corpora D. Patrick, Columba, et Brigide fuerunt sepulta."—Richard, Stanihursti Dublinensis, "De Rebus in Hibernia Ges-

titis," lib. i., c. 26. Edition Anthony et. A.D. 1607, p. 210.

⁵⁰ At the 1st of February. The authority states, "Ipsorum corpora translatum est in 1225."—*ibid.*, lib. i., c. 26.

⁵¹ As related by John de Brompton, in Topographia Hibernica, lib. iii., cap. xxviii. The text was edited by James F. Duffin, M.A., pp. 163, 164.

⁵² The following is found in Camden—"Brigitte," newly translated into English, with large additions and improvements, by Edmund Spenser.

⁵³ In large Latin words its translation is into English, *Patruis, arce Columbe pias.*

It is thus rendered into English.—

⁵⁴ One tomb three saints contains: one vault built.

Thus Brigid, Patrick and Columba show.

—Col. 1013. Fol. edition, London, 1603.

⁵⁵ We are told, that many remains of antiquity had been discovered among the ruins of Down Abbey. Among these were noticed, when repairing the old cathedral, before the commencement of this century, an image of St. Patrick in ivory relief. "This was about two feet and a-half in length; his nose on his head, and crozier in his hand; the work rudely but not unskillfully done."—Dubourcier's "Statistical Survey of the County of Down," Appendix sec. 3, pp. 281, 282.

⁵⁶ See Haverly's "History of Ireland, Ancient and Modern," chap. xxx., p. 365.

⁵⁷ See Rev. S. Baring-Gould's "Lives of the Saints," vol. ii., February 1st, p. 22.

According to the several prophecies, regarding this illustrious saint, her name and her virtues were destined to be celebrated, not only in Ireland, but throughout the world, while that veneration and respect paid to her memory were to continue, until the day of final doom.⁴⁷ The event has corresponded, hitherto, with this recorded prediction, nor can we reasonably doubt the prophetic saying will continue to be verified, when time draws to its close: for, numberless writers have testified, concerning the extent and prevalence of those honours paid to her throughout Ireland, as also in the various countries of Europe, and over the entire world. Generations yet unborn shall continue still further to extend and perpetuate her fame.

CHAPTER XVI.

NUMEROUS CHURCHES, CHAPELS, RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS, AND PLACES, DEDICATED TO, OR CALLED AFTER, ST. BRIGID, IN IRELAND—HOLY WELLS AND OBJECTS ASSOCIATED WITH HER MEMORY—MODERN HYPOTHESES, CHAPELS, AND CONVENTS, DEDICATED TO HER—RELIGIOUS PLACES PLACED UNDER HER PATRONAGE.

THE extraordinary veneration and devotion, entertained by the Irish people for St. Bridget, are evidenced by numberless ancient and modern churches, chapels, convents, holy wells, and places, still retaining her name, throughout every part of our island. There were many other churches and religious houses, in different parts of Ireland, and of which St. Brigid is patron; although such erections and places are not now named after her. Colgan had obtained catalogues of churches, belonging to the different dioceses of Dublin, Tuam, Kildare, Elphin, and Lismore, afterwards united to Waterford, from bishops presiding over those respective sees. From such lists, he was enabled to set down the names of various churches or places, which claimed St. Brigid as special patron.⁴⁸ But, as he was unable to obtain catalogues of contemporary churches and parsons, in connexion with the remaining twenty-five or twenty-six sees in Ireland, he justly leaves us to infer, how extended must have been that fame and veneration, procured for our saint, throughout the rest of our island.⁴⁹ Of Erin she was always regarded as the great, and general intercessor. Hence, it happened, that so many different territories, baronies, parishes, denominations, townlands, and natural objects, were associated with her name.⁵⁰ While enlarging this list, from other available sources for information, our catalogue must necessarily be imperfect. A more extended knowledge of localities and of popular traditions, with comparison and examination of registers or archives, may enable future investigators greatly to increase the succeeding topographical collection of Brigantine localities and objects.

⁴⁷ "Claram nomenque tuum pates, que secutis, in vertice celsi, succedat nomen. — Vita Tertie S. Brigidæ, c. vii. p. 327. Also, the same words occur in Vita Tertie S. Brigidæ, lib. ii. cap. vii. p. 340, with the addition, "in quo in fine succedat."—Colgan's "Thes. Thaumaturgæ."

CHAPTER XVI.—It must be remarked, that some places, mentioned by Colgan, as being dedicated to, or called after, our saint, are to be found in other Irish dioceses, besides those previously named. See "Thes. Thaumaturgæ." Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigidæ, cap. xvii. pp. 624, 625.

⁴⁸ When Colgan's mere page is cited in this chapter, allusion is made to the previously mentioned work and appendix.

⁴⁹ This enumeration Colgan extracted from his Catalogue of Churches, belonging to the dioceses already mentioned. But, he would not undertake to say, whether all these places derived their names from St. Brigid, surnamed Thaumaturga, owing to the number and greatness of her miracles, or whether some had not been derived from other saints, bearing the name of Brigid, since many such are to be found in our Irish Calendars.

Foremost among the places, where St. Brigid was honoured, is Kildare. The cathedral church⁴ of this ancient city, in the province of Leinster, took her name and tutelary guardianship, we can have little doubt, not very long after her demise.⁵ In the seventeenth century, her chapel was also standing.⁶ A monastery of Canons Regular at Kildare, where St. Brigid formerly presided over monks and nuns, is said to have been dedicated to her; while, the convent of her order rejoiced especially, in having her once as an illustrious directrix, and after death as a glorious patroness. In modern times, the Catholic parochial church has been dedicated to her memory, while, the Presentation Convent and schools of the town are under her special patronage. Further, towards the west, Rosenallis,⁷ a parish church, in the barony of Tinnahinch, Queen's County, in the deanery of Killeigh, or Killachuidh, diocese of Kildare,⁸ was dedicated to St. Brigid.⁹

The following churches and places were dedicated to or named from St. Bride, or St. Bridget, in the present city and diocese of Dublin. St. Bride's Church,¹⁰ situated in Bride-street,¹¹ was formerly a dependency on the Church of the Most Holy Trinity, and afterwards on St. Patrick's Cathedral, owing to a grant of Archbishop Comin. It also was called after our saint.¹² Bride's-alley, running off Bride-street. Bride's-place, situated off Golden-lane. Bridewell-lane, off West Arran-street. This locality may have taken its name, from some Brideswell, or St. Brigid's well. A nunnery, dedicated to St. Bride, formerly stood in Channel-row. There was an hospital, dedicated to St. Peter and to St. Brigid.¹³ It stood in Peter-street. There was a Bride's Well; now covered by a pump, which is to be seen at present in a courtway off Bride-street. In the county of Dublin, at Killossery, otherwise called Ashbourne-rath on Ashbourne-road, eight or nine miles from Dublin city, are the ruins of an ancient ivied church, which was dedicated to St. Brigid.¹⁴ It is a curacy in the deanery of Swords.¹⁵ It was called Kilteri or Killostre in ancient documents.¹⁶

The old ruins of Killester, anciently called Kyllastra¹⁷ or Quillestra, are enclosed by walls, and on the road-side.¹⁸ Several portions of the former

⁴ See Colgan, p. 625.

⁵ See a description of the ruins in Thomas Bell's "Essay on the Origin and Progress of Gothic Architecture, with reference to the Ancient History and Present State of the Remains of such Architecture in Ireland, to which was awarded the Prize proposed by the Royal Irish Academy for the best Essay on that Subject," sect. xvi., pp. 192 to 195. Dublin: 1829, 8vo.

⁶ Kill-brigde, or Kilbride, a chapel at Kildare town, and in the same diocese, province of Leinster, was dedicated to St. Brigid, in Colgan's time. See p. 625.

⁷ See its parochial extent on "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the Queen's County." Sheets 3, 4, 6, 7, 8.

⁸ See Colgan, p. 625.

⁹ See an interesting account of this parish—the proper name of which is stated to be Oregan—by the Rev. John Baldwin, curate, in William Shaw Mason's "Statistical Account or Parochial Survey of Ireland," vol. iii. No. xvi., pp. 311 to 332.

¹⁰ We find, at A.D. 1180, Joseph, chaplain of St. Bridget's, was a subscribing witness to a grant of land, made to the prior of the

Most Holy Trinity. See "History of the City of Dublin, from the earliest accounts to the present time," &c., by J. Warburton, Rev. J. Whitelaw, and the Rev. Robert Walsh, vol. i., p. 267.

¹¹ This is probably the one, called Templum S. Brigidæ, or Teampull Bride, in Colgan's list, p. 625.

¹² See William Monck Mason's "History and Antiquities of the Collegiate and Cathedral Church of St. Patrick, near Dublin," &c., book i., chap. xi., p. 72.

¹³ This was founded in 1810, by Dr. Kirby.

¹⁴ See "Repertorium Viride."

¹⁵ See D'Alton's "History of the County of Dublin," pp. 400 to 402.

¹⁶ See William Monck Mason's "History and Antiquities of the Collegiate and Cathedral Church of St. Patrick, near Dublin," &c., book i., chap. x., sect. ii., p. 49.

¹⁷ See some curious grants of lands here to a certain Andrew Breen, in Warburton's, Whitelaw's and Walsh's "History of the City of Dublin, from the earliest accounts to the present time," &c., vol. i., p. 266.

¹⁸ About three miles from Dublin city.

building remain, but, in a very delapidated condition. Masses of ivy shade them on every direction.¹⁹ The walls are well jointed and grouted, while the black calp limestone of this district furnished material for their erection. These are three feet in thickness, and the church measures seventeen feet in width, on the interior, by forty-six feet, in length. The ruins stand in the centre of a small and overcrowded graveyard, which is nearly covered with weeds, aged elder trees, and tangled brambles. This chapel—once appendant to the church of Swords—appears to have been quadrangular, without the usual division of nave and choir. Four large apertures are in the side-walls—two of these on either side. Towards the road, one opening appears to have been



The Old Ruins of Killester.

arched with undressed stone, and this was of obtusely-pointed Gothic shape. Probably a door lay underneath it. On one of the gables, towards the west, a large door-way pierced the wall, which seems torn away below its sill to the present earth-level. Traces of plaster, remaining about its interior, prove that the church was used for purposes of worship, at no very remote age. Opposite the gable described, there was an orifice in the other. A large-pointed Gothic eastern window stood here.²⁰ Mr. D'Alton, who saw the place before the year 1838, infers only the existence of this window. Comfortable old mansions, with their high garden walls, are in the immediate vicinity of this old burial-place; and, but for its proximity to the public road, the seclusion of its situation would almost be complete. The grave surfaces are high over the adjoining fields and the road level; especially between the ruins and the public highway. Rank, indeed, is that soil, formed by the dust of many generations of dead, here quietly reposing.²¹ A

¹⁹ The accompanying engraving by Mrs. Millard, Dublin, is from a sketch taken by the author on the spot, January 1st, 1876.

²⁰ See Thomas Bell's "Essay on the Origin and Progress of Gothic Architecture, with reference to the Ancient History and Present State of the Remains of such Archi-

itecture in Ireland," &c., sect. xiv., p. 188.

²¹ In some instances, the coffins of mere infants were found protruding over the surface; and, in one particular case, the name, and date of death, inscribed over two years before, were distinctly legible on the tiny breast-plate.

few old trees, near the iron gate, which affords an entrance, seem to have shaded the graves beneath for centuries. One of those trees—an ash—is rapidly decaying. On the October day,²² when we rested for a time at this mortuary place, “the sear and yellow leaf” scantily hung from the few remaining branches. This chapel, an appendage to Christ Church, Dublin, at the period of the Anglo-Norman invasion, was dedicated, as we are told, to St. Brigid, the Patroness of Ireland.²³

At Swords, about eight miles from Dublin, there was a chapel, dedicated to St. Brigid, lying north of the town, and an ancient pardon cross stood near.²⁴ It adjoined the prebendary’s glebe, and it arose not far from the gates of the old archiepiscopal palace, having two burgages attached.²⁵ At Ward,²⁶ about three or four miles from Dublin, on the Finglas side, are the very slender ruins of a chapel, dedicated to St. Brigid,²⁷ one of three subservient to Finglas. These remains are sodded over, almost even with the ground, excepting one ivied gable. No tomb of note is to be found in the graveyard.²⁸ This chapel of Ward,²⁹ a parochial one, in the barony of Castleknock, lay within the diocese and county of Dublin.³⁰ At Castleknock, about five miles from Dublin, there might formerly be seen an abbey for Canons, following the rule of St. Augustine. About 1184, Richard Tyrrell, in honour of St. Brigid, granted certain lands to endow it.³¹ This handsome suburban village of Castleknock,³² had a parish church in a barony so called, of Dublin county and diocese.³³ It was dedicated to St. Brigid, who was also patroness of a cell there established.³⁴ Likewise, a Kildarenia, parish church, belonging to the diocese of Dublin,³⁵ is said to have been under St. Brigid’s patronage. Tulach, or Tully,³⁶ a parish within the barony of Rathdown, county and diocese of Dublin,³⁷ had a church dedicated to St. Brigid.³⁸ Already has allusion to it been made, in a previous chapter. Besides these, Grainseach Harold, *alias*, Harold Grange, a parish church, within the county and diocese of Dublin,³⁹ was under the patronage of St. Brigid. At Tallagh, about seven miles from Dublin, a chapel of St. Bride stood near the Dodder. The stones of this building were used in the erection of an adjoining factory. There was a Kilbride chapel, near Rath-

²² In 1870.

²³ See D’Alton’s “History of the County of Dublin,” pp. 239 to 241.

²⁴ See, also, William Monck Mason’s “History and Antiquities of St. Patrick’s Cathedral and Collegiate Church, near Dublin,” &c., book i., chap. x., sect. ii., p. 49.

²⁵ See D’Alton’s “History of the County of Dublin,” p. 274.

²⁶ In ancient times, called the town of Riemund le Bank.

²⁷ See William Monck Mason’s “History and Antiquities of the Collegiate and Cathedral Church of St. Patrick, near Dublin,” &c., book i., chap. vii., p. 37.

²⁸ See D’Alton’s “History of the County of Dublin,” pp. 584 to 587.

²⁹ See its extent, on the “Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Dublin.” Sheets 10, 11, 13, 14.

³⁰ See Colgan, p. 625.

³¹ See it shown on the “Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Dublin.” Sheets 13, 14, 17, 18.

³² See Colgan, p. 625.

³³ See D’Alton’s “History of the County of Dublin,” pp. 552 to 562.

³⁴ See William Monck Mason’s “History and Antiquities of the Collegiate and Cathedral Church of St. Patrick, near Dublin,” &c., book i., chap. x., sect. ix., p. 58.

³⁵ See Colgan, p. 625.

³⁶ See “Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Dublin.” Sheets 22, 23, 25, 26.

³⁷ See Colgan, p. 625.

³⁸ The Rev. Dr. Todd takes Mr. D’Alton and Ledwich to task, for stating this church had been dedicated to St. Tullock or St. Olave. The ancient name was *τὸ ἄσος τῶν ἐπισκόπων*, “the hill of the bishops,” and it was sacred to St. Bride’s memory. See “The Book of Obits and Martyrology of the Cathedral Church of the Holy Trinity, commonly called Christ Church, Dublin. Edited by John Clarke Crosthwaite and Rev. James Henthorn Todd. Introduction, p. lxxxiii., n. (c).”

³⁹ See Colgan, p. 625.

more, and between it and Tipper, which belonged to the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. Between the Golden Hill and Knocktelowny, eight or nine miles from Dublin, were the ruins of a chapel called Kilbride Ogadre. It lies in the glen near the Liffey. It was dependent on the mother church of Kilmesantan or Templesantan, so picturesquely situated high over the bank of the Dodder River, and nestling among the Dublin mountains.⁴⁰ At Stillorgan, about five miles from Dublin, there was a church,⁴¹ dedicated to St. Bride.⁴² It is supposed, the Protestant church now stands on its site. An ancient well is near, but it could not be ascertained, as having been dedicated to St. Brigid, from any existing tradition.

