

has not been left undisputed, an asserted authority allotting him 89 years only. General opinion, nevertheless, gives him the longer span.

The eighth annual conference of the Highland Land League has been made the occasion of a great demonstration at Wick. The Orster's Commissioners were denounced because, in fixing fair rents, they made no allowance for improvements made by the tenants. They were also accused of going about hob-nobbing with landlords and factors. The ministers of the Established Church likewise incurred rebuke, for the antagonism which, it was alleged, many of them showed towards the proposed Land Law Reform. A proposal to move a resolution approving of disestablishment and disendowment was rejected by no very large majority. A resolution was passed to the effect that no settlement of the land question could be regarded as final which did not recognise the inherent and historic right of the Highland people to their native soil. There was a very full attendance, and among the closing ceremonies was an imposing procession, in which numerous banners were carried, some of them displaying very significant designs and mottoes.

Messrs. Primmer, Thompson, and McVarish have been playing their anti-Popish cantrips in several other places. Where, however, any notice was taken of them it was of a strongly disapproving kind, and disgust at their own proceedings is all they have evoked. Protestant testimony has been forthcoming to the nature of the liversed by the monks of Fort Augustus—whose rejected and spiteful postulant McVarish has calumniated them. Gentlemen who had been guests at their monastery have described what they witnessed there—the conclusion being that McVarish had not found the hard work agree with him. No doubt he finds more congenial companions in Messrs. Primmer and Thompson.

The somewhat famous Lady Dunlop has been appearing as Venus in burlesque at the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh. Her Ladyship is very lightly clad, and shows well in spectacular effects. She appears to have been badly used, but if certain interviews published in the papers speak the truth, there would naturally be an inclination—and perhaps one not altogether inexplicable to use her badly. As a peeress of the realm she must decidedly cut a comical figure. The title of Clancarty has come into strange relationship. In the last generation it was synonymous with all that was the pink of propriety and perfectly respectable.

In Presbyterian pulpits some very generous testimony has been borne to the worth of the late Cardinal Newman. In some cases, indeed, an attempt was made to belittle his memory. The Rev. Mr. Hunter of Glasgow, for instance, held him up to the congregation as a striking example of the danger of believing too much—hardly the prevailing danger in the present day. The Rev. T. S. Majoribanks of Prestonkirk, on the other hand, described him as one of the most saintly men not only of this generation but of history. Saintliness of so high an order, he said, was ordained but for few.

The sea serpent has been quite eclipsed by an apparition in Orkney. Near Southside, Deerness, it is affirmed, a creature has emerged from the sea, sitting upon a sunken rock near the shore.—But as to its appearance, who shall describe that? It has a little black head, a long white neck, a white body, shaped like that of a human being, and two long arms which it waves above its head. If it was a Yankee skipper that brought the news, we could understand it, but coming from a dour Scottish source, there seems no more to be said.

ST. PATRICK LANDED.

(By MARY BANIM, in the *Dublin Freeman's Journal*.)

As we went along those pleasant roads, I found myself wondering if St. Patrick was fond of gathering the flowers that grow under the hedge-rows in such abundance?—had he a favourite walk?—which view of the Quoile or the Lough did he love most to gaze on? as he rested on his way from Saul to Rahulp, where yet stand the remains of the church of that holy Bishop Tassach, to whom was given the privileges of assisting at the last hours of St. Patrick's life and administering the last Sacraments to him. Here, by the roadside, is a spot that should be held very dear to all; and yet, owing to what was once a river having been drained away until it dwindled down to a little stream, even the name of the stream was lost, until accidentally discovered by Mr. Hanna, a noted authority upon the antiquities of the locality. In a pretty nook not far from Rahulp, we come upon an old water-mill—its wheel broken; its out-house dismantled; its little water-course almost choked with wild flowers; the grassy bank beside it luxuriant with those beautiful umbrella-like leaves that make such banks always picturesque. In olden times the streamlet that flows under the mill-wheel was a river—the Inver Slaney or Slaney—and it was up this water-course and past this very spot that Patrick sailed until he came near to the bill whence Diéhu looked out and saw the strange barque upon the Slaney. Probably the saint and his followers landed near where this little mill stands now, and probably, too, he often embarked here to sail in his coracle amongst the islands of the Lough, for in those days the sea came much further inland than it does now. As time went on and land was drained and barriers built to keep out the tide, the Slaney ceased to be a river; it dwindled slowly to a little brook, the very name of which was so long forgotten that even the good woman who lives beside it cannot now give a single tradition connected with the spot, while so many memories of the surrounding districts have survived.

On a hillock or rather near the road, to the east of Saul, and about a mile and a half distant from the latter, is the little church of Rahulp or Rath-colpa, which, small as it is, was a Bishop's church in St. Patrick's time. The building is 35ft. long, 21ft. 4in. wide, the

east windows splayed inward; there are some curiously large stones in the walls, and the elder and hawthorn—without which I have rarely seen the old churches—beautify the ruin with their luxuriant branches.

