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SAINT PATRICK'S PURGATORY

A MEDLÆVAL PILGRIMAGE IN
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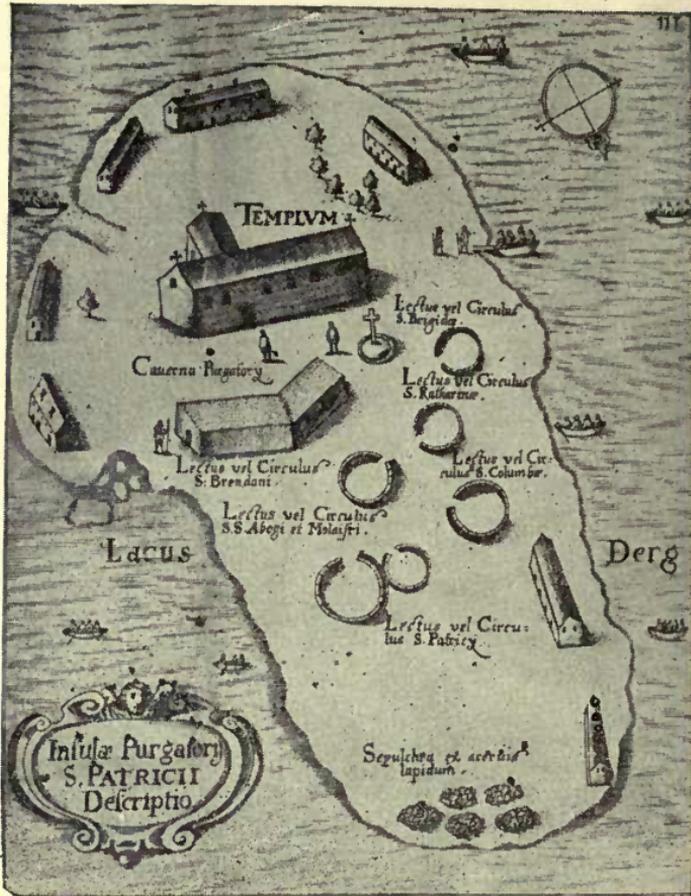
ST. JOHN D. SEYMOUR, B.D.

Author of

Irish Witchcraft and Demonology. True Irish
Ghost Stories. The Diocese of Emly, &c., &c.

W. TEMPEST, DUNDALK,
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ST. PATRICK'S PURGATORY circa 1650.
 From Carve's *Lyra sive Anacephalaosis Hibernica*.

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A MEDIÆVAL PILGRIMAGE IN
IRELAND

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PREFACE.

THE subject of St. Patrick's Purgatory, the visits paid to it by pilgrims from distant lands, the visions seen therein by them, and the literature that subsequently and consequently arose, is of extreme interest. When I commenced to study the subject for my own edification and entertainment—the idea of writing a book had not then occurred to me—I was astonished to discover how much strange and out-of-the-way information might be gathered together, and yet how little knowledge my fellow-countrymen possessed of the past history of a place that was once of European fame. The only book that dealt with it in anything approaching a satisfactory manner was Canon O'Connor's *St. Patrick's Purgatory, Lough Derg*; of this I have used the revised edition published in Dublin in 1910. I differ from him on one or two points; but I must admit my indebtedness to him for many allusions and suggestions which otherwise I might easily have overlooked. He has written a most useful popular history of Lough Derg and the surrounding district, and has given a very good account of the later period down to the present day, which I have consequently passed over very rapidly. I have dealt with the subject on an entirely different plan, as the most superficial comparison will show, and have endeavoured to present the reader with a fairly exhaustive account of an almost forgotten episode in the ecclesiastical and social history of Ireland. For the profound scholar I have not attempted to write, but as there are many by-paths in the history of Ireland as yet almost untrodden, perhaps I may be pardoned for venturing down one of them with somewhat halting steps.

The authorities of which I have made use are sufficiently referred to in the notes. I should state, however, that Father Delehaye's most valuable article in *Analecta Bollandiana*, tom. XXVII, has been for me, as it will be for all other writers on the subject, a basis and a starting-point.

ST. JOHN D. SEYMOUR.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY, 1918.



CHAPTER I.

EARLY LEGENDS. THE CELTIC MONASTERY. THE AUGUSTINIAN CANONS.