The following compound local denominations—or at least the vastly greater number of them—are presumed to have been called after our St. Brigid. Here were probably named, in honour of her, and also dedicated, churches, chapels, or religious institutions. A chapel of St. Brigid was within Cunga or Cong Monastery, county of Mayo, and province of Connaught.⁴³ This existed in the seventeenth century, and perhaps to a later period. In the city of Dublin, there is a parish,⁴⁴ and a parochial church, dedicated to St. Bridget.⁴⁵ The church is now used for purposes of Protestant worship, and it stands on the site of a former Catholic church. Adjoining are the Protestant schools of St. Bridget. There is another parish, dedicated to St. Bridget, in the barony of Forth, and county of Wexford.⁴⁶

There was a Kill-brigde, a chapel in the territory of Inachuaais,⁴⁷ in Meath; and, also, a Kill-brigde, in Ferakeall⁴⁸ territory, diocese of Meath. Various places, here, were under her protection. Kilbride parish, is situated partly in the barony of Fore,⁴⁹ county of Meath;⁵⁰ and, partly in the barony Clonmahon,⁵¹ county of Cavan.⁵² Kilbride townland is in this latter division.⁵³ There is a townland of Kilbride,⁵⁴ in the parish of Nobber, barony of Mor-

⁴⁰ See William Monck Mason's "History and Antiquities of the Collegiate and Cathedral Church of St. Patrick, near Dublin," book i., chap. v., xi., pp. 28, 74, 75, and nn. *ibid.*

⁴¹ See D'Alton's "History of the County of Dublin," pp. 837 to 841.

⁴² According to Archbishop Allen's "Liber Niger."

⁴³ See Colgan, p. 624. An interesting account of Cong, with an illustration from a drawing by Samuel Lover, R.H.A., will be found in Sir William Wilde's "Lough Corrib, its Shores and Islands, with Notices of Lough Mask," chap. vii., pp. 145 to 176.

⁴⁴ See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Dublin." Sheet 18.

⁴⁵ The present parish of St. Bride consists of a union of three smaller parishes, the ancient St. Bride's, St. Stephen's and St. Michael de la Pole. See that most elegant and valuable hand-book, so handsomely issued, "An Historical Guide to Ancient and Modern Dublin." Illustrated by engravings, after drawings by George Petrie. By the Rev. G. N. Wright, A.M., pp. 152 to 154.

⁴⁶ See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Wexford." Sheet 37.

⁴⁷ Under this form, it does not seem to be easy of identification. We find, however, in the "Tripartite Life of St. Patrick," mention made of a "territory of Laeghaire of Bregia and Imghae in the territory of Laeghaire of Meath."—Miss Cusack's "Life of St. Patrick, Apostle of Ireland," p. 395.

⁴⁸ This is rendered by Dr. O'Donovan, "*Viri callarum seu potius ecclesiarum.*" The name was long preserved in Fircal, now known as Eglish, a barony in the King's County; but, there is ample evidence to prove, that Feara-ceall comprised, likewise, the baronies of Ballycowan and Ballyboy, in the same county. See "The Topographical Poems of John O'Dubhagain and Giolla na Naomh O'Luighrin," n. 24, p. vi.

⁴⁹ A great number of ancient forts may be seen, in this division of the parish.

⁵⁰ This is shown on the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Meath." Sheets 8, 9.

⁵¹ Several ancient forts are to be found on this section of the Ordnance Maps.

⁵² This is shown on the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Cavan." Sheets 38, 42.

⁵³ See *ibid.*, Sheet 38.

⁵⁴ This is shown on the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Meath." Sheets 6, 12.

gallion, and county of Meath. We find, also, a parish, called Kilbride⁵⁵ or Moymet,⁵⁶ in the barony of Upper Navan, deanery of Trim, and county of Meath. It contains an old church, venerable in its desolation, and mantled with ivy.⁵⁷ It measures seventy-five by sixteen feet. At Iskeroon,⁵⁸ there is a church and well dedicated to St. Brigid. A cemetery adjoined both, but it has been discontinued as a place of interment for many past years.⁵⁹ In Killare parish,⁶⁰ barony of Rathconrath, and county of Westmeath, deanery of Clara, and diocese of Meath, there are the ruins of St. Brigid's chapel; the length was thirty-three feet, by nineteen in breadth. Two ash-trees spread over the site of the altar. St. Bridgid's Well, shaded by an ash-tree, is also pointed out. Again, a small chapel, called Tigh-Bahrighde, or "Bridgid's House," stood on the townland of Ardnurcher.⁶¹ It has been pulled down, however, and uprooted. St. Bridgid's Well is here, also, and it is occasionally frequented.⁶² At Drumbride,⁶³ parish of Drumcondra,⁶⁴ and barony of Lower Slane, in the deanery of Kells, county of Meath, an abbey and a church are said to have been erected by St. Brigid. On a lofty hill, portion of an old church yet remains. It is situated about two miles north of Drumcondra. The cemetery is yet a favourite place of interment, for people in the neighbourhood.⁶⁵ A moat is beside it. In the parish of Kilbride,⁶⁶ barony of Dunboyne and deanery of Kells, in the county of Meath, there was an old church, which was pulled down, but the cemetery remains.⁶⁷ Near it is St. Bridgid's Well. The parish is under her patronage. In it are several fragments of way-side crosses. The beautiful Lough Sheelin lies near it, and various islands there certify to the existence of ancient religious foundations.⁶⁸ At Kilbride,⁶⁹ a parish situated in the barony of Kilcoursey, King's County, a church and convent are said to have been founded by St. Brigid. The people have a tradition, that this was the first church erected by her, after she became a professed religious, on the hill of Usney. Some remains of a chapel and of a conventual establishment are to be seen; and, fragments of the church, which remain in the contiguous cemetery, measure fifty-two feet in length, by twenty-four in width.⁷⁰ The parish of Oldcastle,⁷¹ in the barony of Demifore,

⁵⁵ A certain Mr. Carey, in 1657, was licensed to preach at Bride's parish to the Irish, "once every Lord's day; and that he doe occasionally repair to Trim and Athye (query) Athboy, to preach as aforesaid."—Very Rev. Richard Butler's "Some Notices of the Castle and of the Ecclesiastical Buildings of Trim, compiled from various authorities," p. 160.

⁵⁶ See it marked, on the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Meath." Sheets 30, 36.

⁵⁷ This, with the castle, is found on Sheet 30. The townland is called Kilbride.

⁵⁸ This denomination, with Iskeroon Little, will be found on Sheet 30.

⁵⁹ See Rev. A. Cogan's "Diocese of Meath, Ancient and Modern," vol. ii., chap. xvii., pp. 368, 369.

⁶⁰ See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County Westmeath." Sheet 24.

⁶¹ Ardnurcher or Horseleap parish is partly in the barony of Kilcoursey, King's County, and this is shown on "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the King's County," Sheet 2; and partly in the barony of Moycashel, county of West-

meath. This latter part is noted, on "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Westmeath." Sheets 24, 31, 32, 37, 38.

⁶² See Rev. A. Cogan's "Diocese of Meath, Ancient and Modern," vol. ii., chap. xix., pp. 494, 497.

⁶³ Its position is marked, on the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Meath." Sheet 3.

⁶⁴ See *ibid.* Sheets 3, 6.

⁶⁵ See Rev. A. Cogan's "Diocese of Meath, Ancient and Modern," vol. ii., chap. xvi., p. 295.

⁶⁶ See it noted, on the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Meath." Sheets 45, 51.

⁶⁷ It is shown, on Sheet 45.

⁶⁸ See Rev. A. Cogan's "Diocese of Meath, Ancient and Modern," vol. ii., chap. xvi., pp. 313, 314.

⁶⁹ Its position is defined, on the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the King's County." Sheets 2, 8.

⁷⁰ See Rev. A. Cogan's "Diocese of Meath, Ancient and Modern," vol. ii., chap. xix., p. 496.

county of Meath, was dedicated to St. Bridgid.⁷² The church has been long since levelled. In the graveyard are fragments of stone crosses and of ancient tombs.⁷³ A holy well lies near the town of Oldcastle, but its patron's name is not recorded.⁷⁴ On a hill called Carrick-Moile, in the parish of Lickbla,⁷⁵ barony of Fore, and deanery of Mullingar, there is a well dedicated to St. Brigid. Here stations used to be held on her festival day.⁷⁶ There was a church also called Kilbride, on the townland of Adamstown,⁷⁷ but only a graveyard there remains.⁷⁸

There was an ancient church of St. Brigid in Cork, close to St. Finbarr's Cathedral. No vestige of the church now remains; but, an old burying-ground is there, and, for a considerable time, it had been used by the Anabaptists, of whom existed a few families. Now, these are extinct, or almost so, in Cork. Few people in this city knew of that little graveyard. We can have no doubt, but this church was dedicated to the great St. Brigid.⁷⁹ There was, also, a Kill-brigde, or Kilbride, a chapel, in Baile antobuir or Ballintober village,⁸⁰ in the diocese of Tuam, and province of Connaught.⁸¹ There was a Kill-brigde, or Kilbride, near the town of Fethard,⁸² in a parish of the same name,⁸³ diocese of Cashel, and province of Munster.⁸⁴ Besides these, Kill-brigde, or Kilbride, or "the cell of Brigid," a chapel in Kill-luckin parish, diocese of Elphin, and in the territory of Siol-Muiredhuigh,⁸⁵ rejoiced in the glorious abbess as special patron.⁸⁶ The people, known by this name, were the O'Conors of Magh Naoi,⁸⁷ and their correlatives.⁸⁸ Their territory

⁷² Its position is marked, on the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Meath." Sheets 9, 10, 15.

⁷⁴ A vast number of ancient forts lie within this parish.

⁷³ See Rev. A. Cogan's "Diocese of Meath, Ancient and Modern," vol. ii., chap. xvi., p. 334.

⁷⁵ See Maps, Sheet 9.

⁷⁷ Its extent is shown, on the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Westmeath." Sheets 1, 2, 3. Yet Carrick-Moile is not noted within it, on any of those Maps.

⁷⁹ See Rev. A. Cogan's "Diocese of Meath, Ancient and Modern," vol. ii., chap. xviii., and n. p. 400.

⁷⁷ There are two Adamstown's, in the county of Westmeath; one, in the parish of Castletownkindalen and barony of Moycashel, and the other, in the parish of Conry, and barony of Rathconrath. See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Westmeath." Sheets 25, 32.

⁷⁸ See Rev. A. Cogan's "Diocese of Meath, Ancient and Modern," vol. ii., chap. xviii., p. 418.

⁷⁹ Letter of Very Rev. Denis Canon MacSwiney, P.P., dated Feb. 1st, 1872, River View, Carrigaline, Co. Cork.

⁸⁰ There are two townlands called Ballintober East and West, in the parish of Kilreekill and barony of Leitrim. Sheet 98. There is a Ballintober, parish of Cummer, and barony of Clare. Sheet 57. There is a Ballintober, parish and barony of Kilconnell. Sheet 86. Again, there is a Ballintober, parish of Killallaghan, and barony

of Kilconnell. See Sheet 86. "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Galway."

⁸¹ See Colgan, p. 625.

⁸² See Sheet 70.

⁸³ The town and parish so named are noted, on the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Tipperary." Sheet 70. The parish is in the barony of Middlethird, and in the South Riding of the county.

⁸⁴ See Colgan, p. 625.

⁸⁵ The Siol or Sil-Muireadhaigh descended from Muireadhach Muillethan, King of Connaught, who died in the year 701. See Dr. O'Donovan's "Topographical Poems of John O'Dubhagain and Giolla na Naomh O'Huidhrin," n. 231, p. xxxiii.

⁸⁶ See Colgan, p. 624.

⁸⁷ The inhabitants of the town of Roscommon and of its vicinity, when speaking of the country generally, call that district, lying between them and Athlone, "the Barony," and that between them and Elphin, "the Magery." They say you are not in the Magery, until you are two miles and a-half, north of Roscommon town. See Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. iii., n. (h), p. 87.

⁸⁸ After the establishment of surnames, they branched into various families and spread themselves over a considerable territory. These families were the MacDermots, MacDonoughs, O'Beirnes, O'Flanagans, Mageraghtys, O'Finaghtys. Of all these ancient clans or septs, the O'Conors were the most powerful. See *ibid.*, vol. i., n. (i), p. 301.

was known as Machaire-Chonnacht,⁸⁹ a large plain in the county of Roscommon.⁹⁰ Kill-brigde, or Kilbride, in the territory of Gleanntachuir,⁹¹ in the diocese of Derry, and in the Ulster province,⁹² was dedicated to St. Brigid. At Kilmactalway,⁹³ about eight miles from Dublin, one of the avenues from Castle Bagot demesne leads to the ruins of Kilbride chapel,⁹⁴ of which mention has already been more fully made, in a previous chapter. Again, Kill-brigde, or Kilbride, a chapel, in the parish of Bally an Chaly—a denomination now unknown⁹⁵—diocese of Tuam,⁹⁶ was called after St. Brigid. There is a townland of Kilbride,⁹⁷ in the parish and barony of Ross, county of Galway; and, we find a townland, called Kilbride,⁹⁸ in the parish of Bright,⁹⁹ barony of Upper Lecale, county of Down. These places were sacred to St. Brigid. There are two townlands of Kilbride, respectively in the parishes of Aghade and Barragh, both in the barony of Forth, and county of Carlow.¹⁰⁰ There is a Kilbride townland,¹⁰¹ in the parish of Abbeylara, barony of Granard, and county of Longford. There is a Kilbride townland,¹⁰² in the parish, barony and county of Louth. There is a Kilbride townland,¹⁰³ in the parish and barony of Burrishoole, county of Mayo. There is another Kilbride townland,¹⁰⁴ in the parish of Mayo, barony of Clanmorris, same county. Again, there is a Kilbride townland,¹⁰⁵ in the parish of Kilcunduff, barony of Gallen, and county of Mayo. There is a townland of Kilbride, in the parish of Cloncurry, baronies of Ikeathy and Oughterany, County Kildare.¹⁰⁶ There is a parish, called Pass of Kilbride, in the barony

⁸⁹ The following are its bounds, according to the general tradition of the Roscommon people. It extends northward as far as Lismaccoil, in the parish of Kilmacumshy; eastwards, to Falsk, in the parish of Kilkuckin; westwards, from the bridge of Cloonfree, near Stokestown as far as the bridge of Castlereia; and, southwards, to a hill, lying two miles and a-half, north of Roscommon town. The natives of Baslick parish call a hill, in the townland of Drishaghan in that parish, the navel or centre of the Machaire, or plain of Connaught. This conveys a distinct idea, regarding the position of Magh Naoi. See *ibid.*, vol. iii., n. (h), p. 88.

⁹⁰ It lay between the towns of Roscommon and Elphin, also between Castlereia and Stokestown.

⁹¹ This was formerly called in Irish Domhnach Slinne-tochair. This particular denomination is now decomposed and preserved, partly in Donough, the name of the parish, and partly in Glentogher, otherwise Carrowmore, an extensive mountainous tract therein. This was the native parish of our great hagiologist, John Colgan. The church was founded by St. Patrick, and originally the place was called Domnach-mor Muighe-Tochuir. See Archbishop Cotton's "Visitation of the Diocese of Derry, A.D. mcccxcvii." Edited by Rev. William Reeves, n. (v), p. 67.

⁹² See Colgan, p. 625.

⁹³ See D'Alton's "History of the County of Dublin," p. 688.

⁹⁴ This Kilbride, near Clondalkin, was found to have had one cottage and one old

chapel, worth yearly xlii*l*., according to the Inquisition of 38 Henry VIII. See William Monck Mason's "History and Antiquities of the Collegiate and Cathedral Church of St. Patrick, near Dublin," &c., book i., chap. v., p. 29.

⁹⁵ Or, at least, not noticed, on the Ordnance Survey Maps.

⁹⁶ See Colgan, p. 624.

⁹⁷ See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Galway." Sheets 13, 26.

⁹⁸ See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Down." Sheet 45.

⁹⁹ This church stood in a field, now known as "Church Park," about three-quarters of a mile S.W. of Killough. It was razed in 1830, and little trace of it now remains. See Rev. Dr. Reeves' "Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Down, Connor and Dromore," n. (t), p. 34.

¹⁰⁰ See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Carlow." Sheets 17, 18.

¹⁰¹ See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Longford." Sheet 11.

¹⁰² See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Louth." Sheet 11.

¹⁰³ See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Mayo." Sheet 68.

¹⁰⁴ See *ibid.* Sheets 90, 91, 101.

¹⁰⁵ See *ibid.* Sheets 62, 72.

