

"And I, mamma, will be like you," lisped the tiny Mary Beatrice, clinging to her mother's robe, "I will be maid of honor to his wife!"
And if our tale of Florence please our readers, hereafter we may tell of the fortunes of her descendants under the last of the Stuart race, gallant Prince Charlie.

ST. PATRICK'S TIMES.

THE thought has occurred to me that it will be instructive and interesting to you to pause and reflectively remember what were the times, and who were the men that immediately preceded St. Patrick's career and who flourished while he labored. It is startling to recall the fact how far off from us those days were—*fourteen hundred years ago!* How near to the death of our Blessed Lord were they! how near to the very disciples and Apostles that He sent forth, and who, amid the flames of the Pentecostal feast, received the divine gifts to fit them for their supernatural and evangelizing missions. The Council of Nice was held in 325. At it Constantine the Great was present: and greater than he, Emperor as he was—the great Athanasius led and assisted, and *this was but fifty-four years before the birth of St. Patrick!!!* and Athanasius died but two years before his birth. Four years after his birth, in 375, Ambrose himself was made Bishop of Milan, and Gregory of Nyssa glorified the Eastern Church with his works of piety—and even then paganism was tolerated in Rome, for it was not till 382 that the Altar of Victory was removed from the Senate House.

I must tell you before I have ended, what was the *real religious* condition of the people who were thus the objects of his apostolic care. He came to them inspired by teachers who were the master spirits of Christian theology, and who were the only men whose labors have rescued Europe from perpetual barbarism. St. Augustine of Hippo, St. Ambrose and St. Jerome, who preceded the great St. Benedict and St. Gregory, together with St. Martin of Tours and St. Hilary and St. Germain were his masters. They were the bright lights in this dark and stormy night of human suffering and human degradation.

Let me tell you, then, what was the condition of these Irish people and what their religion. They were barbarians—they were pagans. Their faith, if faith it could be called, was the Druidical belief of Gaul, a religion borrowed, no doubt, from Oriental paganism, but taking its color from the wild nature of the region in which they lived. High up in the North, in the land of clouds and storms, surrounded by the ocean and hearing the wailing of the wind and the beating of the sea, amid the solitude of their rocks and forests and morasses, they practised the orgies of their almost furious belief. The Druids taught that matter and spirit are eternal. They taught the doctrine of metempsychosis, the transmigration of human souls into animals as a punishment. They taught the doctrine of another world in which the soul preserved its identity, its passions, and its habits. They foretold the future by the flight of birds and the inspection of the entrails of animals. An order of priestesses was devoted to perpetual virginity. Some of them dwelt in the wild reefs of the ocean, where they predicted and raised tempests, and relieved human suffering by pretended supernatural power. Human sacrifices were practiced; at times they crucified their victims on stakes within their temples, or shot them to death with darts and arrows. Often they made a colossus, of wicker-work or hay, and filled it with living beings and lighted it with the torch, destroying their victims in clouds of fire and smoke. Their hierarchy was composed of three distinct Orders—the Druids, men of the oaks, were the first; their knowledge it required twenty years to acquire; it was all traditional, not written. Next came the priests, who performed the sacrifices and ceremonies of worship, and then the bards, who were the genealogists of the clans, and sang the achievements of the chiefs.

This, in brief, was the condition of the people, and from the mass of detestable wickedness and horrible superstition did St. Patrick relieve them. But he did more. He gave them a faith—a faith that enlightened them with a knowledge of the life eternal, and a faith that made them the repository of heavenly holiness and wisdom—with which they too were in turn to aid in evangelizing the Continent of Europe.

During the fifth and sixth and to the eighth century, there was no country in the world that equalled Ireland in purity of doctrine, in number of religious communities, or in extent of learning. Free from invasion, she gave to the lovers of learning and piety an asylum and a hospitable reception. From her shores there went such men as St. Columba to the Northern Isles, St. Fridolin to France and the Rhine, and the far-famed and great Columbanus, with his twelve followers, to France, Burgundy, Switzerland and Lombardy. And at this time the Anglo-Saxon race was unconverted.

Irishmen established Bishoprics in England. In clouds, as numerous as bees, they went to England, and Englishmen went to Ireland to study, and Irishmen gave to the world such names as Erigena, Duns Scotus and St. Virgil. The Irish Clement was the second Rector of the Studium of Paris, The Irish John founded the school of Pavia. The Emperor Frederick the Second, when he would establish a University at Naples, sent all the way to Ireland for the learned Peter to be its Rector. The whole of Ireland, with its family of philosophers, despising the dangers of the sea, migrated to the South. Those days never can return; for the plain reason that then men were learned and taught by the living word, but now they teach and learn by the dead paper. It was to Ireland that England partly owed her own redemption from paganism, for Ireland supplied the whole western world with missionaries.—HON. B. H. BREWSTER.

Handel's sublime oratorio of the "Messiah" will be given in Rome for the first time early in the spring, by the Roman Musical Society. The rehearsals are under the direction of the famous Mustafa, chief musician of the Papal choir. It is curious that this wonderful composition should never yet have been heard in Rome, one of the great musical centres of the world, and the reasons can only be found in the profound antipathy which has always been manifested by the Italians for all that is German, music included.—"Catholic Review."