IN the extreme south of county Donegal, close to the borders of Tyrone, and about four miles north of the town of Pettigo and Lough Erne, lies a small lake, Lough Derg. It has an area of 2,200 statute acres and is about thirteen miles in circumference; it is surrounded on all sides by mountains, and its surface is studded with forty or more islands, great and small, of which two only, Station and Saints', will concern us in this work. Apart from the stern and lonely aspect of this mountain-ringed expanse of water, which would appeal to all lovers of Nature in her rugged moods, the lake has no especial claim to scenic beauty; under ordinary conditions the tourist and sight-seer would pass it by, and the only visitor from the outside world would be the patient angler, or the keen antiquary desirous of examining the almost effaced vestiges of a stronghold of the Celtic Church. But, as it happens, the conditions here are very far from being ordinary; in fact they may well be termed extraordinary and unique. For to this lake for the past seven centuries and longer, pilgrims have come, and still come, from every part of the world; during the mediæval period it was known and spoken of in every corner of Europe, and was visited by men who performed hazardous and tedious journeys from the ends of the earth for the sake of doing penance and making atonement for their sins.

For here lay St. Patrick's Purgatory, that dread ante-chamber to the unseen world,¹ into which if a man dared to enter, and pass twenty-four hours in the face of unknown and unspeakable horrors, he could (so the belief ran) purge himself at once from the evil deeds of this life, and on his death avoid the purgatorial pains, and enter straight into the bliss of heaven. To give a brief account of the earlier history of this celebrated spot, to relate at some length the visions seen by certain pilgrims, to deal with the literature that

consequently arose, and the effect this had on the literary life of Europe, and finally to say something about the history of the cave and monastery from the suppression that took place at the end of the fifteenth century to the present day, will be our task in the following chapters, and if we have to traverse some ground already trodden by previous writers at least we shall be found to have brought along with us many new and interesting items.

As happens elsewhere with regard to ecclesiastical sites in Ireland, the earliest historical period at Lough Derg is preceded by a legendary one which, however, the historian cannot afford to ignore. These tales may *in themselves* be valueless, but as a general rule it will be found that when an accretion of legend gathers round a place it is an indication that the site was of some importance in the pre-Christian period. Or, in other words, that the early missionaries, with commendable foresight, established themselves in a spot where they might both combat Paganism in its citadel, and as well ultimately transfer to themselves its traditional importance. The name "Lough Derg" means the Red Lake, evidently so-called from the reddish tinge of its waters which partly arises from the streams supplying the lake which flow through bog and moorland, and partly from the presence of numerous chalybeate springs around the shores, the outflow from which helps materially to colour the water, and as well to impart to it healthful and palatable qualities.²

Such an explanation is perfectly natural and credible, but far too much so for our Celtic forefathers. Consequently they resorted to legend. According to this source the original name was Lough *Finn*, or the *Fair* Lake, and the change of nomenclature and colour was brought about as follows: At one time there lived in Ireland a most venomous old beldame, known as the Hag with the Finger, for she had but one pliant finger on each hand. She was a most potent witch, and spent her time with the assistance of a giant, her son, in concocting baleful poison, into which arrow-heads were dipped in order to render their wound mortal. The King of Ireland desired to rid the country of her, and consulted his druids as to the best means of effecting this object. They informed him that she could only be destroyed by one of the Fianna, who must shoot her with a silver arrow. Accordingly the renowned Finn MacCumhaill, with some of the Fianna his companions, proceeded to hunt her. They found her in Munster, gathering herbs for her dire concoction. On perceiving them approaching the giant seized his mother, threw her over his shoulders, and fled; but before he had got out of range Finn discharged his silver arrow and pierced the old hag to the heart. Unaware of this the giant continued his headlong course till he came to Donegal, when, stopping to take breath he found that in the rapid passage over mountain and through wood the

greater portion of his mother's body had been rubbed and torn away, till nothing remained but the legs, the backbone, and the two arms. Accordingly he flung these down on the ground, and disappeared.

Some years after this event a party of the Fianna were engaged in their favourite pursuit of hunting, and came upon the bones. As they stood looking at them a dwarf appeared, and warned them not to break the thigh-bone, for in it lay concealed a venomous worm which, if it got out, and could find water to drink, might destroy the whole world. Despite this sage advice the bone was broken by Conan Maol, the Thersites of the Fianna-legends, upon which there crawled out of it a long hairy worm. Taking it on the point of his spear Conan threw it into the lake, adding, with a sneer, "There is water enough for you." Immediately a terrible beast rushed out of the lake, before which the party fled in terror, while the monster over-ran the country unhindered, devouring people by the hundred. Finn MacCumhaill learnt that the beast was vulnerable in one spot only, a mole on its left side. Armed with this knowledge he attacked it with his sword, and succeeded in disabling it. The monster lay struggling and writhing on the shore of the lake, while its blood poured out in torrents and tinged the waters with a crimson hue—hence the "red" lake. In process of time St. Patrick came that way, and compelled it by his power to go to the bottom of the water, as he had done to many monsters elsewhere in Ireland.³