¹⁰⁶ See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Kildare." Sheet 4.

of Fartullagh, County Westmeath.¹⁰⁷ There is, also, as a separate denomination, the parish of Kilbride, in the same barony.¹⁰⁸ On the townland of Kilbride,¹⁰⁹ it seems likely a church to St. Brigid had been erected. Already have we noticed, in a previous chapter, the parishes and townlands, called Kilbride, in the counties of Dublin, Wicklow and Wexford.

It seems likely the following places were named after her:—The Chapel Cill-brigde, or Kilbride, in Kildare deanery and diocese, province of Leinster.¹¹⁰ The town of Kildare, in the middle of this diocese, is surrounded immediately by the deanery so named.¹¹¹ There is a parish of Kilbride, in the barony of Tirawley, county of Mayo;¹¹² a townland in it bears the same name.¹¹³ There is a townland, called Kilbride,¹¹⁴ in the parish of Lea, barony of Portnahinch, Queen's County. There is a parish of Kilbride, in the barony of Ballycowan, King's County;¹¹⁵ a townland of the same denomination lies within it.¹¹⁶ A very extensive parish, lying within the baronies of Ballintober South and of Roscommon, in the county of Roscommon, is denominated Kilbride.¹¹⁷ In the barony of Ballintober North, in the parish of Kilmore, and in the same county, there is a townland called Kilbride.¹¹⁸ Kill-brigde major, or Kilbride the greater,¹¹⁹ and Kill-brigde-minor, or Kilbride the lesser,¹²⁰ parish churches of Limerick diocese, in Munster, were dedicated to St. Brigid.¹²¹ Kill-brigde, or Kilbride, sometimes called Temple Brigid, was a chapel in Armagh city and diocese, province of Ulster.¹²² To this, allusion has been more fully made, in a previous chapter.¹²³ Kill-brigde major, or Kilbride the greater, a parish church, and Kill-brigde minor, or Kilbride the lesser, a chapel, in Maglacha¹²⁴ district, diocese of Ossory, honoured St. Brigid as their special patroness.¹²⁵ There is a townland and parish of Kilbride, barony of Ida, in the county of Kilkenny.¹²⁶ There is also a townland of Kilbride, in the parish and barony of Callan, in the same county.¹²⁷ There is, in addition, a Kilbride Glebe there.¹²⁸ Besides these, we find a Kill-brigde,¹²⁹ or Kilbride,¹³⁰ a parish church,¹³¹ in

¹⁰⁷ See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Westmeath." Sheets 27, 33, 34.

¹⁰⁸ See *ibid.* Sheets 26, 33.

¹⁰⁹ See *ibid.* Sheet 33.

¹¹⁰ See Colgan, p. 624.

¹¹¹ See "Trias Thaumaturga." Appendix Quinta ad Acta S. Brigidæ, cap. i., p. 628.

¹¹² See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Mayo." Sheets 7, 14.

¹¹³ See *ibid.* Sheet 7.

¹¹⁴ See it noted, on "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the Queen's County." Sheets 4, 5, 8, 9.

¹¹⁵ See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the King's County." Sheets 8, 9, 16, 17, 25.

¹¹⁶ See Sheet 16.

¹¹⁷ See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Roscommon." Sheets 28, 29, 35, 36, 39, 40.

¹¹⁸ See *ibid.* Sheet 11.

¹¹⁹ Now called Kilbreedy major, in the baronies of Coshlea and Smallcounty, shown on the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Limerick." Sheets 39, 40, 48.

¹²⁰ Now called Kilbreedy minor, in the barony of Coshma, shown on the "Ord-

nance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Limerick." Sheet 47.

¹²¹ See Colgan, p. 625.

¹²² See Colgan, p. 625.

¹²³ It was near the old Catholic chapel still used.

¹²⁴ This was a plain, in the barony of Kells, and county of Kilkenny. See Dr. O'Donovan's "Topographical Poems of John O'Dubhagain and Giolla na Naomh O'Huidhrin," n. 500, p. lx.

¹²⁵ See Colgan, p. 625.

¹²⁶ See the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Kilkenny." Sheets 36, 40, 41. The townland is shown, on Sheets 40, 41.

¹²⁷ See *ibid.* Sheet 26.

¹²⁸ See *ibid.* In the diocese of Ossory, Catholic chapels and localities, having St. Brigid as patroness, are, Kilbride, in Aghaboe parish, Ballycallan, Attanagh, Kilbride, near Callan, Kilbree, Kilbride, in Glenmore parish, and Lisdowney. See "Statuta Diocesis Ossoriensis edita Kilkennie in Synodo Diocesana Die 8 Junii, 1873," pp. 23 to 29.

¹²⁹ A Kilbride North and a Kilbride South, as townland denominations, are to be found here.

¹³⁰ This parish extension is shown, on the

the barony of Middlethird, and in the deanery of Kill-meathain, diocese and county of Waterford, and province of Munster. Kill-brigde, or Kilbride,¹³² a townland,¹³³ and a parish church,¹³⁴ near the town and in the county of Antrim, in the barony of Upper Antrim,¹³⁵ in the diocese of Connor and province of Ulster. In the same county is the townland of Kilbride, parish of Doagh Grange,¹³⁶ barony of Upper Antrim.¹³⁷ At the Glen of Kilbride, fourteen miles or so from Dublin, and bordering on, perhaps in, the county of Wicklow, there is a small church of Kilbride. Allusion has been already made to this place. The Catholic Church here, and attached to the parochial union of Blessington, is dedicated to St. Brigid.

The following churches and chapels were dedicated to St. Brigid, in the barony of Forth, county of Wexford, about the year 1680. In the parish of Rathspoke, and in that of Kilsoran, were her churches; while, she had chapels at Sladd, a townland in the latter parish, as also at Trummer.¹³⁸ This foregoing account is supposed to have been furnished, by a priest, for the purpose of illustrating Sir William Petty's Maps; and, it purports to describe more at length the barony in question, with the dispositions and customs of its people.¹³⁹ Kilbrideglynn parish,¹⁴⁰ barony of Shelmaliere West, and county of Wexford, has a Tempull Cille-Brighde old graveyard within it. Kilnahue parish,¹⁴¹ barony of Gorey, and county of Wexford, has a Kilbride Church and graveyard, within it. Not far from Carrigaline, in the County Cork, there was a Tempull Brigde.¹⁴² Some old ruins are yet to be seen there, and a holy well dedicated to St. Brigid rises near. This was resorted to by the people, for the purpose of offering devotions, on the day of her festival. The custom has not yet entirely died out.¹⁴³ The ancient church was on the summit of a high hill, right over the sea, and a modern Protestant church now occupies the site. It is a notable land-mark for ships, as it stands at the entrance of Cork Harbour. We find a Templum S. Brigidæ, Templebride, or Teampull Bride,¹⁴⁴ in Rosfinnglass village, Hy-Regain territory.¹⁴⁵ To this, as Rosenallis, allusion has been already made. Tempull-Brigde,¹⁴⁶ Templebride, or Teampull Bride,¹⁴⁷ a chapel in the parish of Killchoirin,¹⁴⁸ diocese of Tuam.¹⁴⁹ Again, there is a Templum S. Brigidæ, Tem-

"Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Waterford." Sheets 17, 26.

¹³² See Colgan, p. 625.

¹³³ The parish boundaries and extent are shown, on the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Antrim." Sheets 44, 45, 51.

¹³⁴ See *ibid.* Sheets 45, 51.

¹³⁵ See Colgan, p. 625.

¹³⁶ In 1605, it was found in an Inquisition, that Kilbride was a parish, in the Tuogh of Moylinny, consisting of thirteen townlands. The old churchyard is in the townland of Kilbride. See Rev. Dr. Reeves' "Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Down, Connor and Dromore," n. (c), p. 64.

¹³⁷ See *ibid.*, n. (l), p. 67.

¹³⁸ See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Antrim." Sheet 45.

¹³⁹ See "Journal of the Kilkenny and South-East of Ireland Archæological Society." New series, vol. iv., part i., pp. 66, 68, and notes (3, 4), *ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ This paper has been edited, by Herbert F. Hore.

¹⁴¹ See its extent, on the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Wexford." Sheets 36, 37, 41, 42.

¹⁴² See its dimensions, on the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Wexford." Sheets 2, 5, 6, 7, 11.

¹⁴³ It is now called Templebreedy, in the barony of Kerrycurrihy, East Riding of Cork. Its position is marked, on the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Cork." Sheet 99.

¹⁴⁴ Information communicated in a letter, from Very Rev. Denis Canon M'Swiney, P.P., Carrigaline, Co. Cork, Feb. 1st, 1872.

¹⁴⁵ This denomination is not marked on the Ordnance Survey Maps.

¹⁴⁶ See Colgan, p. 625.

¹⁴⁷ Latinized, by Colgan, "Templum Brigide."

¹⁴⁸ This denomination is not to be found noted, on the Ordnance Survey Maps, at present.

¹⁴⁹ By this name, it does not appear on the Ordnance Survey Maps.

¹⁵⁰ See Colgan, p. 625.

plebride, or Teampull Bride,¹⁵⁰ a parish church in Waterford city and diocese.¹⁵¹ We find a Templum S. Brigidæ, Templebride, or Teampull Bride,¹⁵² a parish church, within the deanery of Claonadh, or Clane, diocese and county of Kildare.¹⁵³ Templum S. Brigidæ, Templebride, or Teampull Bride,¹⁵⁴ a chapel in the parish of Domhnach Padraig, or Donogh-Patrick,¹⁵⁵ diocese of Tuam.¹⁵⁶ Besides the foregoing, there is a Templum S. Brigidæ, Templebride, or Teampul Bride,¹⁵⁷ a chapel, in the parish of Athenry,¹⁵⁸ diocese of Tuam,¹⁵⁹ and county of Galway.

Rath-brigde,¹⁶⁰ or Rathbride,¹⁶¹ a chapel in Tully parish, barony of Offaly East, Kildare county and diocese, is likely to have been named after St. Brigid. Rath-brigde, or Rathbride,¹⁶² a parish church, in Feraceall or Fearcall territory,¹⁶³ diocese of Meath,¹⁶⁴ as also Rath-brigde, or Rathbride,¹⁶⁵ a chapel, in Kiennachta territory,¹⁶⁶ now the barony of Keenaght,¹⁶⁷ in the county and diocese of Derry,¹⁶⁸ are probably called after our saint.

Tegh-Brigde,¹⁶⁹ which may be Anglicized, "the house of Brigid," was a chapel, in the territory of Kinel-Fiachra,¹⁷⁰ Westmeath county. It was probably so denominatd, because some religious institute had been there erected, by or in honour of this holy abbess. Tegh-Brigde, in the territory of Moenmoya, afterwards called Clann Riocaird,¹⁷¹ when the De Burgos possessed it, after the Anglo-Norman invasion.¹⁷² This Kilbride is probably identical with a place, in the parish of Abbeysormacan, barony of Leitrim, and county of Galway.¹⁷³ There was, also, a Tegh-Brigde, a parish church, in the territory of Siol Annchadha,¹⁷⁴ diocese of Clonfert.¹⁷⁵ In addition, the parish church of Enach-brigde,¹⁷⁶ in the diocese of Clonfert, was dedicated to St. Brigid.¹⁷⁷

¹⁵⁰ This denomination is not marked on the Ordnance Survey Maps.

¹⁵¹ See Colgan, p. 625.

¹⁵² This denomination is not so noted, on the Ordnance Survey Maps.

¹⁵³ See Colgan, p. 625.

¹⁵⁴ This denomination, at present, is not to be found on the Ordnance Survey Maps.

¹⁵⁵ Now Donaghpatrick, in the barony of Clare. See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Galway." Sheets 28, 42.

¹⁵⁶ See Colgan, p. 625.

¹⁵⁷ This denomination is not noticed on the Ordnance Survey Maps.

¹⁵⁸ This large parish lies in the baronies of Athenry, Clare and Dunkellin. See its extent, on "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Galway." Sheets 57, 70, 71, 83, 84, 95, 96.

¹⁵⁹ See Colgan, p. 625.

¹⁶⁰ Latinized, by Colgan, "arx aut burgum Brigidæ," p. 625.

¹⁶¹ This townland is shown, on "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Kildare." Sheets 17, 18, 22, 23.

¹⁶² This denomination cannot be found, at present, on the Ordnance Survey Maps.

¹⁶³ It is said to have comprehended the baronies of Ballycowen and Ballyboy, the country of the O'Molloys, in the King's County. See Harris' Ware, vol. ii., "The Antiquities of Ireland," chap. vii., sect. i., p. 49.

¹⁶⁴ See Colgan, p. 625.

¹⁶⁵ This denomination, at present, is mis-

sing from the Ordnance Survey Maps.

¹⁶⁶ See John O'Donovan's account of it, in the "Dublin Penny Journal," vol. i., No. 13, p. 103. It was called by this name, so early as the year 590.

¹⁶⁷ See some interesting notices of it, in Rev. Alexander Ross's "Statistical Account of the Parish of Dungiven," in William Shaw Mason's "Statistical Account or Parochial Survey of Ireland," vol. i., No. xiv., pp. 321, 322.

¹⁶⁸ See Colgan, p. 625.

¹⁶⁹ Latinized, by Colgan, "ædes, seu, domus Brigidæ," p. 625.

¹⁷⁰ It comprised the countries of O'Molloy, now in the King's County, and of Mageoghagan, now the barony of Moycashel, in Westmeath, and it extended originally from Birr to the Hill of Uisneach. See Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., n. (e), p. 166.

¹⁷¹ See Colgan, p. 625.

¹⁷² Its bounds enlarged or diminished with the fortune of wars. "However, the main parts of it comprehended the six baronies of *Clare, Dunkellan, Loughrea, Kiltartan, Athowry and Leitrim*."—Harris' Ware, vol. ii., "Antiquities of Ireland," chap. vii., sect. i., p. 52.

¹⁷³ See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Galway." Sheet 106.

¹⁷⁴ Or Ui-Annchadha, a sept, occupying the barony of Longford, county of Galway, and the parish of Lismagh, King's County, and east of the River Shannon. See Dr.

Although not recognisable, through denomination or derivation, yet the following parishes and localities are thought to have been placed under the patronage of the illustrious abbess of Kildare. Druim-dubhain, *alias*, Drum-damhain, a parish church,¹⁷⁸ belonging to the diocese of Elphin, and within the territory of Tir-Oilill,¹⁷⁹ now Tirerrill barony, in the county of Sligo. The parochial denomination seems obsolete. Kill-Salach, a parish, belonging to the diocese of Elphin, and in the territory of Airtheach.¹⁸⁰ This latter was comprised in the parish of Tibohine,¹⁸¹ in Frenchpark barony, and county Roscommon. Kill-hiommann, a parish church,¹⁸² belonging to the diocese of Elphin, and in the territory of Maghuir or Moylurg. This district was comprised within Boyle barony,¹⁸³ county Roscommon. Killgeuian, or Kilgefin, a parish church,¹⁸⁴ in the diocese of Elphin, and within the territory¹⁸⁵ and deanery of Tuatha. It lay to the west of Lough Ree, towards its northern part.¹⁸⁶ Kill-mhic-Eogain, or Kilmacowen,¹⁸⁷ a parish belonging to the diocese of Elphin, in the territory of Cairbre,¹⁸⁸ which is now known as the barony of Carbury, County Sligo. Dysart,¹⁸⁹ Latinized Desertum, a parish church,¹⁹⁰ in the diocese of Elphin, territory of Tirmhaine,¹⁹¹ barony of Athlone, and province of Connaught. Ballintobber,¹⁹² a parish church, in the diocese of Elphin, province of Connaught.¹⁹³ Besides the foregoing, the monastery or convent of Malach, or Moylagh,¹⁹⁴ for nuns of the Augustinian order, was situated in the diocese of Lismore, and county of Tipperary.¹⁹⁵ It is in the baronies of Offa and Iffa. A chapel, formerly dedicated to St. Brigid, in the diocese of Ross,¹⁹⁶ is said to have been placed in a churchyard, near a romantic salt-water lake,¹⁹⁷ known as Lough Hyne, or Ine,¹⁹⁸ in the south of Cork County. A curious pillar stone remains there.¹⁹⁹

O'Donovan's "Topographical Poems of John O'Dubhagain and Giolla na Naomh O'Huidhrin," p. xlv., n. 350.

¹⁷⁵ See Colgan, p. 625.

¹⁷⁶ It seems difficult to identify it by this denomination at present.

¹⁷⁷ See Colgan, p. 624.

¹⁷⁸ See Colgan, p. 625.