What is known of Bishop Tassach, who lived here, and who was "one of the family of Patrick of prayers," shows us that in those days a nobleman was not above adding to his privileges and powers by the acquisition of handicraft. Tassach was a noble; he was also a skilled artificer "of great endowment," a worker in gold and other metals, and it was he who covered with gold and adorned with precious gems the sacred Daculus Jesu, or Staff of Jesus, which was the principal pastoral staff of St. Patrick, and was then, and during many subsequent ages venerated as having been used by Christ Himself when on earth.

There were many traditions connected with this staff. It is said that while St. Patrick was in his country he spent a time on an island in the Tournian Sea, or that part of the ocean which bounds the Touraine. In the island Patrick found a hermit from the East who was in possession of this staff, which was a relic of Our Lord's life amongst men; an angel had prepared the hermit for Patrick's visit, and had inspired him to transmit the staff to the missionary, Patrick, by whom it was sacredly kept throughout his life. In his lectures, Professor O'Curry translates a very curious tradition of the "Baculus Jesu," or Staff of Jesus:—

"Patrick took leave of German (his tutor) then, and he gave him his blessing; and there went with him a trusty senior from German to take care of him and to testify to him; Segetius was his name, and a priest in orders, and it was he that performed the offices of the Church under German. Patrick went then upon the sea, nine in his number. It was then the tide cast him on an island, where he saw a new house and a young couple in it; and he saw a withered old woman at the door of the house by their side. 'What has happened the hag?' said Patrick, 'great is her debility.' The young man answered; this is what he said: 'She is a grand daughter of mine,' said the young man; 'even the mother said he, 'O Cleric, of that daughter, whom you see, she is more debilitated again.' 'In what way did that happen?' said Patrick. 'It is not difficult to tell it,' said the young man. 'We are here since the time of Christ. He happened to visit us when He was among men here; and we made a feast for Him. He blessed our house, and he blessed ourselves, and the blessing did not reach our children; we shall be without age, without decay here to the Judgment (day); and it is a long time since thy coming was foretold us,' said the young man; 'and God left (us information) that thou wouldst go to preach to the Gaedhil; and He left a token with us—namely, a bent staff, to be given to thee. 'I shall not receive it,' said Patrick, 'until He Himself gives me His staff.' Patrick stayed three days and nights with them; and he went then to Mount Hermon, in the neighbourhood of the island; and the Lord appeared to him there, and said to him to come and preach to the Gaedhil, and that he would give him the Staff of Jesus; and He said that it would be a deliverer to him in the hour of danger and in every unequal contest in which he should be."

After St. Patrick's death the Staff was held in great veneration and preserved amongst the insignia of the See of Armagh as a most sacred relic, the possession of which, it was believed by the people, gave its holder the right to the Primacy. During successive generations it is mentioned, always with veneration, by St. Bernard and the other writers, and most frequently as the "Staff of Jesus." In the twelfth century—1180—it was removed to Christ Church, Dublin, where it was preserved with the same devotion for nearly four hundred years longer, and there is yet in Westminster Abbey a record stating that in the year 1529 "Sir Gerald Macshayne, Knight, was sworn upon the Holy Massbook and the great relic of Erlonde called Baculum Christi, in the presence of Kyng's Deputie, Chancellor, Treasurer, and Justice." (Dr. Todd's Introduction to the Book of Obits and Martyrology of Christ Church Dublin.) Some years subsequent to this, in 1547, in the reign of Henry VIII by order of Bishop Brown, the first Protestant Archbishop of Dublin, this ancient relic was burned publicly in Dublin. The annalists tell of the wholesale destruction of churches, abbeys, statues and relics of this time, and particularly mention the Staff of Jesus. "They also broke and burned the celebrated images, shrines, and the relics of the saints of Ireland and England. They also burned, after that, the image of the illustrious Virgin Mary, which was of Athrum (Trim), in Meath, which wrought wonders and miracles, and healed the blind, the deaf, the lame, and persons afflicted with various diseases; also the Staff of Jesus, which was in Dublin, and wrought miracles from the time of St. Patrick to that period, and had been in the hands of Christ when He was among men."

In place of turning back to Downpatrick or to the holy wells of Struell—full of interest as they are—we will continue on, by the fields and lanes, under the trees in the valley and out in the broad sunshine and sweet air of the hills, until, from the top of the old Norman tower of Welchstown Castle, we get a fair view out over Strangford Lough and its many islands, each one like a gem set in the sparkling waters that ripple and glow in the gold of the evening sun. Just here the islands are a perfect network, numerous enough, although many must have sunk since St. Patrick counted them as 365. Still they are numerous enough to make the telling of their legends more than I can do. Two of them were related to me as I looked over the Lough from the old ivy-mantled tower—not so far from the mouth of the Quoile but that one can almost see the place where the bell of Saul Abbey lies under the water. For it happened once that, hearing that plunderers were on their way to desecrate and rob the monastery, the monks of the abbey threw their bell into the Quoile to save it from the marauders; and ever since the old inhabitants of Lacle—those descended from the people of those early days—from time to time hear the bell ringing from beneath the waters; then they know that sorrow is at hand for them, or for someone belonging to them. But if, at the same time, they hear the sound of St. Mochay's bell from Island Mahee, they are consoled, for St. Mochay's bell never rings but for joy to its hearers, who then know well that out of the coming tribulation, patiently borne, will spring some happiness tenfold greater than the sorrow that preceded it.