

my own dear dad. Do you think he will let me?

'Yes, Betty,' grandmother said, 'I think he will, for Father Dalton knows the story of Brother John. He and your dear father often discussed the possible hiding places of the snuff box. So I'm quite suré he will be glad to let you keep it for the sake of those who have passed to the Great Beyond.'

Then pressing a kiss on grandma's brow, I wheeled her out into the October sunshine, and there while the swallows were circling overhead I left her to say her rosary, while I carried the precious keepsake to my room.—*Standard and Times.*

## READINGS IN IRISH HISTORY

By 'SHANACHIE.'

ST. COLUMBA.

St. Columba or Columcille, as he is sometimes called, was born at Gartan, in the County of Donegal on the 7th of December, 521. His father, Felim, was prince of the surrounding district and a scion of the royal race of Niall of the Nine Hostages. His mother, Eithne, belonged to the princely house of Leinster. Rightly, therefore, does his biographer, Adamnan, say that Columba was sprung from noble parentage. The saint received at baptism the name of Colum, to which the word Cille (of the Church) was added during his boyhood as a token of his zeal and diligence in the service of God. The compound name Colum-cille, accordingly means 'dove of the Church.' There is no trace at present of any royal rath or ancient fort at Gartan, so far as we could ascertain, writes Dr. Healy. . . . But the flag on which he (Columba) was born is pointed out to every visitor; and there can hardly be any doubt that the tradition fixing the spot is continuous and trustworthy. It is worn quite bare by the hands and feet of pious pilgrims; and what is stranger still, the poor emigrants, who are about to quit Donegal for ever, come and sleep on that flag the night before their departure for Derry. Columba himself was an exile, and they fondly hope that sleeping on the spot where he was born will help them to bear with lighter heart the heavy burden of the exile's sorrow. It would seem that Columba was fostered from childhood by the priest who baptised him, and that in early manhood he entered the famous school of St. Finnian of Moville, where subsequently he was ordained a deacon. We learn from Adamnan that while Columba was in Moville he devoted his attention chiefly to the study of Sacred Scripture. We have the sober testimony of the same Adamnan that while the saint was a deacon at Moville no wine could be found on a certain festival day for the "Sacrificial Mystery." Whilst the ministers at the altar were complaining of the want of wine, the deacon took a cruet to the well, as it was his duty to procure and taste the water for the Holy Sacrifice. Knowing that the wine was wanting he invoked our Lord Jesus Christ, and lo! the water in his hands was changed into wine, as it once was at Cana of Galilee; and he brought it to Bishop Finnian for the Sacrifice, who gave thanks to God on account of this wondrous miracle.

From Moville Columba passed to the school of Clonard, where he was ordained priest. A little later we find him at the Monastery of Glasnevin, whence he returned to his native province in the North and founded, when just twenty-five years of age, the Monastery of Derry. This was in the year 546. About 553 he established the great Monastery of Durrow, in the King's County, and a year later the Monastery of Kells.

It will help us to understand better the subsequent history of Columcille, if we try now to realise what manner of man he was. He came of a fierce and haughty race, and seems to have been himself by nature, notwithstanding his name, a man of ardent temperament and strong passions. He was, says an

ancient commentator, quoting from a still more ancient poet, 'a man of well-formed and powerful frame; his skin was white, his face was broad and fair and radiant, lit up with large grey luminous eyes; his large and well-shaped head was crowned (except where he wore his frontal tonsure) with close and curling hair. His voice was clear and resonant, so that he could be heard at the distance of fifteen hundred paces, yet sweet with more than the sweetness of the bards'. Truly a great and striking man to hear and to look at; one to admire but also to fear, and moreover, animated with lofty purpose, and inspired with all the dauntless courage of his race. In many respects his character appears to bear a striking resemblance to the character of the Prince of the Apostles both in its strength and in its weakness. . . . Doubtless such a man as we have described, found it not only useful but also necessary to chastise his body and bring it under subjection. We are told that he practised the most extreme austerities. He barely took food enough to sustain nature, and that was of the simplest kind. He abstained from meat and wine, living exclusively on bread and water and vegetables—sometimes contenting himself with nettles. He slept on the bare floor with a stone for a pillow and a skin for a covering. Three times at night he rose to pray; and often scored his flesh with the discipline in atonement for his sins. By day he read, or preached to the brethren, or recited the divine office; and not infrequently he took a share in the manual labor of the monks—carrying on his own broad bare shoulders the sacks of meal from the mill to the kitchen. No wonder with such an example before their eyes that the young nobles of Tirconnell strove with generous emulation to excel each other in the service of God. What marvel if the white-robed brethren under such a master became angels in the flesh; and what wonder if God's angels came down from heaven and "crowded every leaf on the oaks of Derry," to listen to such a brotherhood chanting at midnight's hour and at morning's dawn the inspired strains of the Hebrew Bard? (Dr. Healy.)

(To be continued.)

### Palmerston North

(From our own correspondent.)

January 1.

Masses on Christmas Day were celebrated at 6, 6.15, 8, 9, 10, and 11 o'clock. The latter, which was a Missa Cantata, was sung by the Rev. Father Minogue, who was ordained only a few weeks ago. The choir sang Mozart's Twelfth 'Kyrie' and 'Gloria' and Mozart's Eleventh 'Credo' and 'Agnus Dei' with credit, under the baton of Mr. J. Cosgrove, Miss Kendall presiding at the organ. After Mass the choir were entertained by the Rev. Father McManus, who said that he looked forward to Christmas time, to be able to offer a few words of thanks to the choir for the manner in which they give their time to the practices and for the splendid results achieved. He complimented each and every one on the satisfactory way in which the Mass had been sung. He trusted that before another Christmas came the world would be at peace and also that they would be in a new church. Mr. J. Cosgrove responded on behalf of the choir. The usual toasts were then drunk with musical honors. The annual meeting of the choir will be held on Sunday, January 7, after Mass, when all the members are expected to be present.

The Masses on New Year's Day were at 6, 7, and 8 o'clock. They were all well attended. Benediction was given in the evening.

Mr. R. Lafferty, of Wanganui, a former member of the choir, was a visitor to Palmerston North during the holidays. He is going into camp on Tuesday. His many friends wish him the best of luck.

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