¹⁷⁹ See O'Flaherty's "Ogygia," pars iii., cap. lxxix., p. 374.

¹⁸⁰ See Colgan, p. 625.

¹⁸¹ See "The Topographical Poems of John O'Dubhagain and Giolla na Naomh O'Huidhrin." Edited by Dr. O'Donovan, n. 253, pp. xxxv., xxxvi.

¹⁸² See Colgan, p. 625.

¹⁸³ For a very complete account of this division of Roscommon, the reader is referred to John D'Alton's "History of Ireland and Annals of Boyle," vol. i., pp. 167 to 283.

¹⁸⁴ See Colgan, p. 625.

¹⁸⁵ This district was composed of the divisions, Tir-Briuin-na-Sinna, Cinel-Dobhtha, and Corea-Each-lann. See Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. iii., n. (d), p. 86.

¹⁸⁶ See its position defined, on the map prefixed to the "Tribes and Customs of Hy-Many." Edited by Dr. O'Donovan.

¹⁸⁷ See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Sligo." Sheets 14, 19, 20.

¹⁸⁸ See Colgan, p. 625.

¹⁸⁹ See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Roscommon." Sheets 47, 48, 50.

¹⁹⁰ See Colgan, p. 625.

¹⁹¹ Probably intended for Hy-Many, and for information regarding it, Dr. O'Donovan has edited for the Irish Archaeological Society, that interesting tract, "The Tribes and Customs of Hy-Many, commonly called O'Kelly's Country," A.D. MCCCXLIII. A Map, with its ancient Irish denominations in the native characters, is prefixed.

¹⁹² Noted as a rectory, on Rev. D. A. Beaufort's "New Civil and Ecclesiastical Map of Ireland."

¹⁹³ See Colgan, p. 625.

¹⁹⁴ See Archdall's "Monasticon Hibernicum," p. 669.

¹⁹⁵ See Colgan, p. 625.

¹⁹⁶ See its position marked on Rev. D. A. Beaufort's "New Civil and Ecclesiastical Map of Ireland."

¹⁹⁷ "On an islet near its centre stand the ruins of a castle, which was formerly the secluded and romantic fastness of the O'Driscolls."—"Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland," vol. ii., p. 299.

¹⁹⁸ Interpreted "the deep lake." It lies south of Skibbereen.

¹⁹⁹ See Mr. and Mrs. Hall's "Ireland: its scenery, character," &c., vol. i., pp. 136, 137. The descriptive matter is illustrated by an accompanying wood-engraving.

In addition to the places named are these following. Kill-rossinty, or Kilrossanty,²⁰⁰ a parish church, in the barony of Decies without Drum, belonging to the diocese of Lismore,²⁰¹ and county of Waterford. It had been dedicated to St. Brigid. Nor was our holy abbess undistinguished from other great Irish Saints, in the septi-partite group of churches having her as patroness. For, at the great bend of the River Suir, near Ardfinnan and Newcastle, County Tipperary, there is a place, called Molough Blridge, or "Brigid's Molough." It is said, that there were no less than seven churches or chapels there, at one time, and that these were dedicated to St. Brigid. The chieftain of the Decies probably had a residence there, or, at least, he had a property.²⁰² Slieve g-Cua, near it, is mentioned in the Book of Rights. It is in the parish of Tooraneena, county of Waterford.²⁰³ In Kill-dara,²⁰⁴ a parish church, of Tuam diocese, in the territory of Costelach, province of Connaught, St. Brigid was patroness. It is different from Kildare, in Leinster.²⁰⁵ Druim-na bfeadh,²⁰⁶ a parish church, belonging to the diocese of Tuam, *alias*, Elphin, in the county of Roscommon, province of Connaught.²⁰⁷ Besides, in Killchuanna, or Kilcoona,²⁰⁸ a parish, in Clare barony and Galway county, diocese of Tuam, and province of Connaught,²⁰⁹ a church had been erected to St. Brigid.

The following ancient wells were dedicated to St. Bride, within the city and county of Dublin. In a court, off Bride-street, is her spring, now covered by a pump. Between the ivied ruins of St. Margaret's and Dunsoghly Castle, an ancient well, dedicated to St. Brigid,²¹⁰ is surrounded by a battlemented wall.²¹¹ At St. Margaret's, near Finglas, there is a tepid spring, and it is called St. Brigid's Well. At Clondalkin, there is a well dedicated to her. Here, also, there is a fine round tower in good preservation.²¹² At Swords,²¹³ seven miles north from Dublin Castle,²¹⁴ and near the ancient nunnery, a well of St. Brigid was to be seen. Again, at Clonskeagh,²¹⁵ there is a well of St. Brigid. At the Valley of Diamonds, near Bray, there is, likewise, a well of St. Brigid. At Castleknock, there was a well called after her. We are not sure if it yet exists. The place derives its name from an old castle, built in the reign of Henry II., on a hill.²¹⁶ Again, it is stated, on verbal authority, that there is a well, dedicated to St. Bride, near the ruins of the old Black Castle, on the sea-shore, not far from Wicklow town.²¹⁷ The well is in a very out-of-the-way place. In Killisk parish,²¹⁸ barony of Ballagh-

²⁰⁰ It is marked on the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Waterford." Sheets 14, 15, 23, 24, 31, 32.

²⁰¹ See Colgan, p. 625.

²⁰² See Rev. Dr. Kelly's "Calendar of the Irish Saints," p. 134.

²⁰³ Information contained in a letter of Rev. David B. Mulcahy, Portlengone, dated December 18th, 1875.

²⁰⁴ This denomination is not found on the Ordnance Survey Maps.

²⁰⁵ See Colgan, p. 625.

²⁰⁶ By this title, the parish does not appear on the Ordnance Survey Townland Maps of Ireland.

²⁰⁷ See Colgan, p. 625.

²⁰⁸ Its extent is shown, on the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Galway," Sheets 42, 56.

²⁰⁹ See Colgan, p. 625.

²¹⁰ See "Irish Literary Gazette," vol. i., No. xiv. "Antiquarian Rambles in the

County of Dublin." By John S. Sloane, C.E., p. 219.

²¹¹ This was built by a Sir John Plunkett.

²¹² See Joseph Archer's "Statistical Survey of the County of Dublin," chap. v., sec. i., p. 88.

²¹³ See an account of this ancient place, in John D'Alton's "History of the County of Dublin," pp. 269 to 297.

²¹⁴ See Joseph Archer's "Statistical Survey of the County of Dublin," chap. v., sec. i., p. 96.

²¹⁵ See John D'Alton's "History of the County of Dublin," p. 808.

²¹⁶ See Joseph Archer's "Statistical Survey of the County of Dublin," chap. v., sec. i., p. 88.

²¹⁷ For the foregoing list, I feel indebted to Mrs. Anastasia O'Byrne, authoress of "The Saints of Ireland."

²¹⁸ See its extent defined, on the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the

keen, and county of Wexford. St. Brigid's Well may be seen. At Kilscoren parish,²¹⁹ in the barony of Forth and county of Wexford, there is a St. Brigid's Holy-Well. The pattern was formerly held on St. Brigid's day. This parish is supposed to have had her as the patroness. Besides this, at Rosslare parish,²²⁰ barony of Forth, and county of Wexford, a holy well, called after St. Braagh (Brathoach)—said by the people to be no other than St. Brigid—is to be found. Again, there is a Toberbride, or Brideswell, in the parish of Ballysadare, and barony of Tirerrill.²²¹ We find mention, too, of Tobar-Brigde, near Cuilmuine, in the county of Sligo.²²² St. Brigid's Well, at Rostyduff, a snug little place under Keadeen mountain, in the county of Wicklow, had a "patron," which used to be held in the early part of this century, on the 1st of February.²²³ There is a Tobar-Brigde, in the village of Ballintobber, and county of Roscommon.²²⁴ There is another Tobar-Brigde,²²⁵ in the territory of Maineach. A Tobar-Brigde, in the county of Longford, near the town, and in the diocese of Ardagh,²²⁶ appears to have been named after St. Brigid. In Killila parish,²²⁷ barony of Ballaghkeen, and county of Wexford, was St. Brigid's Well. A pattern was held on 1st of February, at this spot. We have, also, learned, that at, or near, Kilcock, in the county of Kildare, a patron used formerly be held at Bride's Well, on the 1st of February. Stations were there performed. In the townland of Ballincurragh, parish of Buttevant, and county of Cork, St. Brigid's Well may be seen. A large ash-tree hangs over it, and it is popularly called Biddy's Tree. No special "pattern" or honour to the patroness is now paid, at this spot.²²⁸ However, "rounds" or stations still take place there. In Hy-Kinsellagh, province of Leinster, there was a well, bearing the name Tobar-Brigdhé, and another in Tuam.²²⁹ Both of these springs were much resorted to, when the feast-day of St. Brigid occurred. There is a Toberbride or Brideswell, in the parish of Dunleecney, barony of Idrone East, and county of Carlow.²³⁰ A celebrated spring, known as "Bride's Well," had been much frequented on the feast of St. Brigid: it flowed from the side of a circular mound, about two miles and a-quarter, north-west from Kilcock, in the deanery of Trim, and county of Meath. An ash-tree spreads its branches over the stream. The diameter of the well is over twelve feet. Nearly all the females of this neighbourhood bear the name of their patron saint.²³¹ Besides the foregoing, there was a reputed miraculous well of St. Brigid, on the estate of Cornelius O'Brien, Esq., of Birchfield, in the county of Clare. This well contained a large eel, and eleven smaller ones, which appeared periodically, according to a popular tradition.²³² Its waters were remarkably clear and cool, but they were never used for domestic purposes.

County of Wexford." Sheets 26, 27, 32, 33.

²¹⁹ It is included, in the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Wexford." Sheet 48.

²²⁰ Its bounds are contained, within the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Wexford." Sheets 38, 43, 48.

²²¹ See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Sligo." Sheet 26.

²²² See Colgan, p. 625.

²²³ See an article, "Donoughmore in Omayle," by J. F. S., in "The Irish Ecclesiastical Record," vol. xii., No. cxxiv., p. 134.

²²⁴ See Colgan, p. 625.

²²⁵ Latinized by Colgan, "fons Brigide," p. 625.

²²⁶ See Colgan, p. 625.

²²⁷ See its delineation, on "Ordnance Survey Townlands Maps for the County of Wexford." Sheets 27, 33.

²²⁸ Information communicated by Mr. Denis A. O'Leary, Killbolane Cottage, Charleville, April 17th, 1875, to the writer.

²²⁹ See Colgan, p. 625.

²³⁰ See it marked, on the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Carlow." Sheet 16.

²³¹ See Rev. A. Cogan's "Diocese of Meath, Ancient and Modern," vol. ii., chap. xvii., p. 361.

The well was a famous resort for pilgrims, especially for those hoping to have cures effected. Whoever was fortunate enough to see the eels was instantaneously cured. Through O'Brien's lawn, free access to the well was easily obtained. Popular tradition has it, that the water was desecrated on one occasion.²³³ Immediately it removed during the night to a great distance. A member of the O'Brien family, to commemorate a miraculous cure,²³⁴ had a beautiful wall built around St. Brigid's Well. The enclosure was elegantly planted, and the place was even furnished with stables, for the accommodation of pilgrims.

Some ancient religious institutions were under her patronage. A hermitage was dedicated to St. Brigid, by the Knights Hospitallers of Kilmainham. It was situated near Waterford. Again, at Carrickfergus, there was an hospital for lepers. The adjoining lands are yet called the Spital Fields. The hospital was dedicated to St. Brigid. At the north side of Carrickfergus, a spring, called St. Brigid's Well, marks the site of an hospital, also dedicated to St. Brigid. We find an hospital for lepers was dedicated to St. Brigid, in the town and parish of Dungarvan,²³⁵ barony of Decies without Drum, situated within the diocese of Lismore,²³⁶ and county of Waterford. Besides, there was an hospital for lepers, within the diocese and town of Lismore,²³⁷ province of Munster, dedicated to St. Brigid.²³⁸ She seems to have been the peculiar patroness of such afflicted persons.

There are various localities or objects, named from St. Brigid, in the county of Dublin. Among these we find: In the ancient church of St. Mochua, at Clondalkin, one of its three altars was dedicated to her.²³⁹ Bride's Glen, near Cabinteely, eight or nine miles from Dublin; the River Bride, a tributary to the Liffey, is thought to derive its name from Ireland's great patroness; Kilbride Manor, near the Glen of Kilbride, which borders on Sally Gap, near the source of the Liffey, is called after her; while, the demesne, called St. Brigid's, at Clonskeagh, or Roebuck, is said to derive its name from her.²⁴⁰ Also, the Breeda or Bride River, is a tributary of the Lee,²⁴¹ in the county of Cork. The Abbey of Kilcrea,²⁴² occupies a retired

²³² The matter of this and of the subsequent narrative was communicated by Rev. D. B. Mulcahy, in a letter, headed Lough Cill, North Antrim, 20th April, 1875.

²³³ It happened, that O'Brien had a large dinner party, and in the hurry of preparation, one of the servants took water to boil potatoes from this well. The dinner was late. O'Brien enquired the cause. The potatoes he found were not boiled. The fire was stirred and blown under, but the servants blew to no purpose. As a last resort the pot was examined, when lo! there was found one of the younger eels. It was reverently taken back to the well, and a solemn admonition was given to the servants. This was unnecessary, for that night the well disappeared.

²³⁴ He lay ill in London, and his life was despaired of, by several doctors. Yet, he had some water procured from St. Brigid's Well, which at once restored him to health.

²³⁵ See "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Waterford," Sheets 30, 31, 35, 36.

²³⁶ See Colgan, p. 625.

²³⁷ The united parishes of Lismore and Mocollop are situated, partly within the county of Cork, in the barony of Condons and Clangibbon, as shown on the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Cork," Sheets 36, 37; and, partly within the county of Waterford, in the baronies of Coshmore and Coshbride, as shown on the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Waterford," Sheets 11, 12, 19, 20, 21, 28, 29, 34.

²³⁸ See Colgan, p. 625.

²³⁹ See William Monek Mason's "History and Antiquities of the Collegiate and Cathedral Church of St. Patrick, near Dublin," &c., book i., chap. v., p. 27.

²⁴⁰ For the foregoing list, I am indebted to Mrs. Anastasia O'Byrne.

²⁴¹ See John Windale's "Historical and Descriptive Notices of the City of Cork and its vicinity; Gougann-Barra, Glengariff, and Killarney," p. 257.

²⁴² See an admirable account of its style and history, at pp. 259 to 270, *ibid.* Two engravings of the ruins are there to be seen.

and a beautiful situation, on a green bank along it, and at the extremity of a long valley, which stretches several miles to the west. It was dedicated to St. Bridget,²⁴³ and probably its River Bride was called after her. In addition, we may observe, there is a very curious object, called St. Brigid's Stone,²⁴⁴ to be seen at Killinagh, near Bantry, in the county of Cork. This is a five-holed Bullaun rock, containing oval-shaped stones in each cavity.²⁴⁵ We find a Saint Brigid's Chair, at Lough Derg. There is an old monument, inscribed with a cross, in the churchyard of Kilbride, county of Wicklow.²⁴⁶ There is, also, an old stone, with several incised crosses, found at Faughart old church, county Louth.²⁴⁷ This is called St. Brigid's Stone, owing to some supposed association with her.

Several modern churches, chapels, and religious institutes, have St. Brigid as patroness. The new parochial church of Kildcullen, as we have already seen, has been dedicated to her. In addition, as has been stated, Kildare town has a Catholic church and a nunnery, under her protection. Throughout the diocese of Kildare are other religious edifices, holding her as the patroness; but, it is to be regretted, a complete list of her Irish churches and chapels cannot be known.²⁴⁸ The Catholic church of Kilbride, parish of Dunganstown, not only occupies the site of a very ancient church dedicated to our saint, but, it yet rejoices in her, as its special patroness. Near the old church ruins²⁴⁹ and churchyard of Kilbride, not far from Blessington, a Catholic chapel, in the village, has been dedicated to St. Brigid.