M. VEUILLOT ON THE KENMARE PUBLICATIONS.

(Translated for the 'Pilot' from the 'Univers' of Sept. 12.)

THE ancient kingdom of Kerry is situated at the extreme western point of Ireland. It is famous in history, and celebrated throughout the world for its exquisite scenery. Its shores are for ever in conflict with the angry ocean; its mountains are not unworthy of comparison with the Alps, its lakes graduate one above another like the platforms of an amphitheatre; but we would now show how the genius of a woman has made a marvellous literary fame for one of its obscure villages, a furnace from which the flames extend to every English speaking country, a Catholic propaganda. This extraordinary woman to whom we are indebted for this is called Miss Cusack in the world, in religion she is known as Sister Mary Francis Clare, by her innumerable admirers as the "Nun of Kenmare." She belongs to an ancient Irish family, but was born a Protestant, and being touched by the grace of Jesus Christ she was received into the Church by Cardinal Wiseman, and immediately after entered the Order of the Poor Clares, casting aside as a worthless garment the pleasures of youth and considerable worldly advantages. The Convent of Kenmare was founded in 1831, by the Rev. Mother Mary O'Hagan. But she knew not that she had to bear the burden of human honors here, where she had only thought to practise penance, yet God had so ordained, she was gifted with a rare talent for authorship, and her superiors desired that she should employ it in the service of religion. She obeyed—a brilliant success made perseverance a duty. Her works had no sooner issued from the press than they were scattered far and near. The Catholic journals welcomed this inspired champion of the Faith with a cry of joy. Her Protestant friends rendered homage to her rare talents and mental powers. To have paused in such a career would have been to abandon the holiest of causes, and Mary Francis dare not even think of it. Her works grew rapidly; she well understands the essential needs of society for which she writes. She instructs alike the child, the young girl, the wife, the mother, and the citizen. Each is offered advice suitable to her situation, every line breathes love to the Church, and devotion to her country. A narrow cell extends itself to the utmost limits of the earth, and the world is instructed by the *inexperience* of the cloister. We have not space to notice "The Spouse of Christ," the "Life of St. Gertrude," the "Manual of Devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart," the "Life of O'Connell," but as we cannot do more on account of the vast field which is open to us, we must only notice out of the Kenmare Series the "Life of St. Patrick," and the "History of Ireland." "The Life of St. Patrick" is honored with the highest of all praise. Pius IX. has recognized its profound learning and eloquence; he is amazed "that an undertaking which appears beyond the power of a woman," has been brought to such perfection; and he has declared that the author "has deserved well of the whole Church." After such praise, we dare not add another word. "The History of Ireland" is a model narrative. It covers the period from Pagan times to the days of O'Connell; it unfolds an immense number of events, yet the reader never wearies for a moment. Confusion is avoided, and yet no useful detail is omitted. Each object has its own place, and each object is considered in proportion to its merit. Nevertheless, the chief merit of this admirable composition is not in the erudition of research, nor the skill with which it is put together, nor the elegance of the style; it consists in the spirit which animates it. The glories and the sorrows of Ireland are felt as they are related. Mary Francis has made them living realities, and has communicated to them the very life of her noble heart—this is the secret of her power.

It is to this heart, sanctified by the love of the Church, that she owes the honor paid to her by the Vicar of Jesus Christ. It is to this heart, thrilling with love of her country, that she owes her popularity, and the verses of a poet of her race, not unworthy to take his place in the foremost ranks of our modern bards:—

As long as there are hearts to feel
For Ireland's woe, for Ireland's weal,
This glorious tribute of their zeal
Will earn the grateful prayer.

Henceforth be sung with loud acclaim,
Be writ upon the scrolls of fame,
The last, the dearest Irish name,
Of MARY FRANCIS CLARE.

If any reliance can be placed on the statements of geologists the carnivorous animals which are now confined to Africa were spread at one time all over Europe. The snowy mountains of northern Greece were infested by lions when the Persian army of Xerxes invaded that country. They hung on the rear of the invading forces and devoured the stragglers. The remains of hyenas have been found in England, and those of elephants have been exhumed in Ireland and Siberia. There is certainly no evidence to prove that the lion ever existed in Ireland, but he may have been imported from countries less remote than Africa. He is repeatedly mentioned in Irish manuscripts. The lion is not necessarily an inhabitant of tropical countries alone. He is perfectly capable of living in the temperate, if not the arctic zone.

"When St. Patrick landed in Ireland, he spoke of the glories of the woman who was the Mother of God upon the earth, and instantly uprose the king upon his throne; and when he heard for the first time in the Irish language the name of Mary, he took off his golden crown and bowed to the sound of that name. Up rose the bard, the poet, the musician, the historian, the prince of his people, and he knelt before Ireland's great apostle, and laid down his harp at the feet of the saint and said, 'I swear that no sound shall ever come from this harp at the bidding of my hands; that no sound shall ever come from my lips on the wings of song, except the glories of Patrick's God, and of the Mother of that God,—the Virgin—the blessed Mary.'"—Father Burke.