The new Catholic church near Carrigaline, county of Cork, has been dedicated to St. Brigid. About half a mile from old Temple Brigde,²⁵⁰ and separated from it by a valley, in which lies St. Brigid's Well, the new erection overlooks the village of Crosshaven.²⁵¹ It is beautifully placed, at the confluence of the rivers Ownboy and Lee—a spot of which Callanan, the poet sings,

“Where calm Avon Buee seeks the kisses of Ocean.”²⁵²

The church is over 100 feet long by forty-eight wide. It consists of nave, chancel, aisles, clerestorey, tower, sacristy, and porch. Built in the Gothic

²⁴³ A beautiful poem, intituled, “The Monks of Kilcrea,” alludes to this foundation, and to its hospitable inmates during mediæval times:—

“’Twas common then
For pilgrims to flock to St. Brigit’s shrine.
So they placed on the table pitchers of
wine,
Gave from the mountain and meat from the
pen.

—Fytte II., stanza i. Also, n. (a), p. 151.

²⁴⁴ A very remarkable and venerated well, dedicated to St. Brigid, and lately covered by a stone building, may be seen close by.

²⁴⁵ See a fuller account of it, with an illustration, in William F. Wakeman’s paper, “On Certain Markings on Rocks, Pillar Stones, and other Monuments, observed Chiefly in the County Fermanagh.”—“Journal of the Royal Historical and Archæological Association of Ireland,” vol. iii.

Fourth series, July, 1875, No. 23, pp. 459, 460.

²⁴⁶ There is a rough drawing of it, among G. V. du Noyer’s “Antiquarian Sketches,” preserved in the Royal Irish Academy, No. 77, vol. i.

²⁴⁷ See *ibid.*, No. 78.

²⁴⁸ It would be very desirable, that our “Irish Catholic Directory, Almanack, and Registry” contained the patron saints’ names of our parishes, churches, chapels and religious houses. By a rightly directed effort, the information could readily be obtained, by the editor or publisher.

²⁴⁹ These scarcely rise above the earth at present.

²⁵⁰ Now known as Templebreedy.

²⁵¹ See it represented, on the “Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Cork.” Sheet 99. It is in the parish of Templebreedy, and barony of Kerrycurrihy, East Riding of Cork county.

²⁵² See “The Poems of J. J. Callanan,” p. 67.

decorated style, its windows have geometric tracery. The chancel window has five lights, the western one is spherico-triangular. At the eastern and western ends of aisles are spherical windows, and there are also side chancel-windows. Besides the western entrance, the tower serves as a porch, and it is placed for effect on the north side, a little higher up than midway, and it will be the great entrance usually. The aisles are separated from the nave by rows of circular red marble columns, with Bath-stone caps for carving. The church is all built externally of limestone-ashlar, while the windows and dressings are finely chiselled.²⁵³ As yet, the tower has only reached its lower story, but the other portions of this fine building, internally and externally, have nearly reached completion.²⁵⁴



Church of the Assumption, of St. Michael, of St. Patrick, and of St. Brigid, Wexford.

The beautiful new Church of the Assumption,²⁵⁵ King's-street, Wexford, has also been dedicated to St. Michael, St. Patrick, and St. Bridget, as joint patrons.²⁵⁶ The grounds, on which the new church stands, are in part on the site of the ancient cemetery, attached to St. Brigid's old church, which, according to local tradition, formerly stood there.²⁵⁷ An adjoining street is called Bride-street, at the present time, and its name seems to have been derived from the early ecclesiastical structure to which it led.

²⁵³ Communication from Very Rev. Denis Canon M'Swiney, P.P., headed River View, Carrigaline, Co. Cork, dated Feb. 1st, 1872.

²⁵⁴ Communication from Very Rev. Denis Canon M'Swiney, dated, January 5th, 1876.

²⁵⁵ The first stone was laid June 27th, 1851. This church was opened for public worship, April 18th, 1858.

²⁵⁶ The accompanying engraving of it, by Mrs. Millard, was executed after a photograph, locally prepared in Wexford.

²⁵⁷ Human remains have been disinterred

The Sisters of Mercy Convent, Rathdrum,²⁵⁸ county of Wicklow, has been dedicated to St. Brigid, by permission of his Eminence Cardinal Cullen.²⁵⁹ This appears from the parish registers.

After the beginning of the present century, a religious community of Brigittine nuns was established in Ireland. This is a most useful institute, for the peculiar wants of our country; and, it has been in highly successful operation, from the very commencement of its inauguration. The first convent of St. Brigid was founded in Tullow, county of Carlow, by the Right Rev. Dr. Delany, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, on the 1st of February, 1807, as also, the Convent of St. Brigid, in Mountrath, on the 18th of April, 1809. Besides these, the Convent of Tullow has sent out two affiliations, one to Abbeylisle, in the Queen's County, A.D. 1842, and one to Goresbridge, County Kilkenny, A.D. 1858. Of late, another branch has been established at Paulstown, not far from the latter place, and within the same county. All of these houses are situated in the diocese of Leighlin. The Brigittine nuns have adopted a constitution and rules, which tend greatly to promote charity, piety, and religious knowledge, in every parish, where their institute has been established. They gain over many of the humble people to a life of penitence. Holding lighted tapers in their hands, they make a solemn declaration and dedication of themselves, on each feast of St. Brigid.²⁶⁰ This order has been established for educational purposes, and, it has three schools in constant operation, under each community; a poor school, a benefit school, and a boarding-school. The teaching of poor children and adults on Sundays and holydays, in the parish church to which their convent belongs, is a special rule of this order.²⁶¹

The house and chapel of the Sisters of the Holy Faith, at Glasnevin, diocese of Dublin, are under the patronage of St. Brigid. In the beginning of 1857, a Ladies' Association of Charity, under the zealous and self-denying Miss Aylward, had been formed to rescue from proselytism Catholic children exposed to danger. An admirable system was adopted, for placing these with Catholic families, until they could be educated and provided with means for earning an honest livelihood. St. Brigid was chosen as patroness of this good work. When the orphanage was begun, no one dreamt of establishing a new community to take charge of it. On the contrary, great efforts were made to avoid anything of the sort; but, Providence made use of those very efforts to accomplish His will. After some trials and much labour, two or three ladies associated themselves,²⁶² to examine cases of proselytism, to rescue those orphans in greatest danger of losing the faith, to make clothes for them, and to superintend their rearing and education. This little seed, cast upon the earth by a seeming accident, took root and grew. The associates in 1867 numbered twenty-two. These ladies are united by the sacred bonds of religion, under the title, Sisters of the Holy Faith.²⁶³ The Cardinal

there, when improvements were effected in the *entourage* of the new church, which, with its twin sister, the Church of the Immaculate Conception and of St. John Baptist, has been erected by the respected parish priest, Very Rev. James Canon Roche, as enduring monuments of his indomitable labour and pious zeal for the greater glory of God.

²⁵⁸ The extent of this parish, in the barony of Ballinacor North, is shown on the "Ordnance Survey Townland Maps for the County of Wicklow." Sheets 24, 29, 30, 35.

²⁵⁹ At request of Rev. Richard Galvin,

P.P., granted May 30th, 1869.

²⁶⁰ See "The Life of St. Brigid," by an Irish Priest, chap. xiii., pp. 184 to 187.

²⁶¹ Much of the foregoing information, regarding the Brigittine Nuns, was kindly communicated, by the Superioress of Mount-rath Convent, Sister Mary J. Peter Stein, in a letter, addressed to the writer, A.D. 1866.

²⁶² In the house No. 42 Eccles-street, Dublin.

²⁶³ See "Eleventh Annual Report of St. Brigid's Orphanage for Five Hundred Children," p. 8, A.D. 1867.

Archbishop of Dublin has greatly fostered and aided this institute, sanctioned by His Holiness Pope Pius IX. His Eminence, finding that the house in Eccles-street was too small for the sisters that taught in their schools, sent them to succeed the religious Ladies of the Sacred Heart, in Glasnevin Convent.²⁶⁴ Even a great enlargement of this house was soon required. The grounds are extensive and beautifully situated. It is not too much to say, that St. Brigid's new home, at Glasnevin, is one of those spots, fashioned by the Almighty Architect for religious exercises.²⁶⁵ The River Tolka separates the convent grounds from the charming Botanical Gardens.²⁶⁶ The whole scene is redolent of literary, patriotic, and above all, of religious associations.

In the name of our great abbess, the orphanage of St. Brigid was founded, while through her influence and prayers it has flourished. During the past nineteen years, this noble institute has saved from proselytism the immense number of one thousand three hundred and seventy Catholic orphans. Otherwise, humanly speaking, these should have been lost to the Church. Under her influence, also, the schools of the Holy Faith have, so to speak, sprang from the orphanage; and, as a matter, almost of necessity, to take charge of these works, the Sisters of the Holy Faith have grown up, a new family, in the Church. Besides managing the orphanage, these ladies have fourteen schools, with a daily attendance of one thousand four hundred poor children. It must seem a strange thing, that the former grounds and residence of a distinguished Protestant Bishop of Kildare should become the dwelling of St. Brigid, Patroness of Kildare. In truth, it appears to be the place for St. Brigid's work—within two short miles of the General Post Office, Dublin, and yet the situation is completely rural. Here, those Sisters of the Holy Faith, that teach the poor schools in the lanes of the city, can retire at evening to breathe, and acquire strength and buoyancy for their hard work. There is no harder strain on mind and body, than the daily toil of teaching. Here, it shall please God, a band of apostolic teachers can be trained to defend the faith of poor children, and impart, with knowledge, a love of virtue. Here, then, St. Brigid's spirit will rest, and religious teachers are likely to grow up under her patronage. These good ladies will devote themselves to the instruction and sanctification of poor children, in the capital of holy Ireland; hereafter, their mission may extend to more distant places.

CHAPTER XVII.

CHURCHES AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTES DEDICATED TO ST. BRIGID, IN THE BRITISH ISLANDS, IN ANCIENT AND MODERN TIMES, AS ALSO ON THE CONTINENT OF EUROPE, AND IN AMERICA—FESTIVALS, COMMEMORATIONS, OFFICES, HYMNS, RELICS, USAGES, AND POPULAR MEMORIALS, REFERRING TO HER—CONCLUSION.

In England, Wales and Scotland, as also in minor islands around their coasts,¹ the fame and virtues of St. Brigid had spread, even from very re-

²⁶⁴ Much of the foregoing and succeeding information was kindly communicated to the writer, by Miss Aylward, the Lady Superioress, and foundress of the Sisters of the Holy Faith.

²⁶⁵ See "Ninth Annual Report of St. Brigid's Orphanage for Five Hundred Children," p. 20, A.D. 1865.

²⁶⁶ In the "History of the City of Dublin,

from the earliest accounts to the present time," &c., as compiled by J. Warburton, Rev. J. Whitelaw, and the Rev. Robert Walsh, are some interesting views, with a very complete description of the Botanic Gardens, at Glasnevin. See vol. ii., pp. 1279 to 1304.

CHAPTER XVII.—¹ See "Martyrologium Anglicanum," ad I. Februarii.

note times.² Many parts of England had churches dedicated to St. Brigid.³ In the city of London, Fleet-street, St. Bride's Church was celebrated in old Catholic times, nor has the parochial designation yet disappeared. This church was extant in the seventeenth century. A very elegant spire surmounts the present Protestant church; but, it had been injured by lightning, in 1805.⁴ Near its site, Fleet-street, London, in the fourteenth century and in the reign of Edward III., stood the palace of St. Bride. It had been built, in the vicinity of St. Bride's Well. It is supposed, the present Bride-well occupies this site. Edward III. had a daughter, named Brigid, who became a nun.⁵ At Glastonbury, as we have already observed, a St. Brigid was venerated at the 1st of February; however, it is thought, she must have been different from our holy abbess, and that her real festival may have been assigned incorrectly to the present date.⁶ In the litany of the very ancient church of Salisbury, Wiltshire, her name was specially invoked. There is a parish, called Kirkbride, in the Isle of Man. The only nunnery in the same place was called after St. Brigid. It is said to have been founded by our holy virgin,⁷ in the beginning of the sixth century.⁸ It lay near Douglas, beside the river, in a beautiful situation, and its prioress was anciently a baroness of the Isle of Man. She held courts in her own name, and possessed authority equal to a baron.⁹

Several places in Scotland,¹⁰ especially nearest to Ireland, and subjected to Irish influences,¹¹ are enumerated, as having been under our saint's patronage. Among those are the Hebrides, anciently called Bride's or Brigid's Islands, as has been thought from our St. Bride.¹² Excluding, perhaps, the nuns at Kildare, no others, excepting the inhabitants of those western isles, dedicated more churches to her. Thus, their veneration was expressed and perpetuated.¹³ The Hebrideans imagined, however, that her remains reposed at Abernethy,¹⁴ the Pictish capital. When the Scots annexed the Pictish territories to their own, they paid a singular homage to the relics of St. Brigid, in Abernethy.¹⁵ We are told, one of the Hebrides was called after her, and specially deno-

² John Macpherson, evidently no great admirer of St. Brigid, writes: "The several divisions of Britain concurred very zealously with Ireland, the country that gave her birth, in treating her character with a most superstitious respect."—"Critical Dissertations on the Origin, Antiquities, Language, Government, Manners and Religion of the Ancient Caledonians, their posterity the Picts, and the British and Irish Scots." Dissertation xv., p. 239.

³ So states the English Martyrology, when alluding to St. Brigid, at the 1st of February.

⁴ See Cassell's "Illustrated Guide to London." The Churches of London, p. 132. London, 1862, 8vo.

⁵ Much of the foregoing information was kindly communicated by a talented lady, Mrs. Anastasia O'Byrne, living in Ranelagh, near Dublin, and quite conversant with the traditional and historic lore of her country.

⁶ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigidæ, cap. xv., p. 624.

⁷ The Manx have a tradition, that she lived for some time in their island. See "Martyrologium Anglicanum," I. Febru-

arii. We have already shown how this mistake originated.

⁸ The Manx think, she received the veil of virginity from St. Maughold, fourth bishop of their island.

⁹ See George Woods' "Account of the Past and Present State of the Isle of Man," book i., chap. ix., pp. 112, 113.

¹⁰ See Rev. Thomas Innes' "Civil and Ecclesiastical History of Scotland," book ii., p. 128.

¹¹ See Bishop Forbes' "Kalendars of Scottish Saints," p. 290.

¹² See John Macpherson's "Critical Dissertations on the Origin, Antiquities, Language, Government, Manners, and Religion of the Ancient Caledonians, their posterity the Picts, and the British and Irish Scots." Dissertation xv., p. 240.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 239. Also, Hector Boetius' "Scotorum Historiæ, a prima Gentis Origine," lib. ix., p. 158.

¹⁴ See an account of it, in Mackenzie E. C. Waleott's "Scoti-Monasticon: The Ancient Church of Scotland," pp. 316, 317.

¹⁵ See Hector Boetius' "Scotorum Historiæ, a prima Gentis Origine," lib. ix.

minated Brigidiana.¹⁶ Indeed, throughout the whole west and south of Scotland,¹⁷ veneration towards her was unbounded. St. Bride was the patron saint of the noble family of Douglas,¹⁸ and they invoked her help on all important occasions.¹⁹ The church of Douglas also bears her name.²⁰ Her temples among the Hebrideans were more numerous than such as had been erected to any of their other saints.²¹ Among well-known Scottish localities, a scarped upburst of trap-rock out of the surrounding red sand-stone, and not far from the Laws,²² in Forfarshire, is known as St. Bride's Ring, at Kingenny.²³ The Church of St. Brigide de Blacket is noticed, in the Chartulary of Holyrood.²⁴ The Church of St. Brigid of Kype is mentioned in the Chartulary of Kelso;²⁵ and in that of Glasgow,²⁶ the Church of Wintertonagen, in Valle de Niht.²⁷ In Aberdeenshire, we have St. Bride's Rock, at Tomantoul. We find St. Bride's Church, at Cushnie,²⁸ at Crochaul,²⁹ at Kildrumm'e,³⁰ and at Skene.³¹ In Lanarkshire, there is a place, called East Kilbride, about seven miles from Glasgow.³² Its ancient church belonged to the bishops of that city.³³ Likewise, there is a remarkable enclosed barrow, which occupied the summit of one of the Cathkin hills, in the parish of Kilbride.³⁴ An interesting account of this parish has been written.³⁵ We learn, also, that St. Bride was honoured at Auchtergaven, and at the romantic Blair Athol,³⁶ in Perthshire, on the other side of the Drumalban.³⁷ Again, a church was consecrated to St. Brigid at Dunnottar, A.D. 1394,³⁸ according to Bishop Forbes.³⁹ Besides the foregoing, St. Bride's Chapel and burn are

¹⁶ See Mrs. Anastasia O'Byrne's "Saints of Ireland," February i., p. 15.

¹⁷ Macpherson says he has "reason to suspect, that the western isles of Scotland were, in some one period or other during the reign of popery, put under the particular protection of St. Bridget, and perhaps in a great measure appropriated to her."—"Critical Dissertations on the Origin, Antiquities, Language, Government, Manners, and Religion of the Ancient Caledonians, and their posterity the Picts, and the British and Irish Scots," Dissertation xv., p. 240.

¹⁸ In connexion with the family of Douglas, we read the following lines, in reference to their great patroness:—

"The folk upon the Sonounday
Held to Saynet Bridis Kyrk thair way;
And thair that in the Castell war
Ischyt owt, both les and mar,
And went thair palms for to ber."

—"The Bruce; or, The Metrical History of Robert I., King of Scots," by Master John Barbour, Archdeacon of Aberdeen. Buke Feyrl, ll. 335 to 339, vol. i. Edited by John Jamieson, D.D.

¹⁹ See Cosmo Innes' "Sketches of Early Scottish History and Social Progress," chap. i., pp. 137, 138.

²⁰ See Bishop Forbes' "Kalendars of Scottish Saints," p. 291.

²¹ See Hector Boetius' "Scotorum Historie, a prima Gentis Origine," lib. ix., p. 158.

²² The word "Law" is an Anglo-Saxon prefix or suffix, signifying an isolated hill or mount, generally of a conical form. See "The Imperial Gazetteer of Scotland," vol.

ii., p. 305.

²³ See Bishop Forbes' "Kalendars of Scottish Saints," p. 290.

²⁴ See Bishop Forbes' "Kalendars of Scottish Saints," p. 291. He quotes p. 42, and again at p. 57, St. Brigide's of Loublacket is recorded.

²⁵ Page 153.

²⁶ One of the most complete and satisfactory of modern historical works is "The History of the City of Glasgow," by Rev. Dr. J. F. S. Gordon.

²⁷ See Bishop Forbes' "Kalendars of Scottish Saints," p. 291.

²⁸ See "View of the Diocese of Aberdeen." Collections for the History of the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff. Spaulding Club, p. 593.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 642.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 589.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

³² See "New Statistical Account of Scotland," Lanark, p. 877.

³³ See "The Imperial Gazetteer of Scotland," vol. ii., p. 188.

³⁴ See Daniel Wilson's "Archæology and Prehistoric Annals of Scotland," chap. iii., pp. 55, 56, 71.

³⁵ See "History of Ruthe Glen and Kilbride."

³⁶ See an account of this parish in "The Imperial Gazetteer of Scotland," vol. i., pp. 172, 173.

³⁷ See "New Statistical Survey of Scotland," Perth, p. 426.

³⁸ See Jervise's "Memorials of Angus," p. 448.

³⁹ See "Kalendars of Scottish Saints," p. 291.

to be seen, at Kilbarchan, in Renfrewshire.⁴⁰ Again, there is a spring of St. Bride, at Traquair.⁴¹ Also, we find St. Brigid's or Bride's Spring at Dunsyre in Lanarkshire.⁴² There is a Kilbride, in Lorn,⁴³ This wildly beautiful district of Argyleshire⁴⁴ is said to have derived its name from Labhrin or Loarn.⁴⁵ Also, St. Bride's Chapel and Well were at Beath in Ayrshire.⁴⁶ Here there is a parish called Kilbride.⁴⁷ The lands of S. Brydehill, in Dumfrieshire,⁴⁸ are noted, in the Retours.⁴⁹ There is a Kilbride, in Arran. There is a Kilbride, in Cromarty. There is a Kilbride, in Uist.⁵⁰ St. Bride had a chapel at Rothesay,⁵¹ a royal burgh, in Bute.⁵² In the parish of Kilmoire, in Bute,⁵³ a convent had been erected to St. Bride.⁵⁴ There was a St. Bride's Church, at Kirkcolm,⁵⁵ at Kirkmabreck, in Wigtonshire.⁵⁶ This is situated, on the western side of Lough Ryan, entering Stranraer. The dedication of St. Bride is found in the Lewes,⁵⁷ at Borve.⁵⁸ Besides this, at the remote Orcadian⁵⁹ extremity of Scotland, St. Bride's dedication is found in Stronsay and Papa,⁶⁰ in the Orkney Islands.⁶¹ There, our saint is associated with St. Nicholas.⁶² Again, the Church of St. Brigid, in the province of Athol, was reputed as being famous for miracles.⁶³ We are told, that fairs were held in St. Bride's honour, at Forres and Inverness.⁶⁴ We read, in the Retours,⁶⁵ about St. Brigid's Chapel, at Clackmannan,⁶⁶ where it is mentioned.⁶⁷ Other churches and religious houses, dedicated to her in North Britain, might probably be enumerated.

On the continent of Europe, the *cultus* of this illustrious abbess was observed by the faithful, in various countries. It is to be regretted, that no

⁴⁰ See "New Statistical Account of Scotland," No. 53, pp. 354 to 366.

⁴¹ See Bishop Forbes' "Kalendars of Scottish Saints," p. 290.

⁴² See "New Statistical Account of Scotland," vol. iii., p. 66.

⁴³ See "Old Statistical Account of Scotland," vol. ii., p. 826.

⁴⁴ See an account of it in "The Imperial Gazetteer of Scotland," vol. ii., pp. 374, 375.

⁴⁵ He emigrated from Ireland, and established a dynasty among the south-western Picts in the year 503. He is said to have ruled there ten years. See O'Flaherty's "Ogygia," pars iii. *Scotiæ Regum Catalogus Chronologico-Generalogicus*, p. 470.

⁴⁶ See "New Statistical Account of Scotland," Ayr, p. 581.

⁴⁷ See a very complete and an interesting account of the parish of Kilbride, in Ayrshire, to be found in George Robertson's "Topographical Description of Ayrshire; more particularly of Cunningham; together with a Genealogical Account of the principal families in that Bailiwick," pp. 114 to 145.

⁴⁸ See Bishop Forbes' "Kalendars of Scottish Saints," p. 290.

⁴⁹ See Dumfries, No. 212.

⁵⁰ See "New Statistical Account of Scotland," No. 27, 1.

⁵¹ See "New Statistical Account of Scotland," Bute, p. 103.

⁵² See a description of it, in "The Tourists' Shilling Handy Guide of Scotland," sect.

ix., p. 90.

⁵³ See Bishop Forbes' "Kalendars of the Scottish Saints," p. 290.

⁵⁴ See "New Statistical Account of Scotland," Bute, p. 54.

⁵⁵ See the map prefixed to John Nicholson's "History of Galloway."

⁵⁶ See "New Statistical Account of Scotland," Wigton, p. 111.

⁵⁷ See Bishop Forbes' "Kalendars of Scottish Saints," p. 290.

⁵⁸ See "New Statistical Account of Scotland," Ross, p. 145.

⁵⁹ For information regarding this group of isles, the reader is referred to the Rev. George Barry's "History of the Orkney Islands." Edinburgh, 1805, 4to.

⁶⁰ Lord Teignmouth, in his "Sketches of the Coasts and Islands of Scotland," gives several interesting particulars, regarding the Orkney Islands.

⁶¹ See Bishop Forbes' "Kalendars of Scottish Saints," p. 290.

⁶² See *ibid*.

⁶³ See Rev. Alban's Butler's "Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs and other Principal Saints," vol. ii., 1 February.

⁶⁴ See Bishop Forbes' "Kalendars of Scottish Saints," p. 290.

⁶⁵ See Clackmannan, No. 26.

⁶⁶ Here there is a tower nearly 80 feet high and said to have been built by Robert Bruce. See "The Tourists' Shilling Handy Guide to Scotland," sect. viii., p. 71.

⁶⁷ See Bishop Forbes' "Kalendars of Scottish Saints," pp. 290, 291.

complete list can be obtained, at present, to prove the extent to which it had gone, or the various localities, in which religious houses, and churches,⁶⁸ dedicated to her, had been established. In British Armorica,⁶⁹ and in other parts of France, St. Brigid was invoked,⁷⁰ and very special honour was paid to her memory. At the present day, a very fine carved statue of the holy virgin, represented nearly life-size in the garb of her order, and attired as an abbess, is to be seen, in the noble old cathedral church of St. Omer.⁷¹ Among other foundations erected to her honour, in France, we read of an hospital at Bisuntinum, which existed in the year 1438.⁷² There was a chapel or an altar, dedicated to our saint, in St. Martin's Monastery at Tours; and, in one of his poems, Alcuin⁷³ speaks regarding certain altars, erected to the Scottish or Irish virgins, Brigid and Ita.⁷⁴ Classed with the saints of Germany, our Scottish virgin, St. Brigid, is held to have been among the most celebrated.⁷⁵ We are told, not only of a parish church being dedicated to St. Brigid, the Scottish virgin, at Cologne, but we are further informed, that it was one of the most remarkable in that city. It bordered on the street, called Lankgassen.⁷⁶ Candidus, who was a monk of Fulda, and a writer who lived in the ninth century, gives us a description of relics there preserved. He mentions a chapel or an altar, dedicated to St. Brigid and to other virgins, before the year 818.⁷⁷ In Belgium, likewise, our holy abbess was venerated in a distinguished manner. By Molanus,⁷⁸ she is ranked among the saints of that country. There was a church, erected to our saint, near Fossey, in the diocese of Namur, Belgium. This was frequented by pious pilgrims, and by the local inhabitants. The Reverend Dean of Fossey was engaged, in the work of repairing this church, before the middle of the seventeenth century.⁷⁹ In his collections regarding St. Brigid, Father Ward tells us, that a church or an altar was dedicated to this great virgin, at Hispalis, in Spain; and, Roth says, that her relics were kept at Lisbon, in

⁶⁸ Alan Cope, *Dial.* ii., cap. 22.

⁶⁹ Her Office of Nine Lessons is to be found in the old "Breviarium Chorisopotensis."

⁷⁰ St. Alcuin compiled a Litany, in which her name is included, and this form of prayer Charlemagne was accustomed to recite, as part of his daily devotions.

⁷¹ During a visit made to this place in July, 1863, the writer was pleased to behold this object of popular respect. Several votive offerings were suspended near it. Beside the foregoing statue, was a miniature one, representing the small image of a young maiden engaged in the act of churning. Doubtless, both these objects had been the gift of some former Irish resident, at St. Omer's, to the cathedral church.

⁷² At this year, we have the subsequent testimony of John Chifflet, archbishop over this city, who thus writes: "Hoc anno Capitulum Bisuntinum ratam habuit unionem Hospitalis S. Brigide factum Cantorie Bisuntinae: ex actis Capituli, in quibus actis 7 Decemb., 1530, dicitur fundatio illius domus nullibi reperiri; atque id ipsum innuit vetustus anno 1363 conscriptus codex," &c.—*Pars* ii., cap. 79.

⁷³ See an account of this celebrated writer in Mabillon's "Annales Ordinis S. Benedicti," *tomus* ii., lib. xxiii., sects. xxxvii.,

xxxviii., pp. 186 to 188, lib. xxvi., lib. xxvii., *ibid.* He died on the 19th of May, A.D. 804.

⁷⁴ "Virginibus sacris præsens hæc ara dicata est,

Quarum clara fuit Scottorum vita per urbes,

Brigida sancta femina Christo simul Ita fidelis

Hæc nobis salutem per suffragia sancta," &c.

—Alcuinus, "Poemata," No. 247.

⁷⁵ See Petrus Cratopolius, "De Sanctis Germaniæ."

⁷⁶ See Erhard Winheim, "In Sacrario Agrippinae."

⁷⁷ He says:—

"Agnes & Euphemia, Geneoufa, Susanna, Columba,

Hoc altare ornant rite suis precibus.

Cum queis tu Brigida, & tu Virgo Scholastica semper,

Placatum nobis Altithronon facias."

⁷⁸ See his Kalendar, at the 1st of February. "Natales Sanctorum Belgii, et eorum Chronica recapitulatio."

⁷⁹ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigide, cap. xiv., xv., pp. 623, 624.

Portugal.⁸⁰ There had been a foundation in her honour, at Placentia,⁸¹ in Italy ; but, Colgan could not pronounce with certainty, whether it existed in his time.⁸²

In England and Scotland, the following modern churches, chapels and religious houses have been consecrated or placed under the invocation of our great virgin saint. In the diocese of Westminster, and in the city of London, there is a St. Brigid's Church, at Baldwin's Gardens, E.C., at Isleworth. There is a church, jointly dedicated to Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception and to St. Brigid. In the diocese of Beverly, and in the great manufacturing town of Leeds, is a church, dedicated to St. Brigid. In the diocese and great commercial town of Liverpool, there is a church of St. Brigid, at Bevington Hill, N., there are also a seminary and schools of St. Brigid.

In the western district of Scotland, a church of St. Brigid was built, in 1871, at Newmains, in Lanarkshire ; and another at Kilbirnie, Ayrshire, was erected in 1862 ; one at Eaglesham, Renfrewshire, was built in 1858.⁸³

In the New World, and especially since the beginning of the present century, several churches, schools, and other religious institutions, have been built, in honour of our illustrious saint, and these have been placed under her protection. The following enumeration, because drawn from the most recent and authentic official source,⁸⁴ is deemed to be accurate, so far as it goes, and tolerably complete. We shall commence with the great Western Republic, the United States of America. Thus, in the archdiocese of Baltimore, there is a church, dedicated to St. Brigid, at Canton, and St. Brigid's school is to be found at Baltimore. In the diocese of Wheeling, there is a church of St. Brigid, at Murray's, Lewis County, State of Virginia. In the archdiocese of Boston, there is a St. Brigid's Church, at Abington, one at Framingham, one at Maynard, and one at Melrose. In the diocese of Burlington, there is a church of St. Brigid, at West Rutland, and parochial schools are attached, under the same patronage. In the diocese of Hartford, there is a church to St. Brigid, at Cheshire, one at Cornwall, one at Manchester, and one at Moodus. There is an academy of St. Brigid, at Meriden, under charge of the Sisters of Mercy. In the diocese of Portland, there is a church of St. Brigid at Vassalboro. In the diocese of Springfield, there is a church of St. Brigid, at East Hampton, and another at Millbury. There is another St. Brigid's Church, at Warren. In the archdiocese of Cincinnati, there is a church to St. Brigid at Xenia. In the diocese of Cleveland, and in the city so called, there is a church of St. Brigid, now building. In the diocese of Detroit, there is a church of St. Brigid, at Northfield. In the diocese of Fort Wayne, there is a church of St. Brigid, at Logansport. In the diocese of Louisville, and in the city so called, is St. Brigid's Church. At Hickman, there is another church, dedicated to her. St. Brigid's School, in Louisville, is conducted by the Sisters of Loretto. In the diocese of Vincennes, there are churches of St. Brigid, at Liberty, and at Nebraska. In the archdiocese of Milwaukee, there is a church to St. Brigid, at Kewaskee, and one at Ridgeway. In the diocese of Green Bay, there is a church of St. Brigid, at Northport. In the diocese of La Crosse, there is a church of St. Brigid, at Beaver Creek, as also one at Westford. In the diocese of St. Paul,

⁸⁰ In "Dissertatione de S. Brigida."

⁸¹ This is stated, in an Irish Life of St. Brigid, chap. 50.

⁸² See "Trias Thaumaturga." Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigidæ, cap. xv., p. 624.

⁸³ The foregoing list has been extracted, from "The Catholic Directory, Ecclesias-

tical Register and Almanac, for the year of our Lord, 1876." London : 1876, 8vo.

⁸⁴ See Sadliers' "Catholic Directory, Almanac, and Ordo, for the year of our Lord, 1876." With full returns of the various dioceses in the United States and British America. Published in New York, 1876, 8vo.

there is a church of St. Brigid, at Pleasant Grove. In the diocese of Mobile, which belongs to the province of New Orleans, there is a church of St. Brigid at Whistler, with a convent and school attached, also dedicated to St. Brigid, and attended by the Sisters of Charity. In the archdiocese of New York, are a church to St. Brigid, in the city, and also St. Brigid's Academy, with St. Brigid's Male School, taught by the Christian Brothers; also, St. Brigid's Female School, taught by the Sisters of Charity. In the diocese of Albany, there is a church of St. Brigid, at Port Schuyler, one at Salisbury, one at Copake, and one at Skaneateles Falls. In the diocese of Brooklyn, there is a church of St. Brigid, at Westbury. In the diocese of Buffalo, and in the city so named, there is a church of St. Brigid. Again, at Cuba and at Bergen, there are churches to St. Brigid. St. Brigid's Schools in Buffalo, are under the care of the Sisters of Mercy. In the diocese of Newark, there are churches of St. Brigid, at Glassboro, at High Bridge (now building), and at Jersey City. St. Brigid's Academy, Jersey City, is taught by Sisters of Charity, and they also teach in parochial schools attached. In the diocese of Ogdensburg, there is a church of St. Brigid, at Trout River. In the diocese of Rochester, and in the city of that name, there is a church of St. Brigid, and there is one in East Bloomfield. In the city, St. Brigid's Free School is taught by the Sisters of St. Joseph. In the archdiocese of Philadelphia, there is a church of St. Brigid, at the Falls of Schuylkill. In the diocese of Erie, there is a church of St. Brigid, at Jamestown, and one at Meadville. At the latter place, is St. Brigid's Academy, under care of the Sisters of St. Joseph, besides a parochial school, under her invocation. In the diocese of Pittsburgh, and in the city so named, there is a church of St. Brigid, and one also at McNeill's Settlement, as likewise one at Wellesburgh. St. Brigid's Schools are in the city of Pittsburgh. In the diocese of Scranton, there is a Mission of St. Brigid, at Keiser Valley. In the archdiocese of St. Louis there are churches, one to St. Brigid in the city of St. Louis, and one at Pacific City. In the city of St. Louis are St. Brigid's Christian Brothers' Schools, St. Brigid's Half-Orphan Asylum, and St. Brigid's Female Schools, conducted by the Sisters of St. Joseph. In the diocese of Alton, there is a church to St. Brigid at Liberty, and one at Delhi. In the diocese of Chicago, and at Bridge Port, Chicago, there is a church of St. Brigid. There is another at Tremont. In Chicago are St. Brigid's Schools for Boys under the Christian Brothers; while, there are also St. Brigid's Schools for Girls. In the diocese of Nashville, there is a church of St. Brigid at Memphis, and schools are attached to it, under care of the Dominican Nuns. In the diocese of St. Joseph, there are churches of St. Brigid, at Bucklin, and at Forest City. In the Vicariate Apostolic of Kansas, there are churches of St. Brigid, at Coalfield, and at St. Brigid's. In the archdiocese of San Francisco, and in the city so called, there is a church of St. Brigid, and one at Volcano.

The following churches, dedicated to the renowned abbess of Kildare, are in the British possessions. In the province of Quebec, Lower Canada, and in the diocese of Three Rivers, there is a parish church of Ste. Brigitte; in the diocese and city of Montreal, there is a church, dedicated to St. Bridget; in the diocese of St. Hyacinth, there is a parish church, dedicated to Ste. Brigide; in the diocese of Ottawa, there is a church of St. Brigid, at Onslow, and another at Osgood, on the Rideau, while there is a St. Brigid's School, at Ottawa, in charge of Gray Nuns; in the diocese of St. Germain of Rimouski, there is a church of St. Brigid, at Maria. In the province of Toronto, Upper Canada, and in the diocese of Kingstown, there is a church of St. Brigid, at Burgess. In the province of Halifax, and in the diocese of St. John, N.B., there is a church of St. Brigid, at Kingstown; in the diocese of

Chatham, there is a church of St. Brigid, at Renous Bridge ; in the diocese of Charlottstown, on Lott 11, there is a church of St. Brigid. Again, in the diocese of St. John's, Newfoundland, there is a church, known as St. Bride's and Branch.

Three different days, within the year, have special festivals of St. Brigid assigned to them, according to our Irish annalists and hagiographers. *First*, At the year 449, the "Annals of Roscrea" state, that our saint was born on Wednesday, and on the eighth moon of February. This is attested, likewise, by an Irish Life of St. Brigid.⁸⁵ Yet, in no other record or martyrology can we find confirmation, concerning this statement. *Secondly*, The Feast of a Translation of St. Patrick's, of St. Brigid's, and of St. Columbkille's Relics occurs, on the 9th of June,⁸⁶ according to various authorities, while others assign it to the day following, or to the 10th of this same month.⁸⁷ Our own respected Colgan says, he could not undertake to settle such a question,⁸⁸ as at the time of writing, he had been an exile from his country during thirty-two years, and, as a consequence, he was ignorant regarding Irish Church customs and practice, in celebrating this festival of their Translation.⁸⁹ *Thirdly*, The principal festival of St. Brigid was that of her Natalis, on the 1st of February, and this corresponds with the day of her death.⁹⁰ By an Indult of the Papal See,⁹¹ the 1st of February was to be observed, as a double of the second class, throughout all Ireland. In the united dioceses of Kildare and Leighlin, the feast of St. Brigid, as special patroness of these dioceses, is observed as a double of the first class, with an octave, commencing on the 1st of February, and terminating on the 8th day of the same month. This principal festival of St. Brigid is noticed,⁹² in nearly all our native and foreign Martyrologies, whether in MSS. or published.

St. Angus, the Culdee, in his Metrical Festivity, at the Kalends, or 1st

⁸⁵ In the sixth chapter.

⁸⁶ See Stanihurst, in "Vita S. Patricii," lib. ii., cap. 76.

⁸⁷ Ussher, referring to Down, in his "Primordiis Ecclesiarum Britannicarum," cap. vii., p. 791, cites the following passage, from lect. vi., Officii Translationis, printed at Paris, A.D. 1620 : "Tempore vero translationis eorum in dicta Ecclesia præsident quindecim Episcopi cum Abbatibus, Praepositis, Decanis, Archidiaconibus, Prioribus, aliisque viris orthodoxis quam plurimis, statuantes diem translationis dictorum sanctorum ab universis Christi fidelibus per Hiberniam constitutis quarto Idus Junii per singulos annos celebrari et transferentes festum S. Columbae in crastinum octavarum istarum reliquiarum istarum." Ussher observes, that for "quarto Idus," we should read, "quinto Idus;" and, this emendation seems to be suggested by the words of the text itself, "transferentes festum S. Columbae."

⁸⁸ Colgan remarks, that if the 10th of June be not meant, why should St. Columba's feast, which fell "in quintum Idus," or on the 9th day of June, be transferred to the feast of the before-mentioned translation, which seems to have fallen, not on that day, but on the fourth of the Ides, corresponding with the 10th of June, when it was pro-

bably celebrated.

⁸⁹ Yet, we find the feast of the Translation of St. Patrick's Relics, set down at the 10th of June ; while, at the same day, we read, in the emendator of Usuard, or in the "Carthusian Martyrology;" "Apud Scotiam Translatio S. Patricii, Episcopi et Confessoris." Canisius has a like entry, in his "German Martyrology." In "Catalogo Generali," Ferrarius, citing Canisius, gives a similar account, and he afterwards adds in his notes : "Ex Canisio hac die, quæ Translationis est. Natalis enim die 17. Martii, ut in Martyrologio Romano, colitur. Est autem ille Patricius celeberrimus Episcopus, Hibernia Primas, et miraculis illustris : cuius corpus Duni urbe Hibernica, olim conditum erat una cum corporibus Sanctorum Columbae Abbatis, et Brigidæ Virginis. Cujus rei distichon apud Hectorem Boetium legitur hoc

"Ifi tres in Duno tumulo tumulantur in uno,
Brigida, Patricius, atque Columba pius."

⁹⁰ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigidæ, cap. xi., pp. 620, 621.

⁹¹ Bearing date August 6th, 1854, and issued by Pope Pius IX.

⁹² At the 1st of February.

of February, mentions this illustrious cenobiarch of pious women, with a distinguishing eulogy.⁹³ The "Martyrology of Tallaght,"⁹⁴ composed by the same St. Ængus and St. Molruan, records the eternal rest of St. Brigid, as taking place in the seventieth year of her age, and on the Kalends of February. Likewise, the Calendar of Cashel, Charles Maguire, Fitzsimons, and other hagiographists, treat about our saint and her festival, at the 1st of February. Besides these notices, in that ancient Martyrology, kept in the Cathedral Church of the Holy Trinity, Dublin, the memory of St. Brigid, virgin, is noted, with particular eulogy, at the Kalends, or 1st day of February.⁹⁵ Her office was celebrated with the reading of nine lessons. This day was regarded as the one of her Dormition, Deposition,⁹⁶ or Death. The martyrologist avers, that she went to join the Heavenly choirs of angels, and Christ, for whose love she wrought, after performing signs and miracles, after renowned works of mercy and alms-deeds, after pure humility and benevolence, devoted to God, and after an illustrious example afforded to other virgins of chastity and of holiness. If the great works of this noble virgin were to be written in full, the martyrologist declares, he should be obliged to write a book of an unusual size. A still later composition, the Martyrology of Donegal⁹⁷ records, on this day, the celebration of the festival of Brigit, virgin, abbess of Cill-Dara.

The Roman Martyrology,⁹⁸ and Father Stephen White,⁹⁹ commemorate this renowned virgin, at the 1st of February. In the anonymous catalogue of Irish saints, published by O'Sullivan Beare,¹⁰⁰ the name of St. Brigida occurs. In Henry Fitzsimon's list, it is also to be found at this date.¹⁰¹ Reference is made to Surius, and to notes in the Roman Martyrology, as edited by Baronius.¹⁰² Convaenus observes, in relation to this saintly virgin, at the same day, that she was of royal race.¹⁰³ In several ancient Martyrologies the feast of this holy virgin is recorded. Venerable Bede, in noting it, remarks, that St. Brigid's Life had been distinguished for miracles.¹⁰⁴ Rabanus

⁹³ The following *rann*, transcribed from the "Leabhar Breac," with its English translation, has been kindly furnished to the writer, by the Irish Professor, Bryan O'Looney, of the Catholic University:—

O. kl. moíair calainn februaí,
 fíorfhí martríu mar n-áileonn;
 b'áiríe ban báile n-uallann,
 cenó eairí eallóe n-epenn.

They ennoble the Kalends of February,
 A shower of martyrs, great, resplendent;
 Bridget the great illustrious woman,
 The chaste head of the nuns of Erin.

⁹⁴ On the 1st of February, we find entered in Dr. Kelly's "Martyrology of Tallagh," "Dormitatio S. Brigidæ, lxx. anno ætatis suæ," p. xiv.

⁹⁵ See the work, edited by John Clarke Crosthwaite and Rev. Dr. Todd. Introduction, pp. xlvii., liii., and pp. 62, 84, 85.

⁹⁶ The English Martyrology says: "In Hibernia depositio S. Brigidæ Virginis," &c.

⁹⁷ See Drs. Todd's and Reeves' edition, pp. 34 to 37.

⁹⁸ At this day, the Roman Martyrology says: "In Scotia S. Brigidæ Virginis, quæ cum lignum altaris tetigisset, in testimonium Virginitatis suæ statim viride factum est."

⁹⁹ See "Apologia pro Hibernia," cap. iv., p. 39, cap. v., pp. 71, 72.

¹⁰⁰ See "Historiæ Catholicæ Ibernæ Compendium," toms i., lib. iv., cap. xi., p. 49.

¹⁰¹ See *ibid.*, cap. xii., p. 53.

¹⁰² Baronius remarks, that Bede, Usuard, Ado, and other Martyrologists, agree. He also says, that Surius, in his first tome, has some acts relating to our saint; while, in an old MS. copy, belonging to St. Cecilia's monastery, beyond the Tiber, her Acts were written, at greater length, by Cogitosus, in 24 distinct chapters. Appended to this Life were some verses.

¹⁰³ He adds, that she was venerated at Lisbon, the chief city of Portugal, where her sacred relics were preserved, and were annually exposed "Jubilæi celebratione."—See *ibid.*, cap. x., p. 47.

¹⁰⁴ "Apud Scotiam S. Brigidæ virginis; ejus vita miraculis claruit: quæ cum lignum tetigisset, viride factum est."

Maurus has a notice of her nativity.¹⁰⁵ St. Ado of Vienne has a record in his Martyrology, and exactly like that of Bede. Usuard extended, or the Carthusian Martyrology, at the 1st of February, remarks on her renowned miracles.¹⁰⁶ St. Notker has a similar notice to that of Raban, with an addition about the wood of the altar becoming green, in recognition of her purity.¹⁰⁷ The Blessed Marianus O'Gorman calls our saint, the Arch-Virgin or Chief of the Irish Virgins.¹⁰⁸ And the Martyrology of Salisbry states her great merits.¹⁰⁹ Wandelbertus Prumiensis,¹¹⁰ Galasinus,¹¹¹ and Molanus,¹¹² in their respective Martyrologies, as also Hermanus Gruen, have notices of this holy virgin, at the 1st day of February.¹¹³ Other authorities, if cited, should prove too tedious for enumeration.¹¹⁴

In various antiphonaries, office books,¹¹⁵ kalendars, and martyrologies, her name and feasts are inscribed. Likewise notices are to be met with, in those ecclesiastical remains, which serve to manifest the great reverence paid her memory by the clergy, in different dioceses, throughout Ireland.

The office of St. Brigid appears to have been recited in times the most remote, not alone in the diocese of Kildare, as special patroness, but throughout the various other dioceses of Ireland, as also in the British Isles, and on the continent of Europe. The old "Breviarium Chorisopotensis" of British Armorica, had an office of St. Brigid, having nine lessons. Her feast was celebrated at Cologne, as a double, and in the church, bearing her name,

¹⁰⁵ "In Hibernia Nativitas Brigidæ, quæ nativitas magnorum meritorum et sanctitatis esse prædicatur."

¹⁰⁶ "In Scotia S. Brigidæ Virginis cujus Vita miraculis claruit."

¹⁰⁷ "In Hibernia Nativitas S. Brigidæ Virginis quæ multorum meritorum et sanctitatis esse prædicatur, adeo ut cum lignum altaris tetigisset viride fit effectum."

¹⁰⁸ "Brigida Archvirgo, seu caput virginum Hiberniæ."

¹⁰⁹ "In Scotia festum S. Brigidæ Virginis, cujus vita virtutibus et miraculis fuit valde famosa."

¹¹⁰ He thus writes :—

"Brigida Virgo potens, Februi sibi prima Calendas

Scotorum miro poscit celebrata favore."

¹¹¹ In his "Martyrology" at the same day, Galasinus observes, "In Scotia S. Brigidæ Virginis, quæ apud Episcopum cum virginitatem profiteretur, lignum altaris tetigit, quod statim viride factum, argumento fuit ejus sanctitatis, et virginalis castitas." Again: "Brigida Virgo, quæ ut scribunt Lippomanus et alii, fuit e Scotia vel Hibernia oriunda, nata ex Dubtacho patre et quadam ejus ancilla; quæ multis postmodum miraculis valde illustris evasit, multaque Virginum et Monachorum Monasteria fundavit, multa restauravit. Illa est, quæ solo tactu lignum altaris in suæ virginitatis argumentum, viride effecit, mortua est cum magna sanctitatis opinione anno 518. Alii volunt, an 522."—Felic. I. Febr.

¹¹² In his Belgian Calendar, at the 1st of February, Molanus places her among the Belgian saints. See "Natales Sanctorum

Belgii, et eorum Chronica recapitulatio."

¹¹³ At the same day, in MS. Chartucie Coloniensis, Gruen writes: "S. Brigidæ Virginis in Scotia, alias Hibernia."

¹¹⁴ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigidæ, cap. xi., pp. 620, 621.

¹¹⁵ The following notices refer to her Offices and Feasts. A MS. of T.C.D., classed B. 1, 1, contains at February 1st, Kal. Sanctæ Brigidæ Virginis non martyris iii. lect. A MS. classed B. 3, 1, at the same date, enters in its Kalendar, Sanctæ Brigidæ Virginis non Martyris Duplex fiii ix. lect. A MS. classed B. 1, 4, contains at February the 1st, Kal. Sanctæ Brigidæ Virginis non Martyris, ix. lect., in its Kalendar. Another entry, at February 1st Kal. is Sanctæ Brigidæ Virg. ix. lect. A calendar in Trinity College in MS., marked, B. 3, 9, has in the list of its Irish saints, at February the 1st, Kal. Sanctæ Brigidæ Virg. non mart. iii. lect. A MS. classed B. 3, 10, registers at February the 1st, Kal. Sanctæ Brigidæ Virg. A MS. classed B. 3, 12, contains at Februarii, Kal. Brigidæ Virg. ix. lect. A MS. classed B. 3, 13, contains at February 1st, Kal. Sanctæ Brigidæ Virg. non mart. ix. lect. In the Kalendar of a Roman Psalter, classed among the MSS., B. 3, 14, at February 1st, Kal. is noted Brigidæ Virginis. In another, classed B. 3, 15, is entered, at February 1st, in French, *Se Bride*. In another Kalendar of the Breviary, according to the Sarum rite, and in the second part, at February 1st, Kal., we have entered Sanctæ Brigidæ Virginis, with an Office of Three Lessons. This latter is classed, in both its parts, B. 3, 18, 19.

she being its patroness. In the breviaries and missals, belonging to the churches of Utrecht, of Treves, of Mentz, of Herbpolis, of Constance, of Strasburg, and of many other places in Germany, her feast is set down as a *simplex*, at the 1st of February. Before Colgan's time, an office of St. Brigid had been printed at Paris, A.D. 1622. In this, the antiphons are proper and taken from the lauds, in the first vespers of her feast. The capitulum, hymn, antiphon of the *Magnificat*, and prayer, are also proper. At matins, the invitatorium, hymn, as at first vespers, antiphons, responses, the fourth, fifth, and sixth lessons of the second nocturn, are proper, the remaining lessons being taken from the common of virgins. The antiphons, capitulum, hymn, versicles, and responses, with the antiphons at Benedictus, and the prayer are proper for lauds. At little hours, the antiphons are taken from the proper antiphons of lauds. At second vespers, the antiphons, psalms, capitulum, and hymn, as at first vespers of the feast, the versicle, response and antiphon of the *Magnificat*, are likewise proper. The second office, taken from the Roman Breviary,¹¹⁶ has the six first lessons of the various nocturns, one and two, with a prayer proper. The same observations will also apply, to the third office of our saint, printed from the "Breviarium Giennensis," published in Italy. We find a fourth office, taken from the Breviary of the Canons Regular of Lateran, printed by Francis Wauder, at Mons. Besides the prayer proper, there are apparently three proper lessons, as reprinted in Colgan's work.¹¹⁷

Hymns and panegyrics of St. Brigid have been written in various languages. A Latin hymn, in praise of St. Brigid, and attributed to *Ninnid lamh-dán*, or "Ninnid of the clean hand," is preserved.¹¹⁸ There is an Irish poem on St. Brigid, but improperly ascribed to St. Suibne, the son of Colman, in the Betham Manuscript Collection,¹¹⁹ belonging to the Royal Irish Academy, and written by O'Longan, of Cork. Among the manuscripts of Trinity College, Lhuyd¹²⁰ notes an Irish hymn, in which St. Brigid's praise is celebrated. Another, composed by St. Columkille, in the time of Áedh Mac Ainmerech, also celebrates her merits, and it is in the Irish language.¹²² Besides the foregoing, Edmund Dwyer, Bishop of Limerick, has composed some Latin verses, on the miracles of St. Brigid.¹²³

¹¹⁶ Printed at Venice, by Antonio de Giunta, A.D. 1522.

¹¹⁷ See Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga." Appendix Prima ad Acta S. Brigidæ, pp. 599 to 602.

¹¹⁸ Among the Trinity College Manuscripts, Dublin, we found a copy in the MS., classed, E. 4. 2.

¹¹⁹ Vol. liv., p. 176.

¹²⁰ See "Archæologia Britannica," p. 436.

¹²¹ It is particularized thus: 501. Hymni in laudem B. Patricii, Brigidæ, et Columbæ, Hibern. plerumque, fol. membr. I. 125.

¹²² It is thus described by Lhuyd: "An hymn on S. Brigid in Irish, made by Columkille, in the time of Éda Mac Ainmerech, or Broccan Cloin; cum regibus Hibern. et Success. S. Patricii, p. 14." See "Archæologia Britannica," p. 436.

¹²³ We shall extract from those portions, which are given by Colgan:—

"Dum Brigidæ fit Hymen, frondet pes aridus aræ:

Quid? nota frons floris, floris at hostis Hymen.

Sidere se privat, velut hoste pudoris, oculo:

An quia dat cæci lumina, cæca manet? Dat Bellona viros, Brigida umbras ensibus escam

Brigida bruta facit scire, Minerva viros. Res cunctas parere parum est; en recula inanis

Umbra capit vulnus, pondus & umbra subit.

Next follow some lines, on the inextinguishable fire of St. Brigid:—

"Ardet inextinctus Brigidæ focus igne perenni,

Non capit augmentum coctus at inde cinis

Quid notat ille rogus? tacite-ne incendia mentis?

Vivaci vivax igne notatur amor?

Sed si hæc flamma, suos dum Brigida foverit ignes,

Nescia mortis erit; nescia mortis erit."

It is certain, from what we have already seen, the great St. Brigid's relics were preserved with great honour, at Kildare, and afterwards at Down, for many years after her death. Among other relics of our saint, Hanmer mentions a bell, called "Clogg Brietta," or "Brigid's Bell," which he says, the superstitious Irish found out, in process of time, and to which they attributed great virtue and holiness. This bell, he says, and other toys, carried about, not only in Ireland, but also in England, were banished the land, in the time of Henry V.¹²⁴ Colgan indignantly takes exception to such statements; and, he shows, that the relic in question was not a recent invention or a fraud, but that it had existed from a remote period.¹²⁵ Yet, he would not undertake to pronounce, whether or not, this had been the identical bell, sent by St. Gildas to our saint as a present.¹²⁶ At the church of Scrin, in Ireland, was preserved a shroud, in which St. Brigid's corpse is said to have been wrapped, together with other much venerated relics of this same church.¹²⁷ Doctor Petrie tells us, that he had in his own cabinet, that celebrated reliquary, which contained a slipper of St. Bridget. It is said, that a part of St. Brigid's sacred relics, and especially the wood that became green,¹²⁸ were preserved at Candida Casa, until these had been profaned at the period of the Reformation.¹²⁹ In his catalogue of the Irish saints, Ricardus Convæus, as already mentioned, tells us, that some relics belonging to our saint, were preserved in a church of the city of Lisbon, in Portugal. It is not improbable, that certain mementoes of St. Brigid had been deposited in some of the churches, dedicated to her memory, as previously detailed, and more especially within those, which were built in extern countries.¹³⁰

In art, S. Bridget is usually represented, with her perpetual flame, as a symbol; sometimes, with a column of fire, said to have been seen above her head, when she took the veil.¹³¹ This flame has reference, likewise, to the portent of illumination about the house in which she was born. In allusion to her tending of cows, she is also represented, dressed as a dairy-maid, and in the act of churning. Again, one of her floral emblems is the "*Laurus Nobilis*," which is called the shrub of St. Bride, although it does not flower on her day.¹³² We are told, furthermore, that her type among created things is the dove among birds, the vine among trees, and the sun among the stars.¹³³

St. Brigid had been regarded by our ancestors as the special patroness of Leinster.¹³⁴ In many parts of Ireland, a very considerable number of mar-

¹²⁴ See Hanmer's "Chronicle of Ireland," p. 91.

¹²⁵ For proof of this assertion, he cites the respective martyrologies of St. Ængus, or of his scholiast, and of Charles Maguire, at the 1st of February. See "*Trias Thaumaturga*," Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigidæ, cap. xvii., p. 625.

¹²⁶ See Colgan's "*Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ*," xxix. Januarii. Vita S. Gildæ Badonici, cap. ix., p. 183.

¹²⁷ According to St. Adamnan's catalogue of these religious treasures.

¹²⁸ In token of her purity, the altar is said to have become virescent, and to have budded forth flowers, according to one account. See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigidæ, cap. xi., pp. 620, 621.

¹²⁹ See Camerarius "*De Statu Hominis veteris simul ac novæ Ecclesiæ, et Sanctis Regni Scotiæ*," lib. i., cap. iiii., sec. 2, p. 141.

¹³⁰ See Colgan's "*Trias Thaumaturga*," Appendix Quarta ad Acta S. Brigidæ, cap. xvii., p. 626.

¹³¹ See Rev. S. Baring-Gould's "*Lives of the Saints*," vol. ii., February i., p. 22.

¹³² See "*Circle of the Seasons*," p. 32.

¹³³ See Professor O'Looney's *Irish Life of St. Brigid*, pp. 43, 44.

¹³⁴ The following quotation, in reference to St. Bridget, is from a poem on the "Patron Saints of the principal tribes and territories of Ireland," several copies of which are preserved in the Library of the R. I. A. Especially there are two MSS., classed 23, L. 19, and 23, L. 39. An extract is kindly furnished by Mr. Joseph O'Longan, which, with its English translation, reads as follows:—

Laiḡean uile ar eúl bṛiḡoc
Clú go paróibne.

All Leinster under the protection of Bridget,
Fame most precious.

riages were solemnized within that period of the year, extending from the Epiphany to Ash-Wednesday. Several parties were also most anxious, that their marriages should be celebrated before the 1st of February, so that possession might then be taken of their new abode.¹³⁵ It was also an invariable usage of the Irish people to have female infants, born on the feast of the holy abbess of Kildare, baptized with the beautiful name of Bridget¹³⁶ or Bride. This even was a practice, when such births preceded or succeeded the festival by a week or two, and when no other sister had already received that name in a particular family.

The sapient Irish antiquary, Ledwich, while considerably allowing St. Brigid to have had an existence, in one passage of his work,¹³⁷ deems her to have been a purely imaginary personage, in another,¹³⁸ or to have been a sort of Druidess, established at Kildare to preserve fire, together with her community of Druidesses,¹³⁹ whom it would be so absurd to call nuns. We cannot even discover, when the practice of preserving fire had been at first introduced, in Kildare.¹⁴⁰ Giraldus Cambrensis is the first writer who mentions it.¹⁴¹ Whatever had been the system of the heathen Irish, with regard to the preservation of fire, nothing occurs to prove, that the practice of Kildare was in any manner derived from it; although, it is not meant to be denied, that some remnants of Pagan customs have been observed, without, however, any bad intention, in Ireland, as well as in other countries.¹⁴² Even, it was sometimes thought advisable, to allow certain time-sanctioned usages, harmless in themselves; yet, with the precaution of having them directed to the worship and honour of the true and Almighty God.¹⁴³ As yet happens in the midland counties, and in parts of the South of Ireland, the custom of carrying the "Brigid Oge" is practised, especially by young persons:¹⁴⁴ still, this is more likely to have had a Christian, rather than a Gentile origin.¹⁴⁵ The Irish practice of making circular¹⁴⁶ and square crosses on St.

¹³⁵ For this information, I feel indebted to Ven. John Kenny, D.D., P.P., Ennis, and dean of Killaloe diocese, conveyed in a letter dated Ennis, April 14th, 1875.

¹³⁶ In Cormac's "Glossary," the name of Brigit is derived from *brico-aigil*, *brico-shaigil*, in English "a fiery arrow." See "Sanas Chormaic," translated and annotated by Dr. O'Donovan, edited, with Notes and Indices, by Whitley Stokes, p. 23.

¹³⁷ Dr. Milner was induced to suppose, that Ledwich did not deny the existence of St. Brigid. See "Tour in Ireland," letter M. Dr. Milner, however, seems to have observed only a passage at p. 387 of the "Antiquities of Ireland," overlooking one at p. 378.

¹³⁸ See Dr. Ledwich's "Antiquities of Ireland," p. 378.

¹³⁹ Ledwich imagines, these were intended to replace the heathen Druidesses of yore. If the Pagan Irish worshipped or tended fire, however, its care was entrusted to Druids, rather than to Druidesses.

¹⁴⁰ Such account is not referred to in very ancient documents. The writers of St. Brigid's Lives, it seems evident, knew nothing about it. See her Third Life, at chap. 84, and her Fourth Life, book ii., chap. 57. Colgan's "Trias Thaumaturga," pp. 537, 538, 558, 559.

¹⁴¹ It was kept constantly burning, in an enclosure near the monastery, as Ware says, "De Hibernia et Antiquitatibus ejus, Disquisitiones," &c., cap. xvii., p. 83, for the benefit of the poor and of guests. To this remark, Harris wantonly added, "as was pretended." This practice continued until the suppression of monasteries in the reign of King Henry VIII. See Harris' Ware, vol. ii., "The Antiquities of Ireland," chap. xxxv., p. 238.

¹⁴² See Dr. Lanigan's "Ecclesiastical History of Ireland," vol. i., chap. ix., sec. vi., n. 98, pp. 459, 460.

¹⁴³ In reference to this matter, see St. Gregory the Great's letter to Mellitus in Bede's "Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum," lib. i., cap. 30.

¹⁴⁴ Yet observed in Carrigaline, and in other parts of Cork county. Letter from Very Rev. Denis Canon M'Swiney, P.P., to the writer.

¹⁴⁵ According to a modern writer, the custom of carrying about an image of St. Brigid, on the eve of her festival, is said to have been derived from Paganism. See Marcus Keane's "Towers and Temples of Ancient Ireland," p. 60.

¹⁴⁶ These are sometimes called *boğ bpa-ğroo*, "Brigid's King," and they are invariably made by women alone. From a draw-

Brigid's eve, still prevailing ; and the hanging out of a ribbon or handkerchief from windows¹⁴⁷—yet pretty general in the South of Ireland¹⁴⁸—may be traced to the discontinuance of old festive and Christian usages. All our legend-lore confirms the truth of such a conclusion. In the county of Cork, this tradition prevails. St. Patrick once said in St. Brigid's hearing, that every second day from her festival should be good.¹⁴⁹ "Yes," replied the holy Brigid, "and half of my day, too."¹⁵⁰

Although this illustrious patroness of Ireland justly deserved the title of Thaumaturga, or "Worker of Miracles," and although she was eminently distinguished for her faith, her spirit of prophecy, and her knowledge concerning the most sublime mysteries of Christianity ; yet, she considered, with the great Apostle of the Gentiles, that without charity, her works could not be rendered perfect.¹⁵¹ Though she spoke words of human and angelic wisdom or eloquence, she deemed herself as nothing, or not better than sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal, if not possessing this queen of all virtues. In the distribution of temporal goods, she was liberal, indeed, and almost to prodigality, especially when poor and distressed individuals claimed her protection. This was done, through no motive of ostentation, or through any pride of soul, through no indirect self-seeking or ambition. She was induced, neither to think evil, nor to feel indignant, even when unworthy persons approached to obtain her alms. She envied not others, when fortune dealt adversely with herself ; she was humble, as the lowliest of her religious, when placed over them as a superior. She bore kindly and patiently, with the perverseness and ingratitude of some ; while, being a lover of what was deemed upright and just, the holy Brigid laboured indefatigably, in the cause of religion and divine truth. Speaking and understanding as a child, in her youth, yet she learned to love and serve God ; nor, in her advanced years was it deemed necessary to put away the things she had learned, in earlier life, since these stood the test of genuine holiness. She was only required to glean fresher flowers, and to gather riper fruits, before her course on earth had finally closed. Steadily keeping her own sanctification in view, she burned with a holy zeal to secure the salvation of all other persons, especially those immediately subject to her regular rule. She undertook many wonderful labours, and her energies never failed, in bringing them to a satisfactory issue. In doing the work of God, her soul seemed to expend itself in each particular action ; and, yet, after such accomplishment, it felt invigorated for fresher toils. Bright, indeed, is her crown in Heaven, and unfading are her rewards. If she was strong in faith, she was firm in hope ; and, as an ardent love of God and of her neighbour animated her devoted spirit, so was she a living impersonation on earth of that virtue, greatest of all, pure and perfect charity.

ing of one, sent to the writer by Mr. Denis A. O'Leary, Kilbolane Cottage, Charleville, County Cork, it seems in every respect to resemble St. Patrick's tastefully decorated cross, so becomingly worn by Irish female children on their right shoulder, each St. Patrick's Day. Exactly similar crosses are made by men, and put up in the thatch every Patrick's Day, but only one is made on each festival occurring.

¹⁴⁷ This is said to lengthen during the night, and to cure headaches.

¹⁴⁸ The foregoing and the following information was kindly communicated in Mr. O'Leary's letter of April 17th, 1875.

¹⁴⁹ Mr. O'Longan informs me, that St. Patrick is reputed to have said these words.

¹⁵⁰ In the Irish version, the saying of St. Patrick runs thus :—

"*Ṣaé napa lá go maic
ó lá lae bpiḡoe amaé.*"

Then follows the reply :—"Seao," *oúbaire
bpiḡio*, "*asur leaé mo lae leir.*"

¹⁵¹ See i. Cor. xiii.