A variant of the above, probably picked up from some local raconteur, is given by Richardson in his *Folly of Pilgrimages* (1727). According to this the monster that came out of the lake was called *Caoranach* by the natives, and could suck men and cattle from a distance into its mouth. Such loss did it occasion that at length the people compounded with it for so many cattle per diem. At length when almost all the cattle in Ulster were destroyed the inhabitants began to threaten Conan Maol for all the misfortune he had brought upon them by his rash act. In order to make amends he went sword in hand to the place where the daily allowance was left for the monster, and allowed it to swallow him. He then proceeded to cut his way out through its belly, and in the process lost all his hair from the heat of its entrails; hence he was nicknamed *Maol*, or "the bald." He then decapitated it, and threw its head on the shore, where the blood ran in such quantities that the lake was reddened for forty-eight hours; from this the name arose. The bones of the animal were metamorphosed into great stones; these, which lie in the water close to the shore of Station Island, are marked by Richardson on his map.

One more variant may be given. The district was at one time haunted by a serpent called *Caol*, apparently in the very best of

health, which used to consume a great deal of the produce of the country. St. Patrick heard of this, and came to Lough Finn, where he found the serpent on an island in the lake. It proceeded to spit out poisonous matter at him and the clerics of his company : but the saint hurled his crozier, which traditionally had a very sharp point, at it, piercing its heart and causing the blood to run out so profusely that it dyed all the water red. Upon which Patrick said that the lake would be called Lough Derg until the Day of Judgment. This affords an interesting example of the manner in which a legend, in its origin purely pagan, became Christianised by the substitution of St. Patrick's name for that of Conan Maol.⁴

In such a way, and by such a curious mixture of pagan and Christian legend, is the name of the lake explained. But, according to O'Donovan, whose opinion on such matters cannot be lightly put aside, the correct form of the name should be, not Lough *Derg* (the red), but Lough *Dearc*, the lake of the *cave*—that is, the grotto or cavern which was known as St. Patrick's Purgatory.

To the accounts of the origin of this dread spot we must now turn. The one generally given is, that when St. Patrick endeavoured to convert the Irish people to Christianity by preaching to them of the happiness of heaven and the misery of hell, they turned a deaf ear to him, and said that they would never be converted by his words and miracles, unless one of their number should be permitted to see with his own eyes the torments of the damned and the bliss of the saved. Patrick was naturally in despair at their obduracy and unreasonableness. Upon this Our Lord appeared to him, and led him into a desert place, where He showed him a certain round pit, dark within, and said, "Whatever man, being truly penitent, and armed with a lively faith, shall enter that pit, and there remain for a day and a night, shall be purged from all his sins, and going through it shall behold not only the torments of the lost but the joy of the blessed." The Lord then disappeared, and Patrick joyfully built a church in that place, and placed Canons Regular of St. Augustine in it. He surrounded the ditch (*fossa*), which is in the cemetery outside the front of the church, with a wall, and fitted it with gates and locks, lest anyone should rashly seek to enter it without permission, and then entrusted the key to the keeping of the prior of the convent. In the time of Patrick himself many entered the ditch, induced by penance. When they came out they bore witness that they had beheld the greatest torments ; and these revelations Patrick ordered to be noted down in a record kept in that church.⁵

Such is the account given by Henry of Saltrey. It seems to be the earliest and most complete description of the traditional foundation of the celebrated Purgatory. It is worthy of note that

in it there is no allusion to the Purgatory being situated on an island in a lake ; on the other hand, it is located in a desert place on the mainland,—not necessarily in the Province of Ulster. It may be pointed out here as well that the establishment of Canons Regular of St. Augustine by Patrick is an anachronism, as that Order was not introduced into Ireland until the twelfth century.

Other accounts vary slightly in detail. According to one, when St. Patrick prayed to God for a sign for the impenitent natives, he was ordered to trace with his staff a large circle on the ground, upon which the earth within the circumference of the circle opened, and a very deep pit appeared ; it was revealed to him that this was purgatory. Elsewhere we read that the Saint struck the earth with his pastoral staff, making with it the sign of the cross, upon which a chasm opened. It is said that the staff thus employed was that known as the *Bachall Iosa*, or “ Staff of Jesus,” a celebrated relic which was in existence until about 1538, when it was publicly burnt.⁶

Again, a later writer, Father Feyjoo, declares his belief in the origin of the story as follows :—“ Perhaps God had shewn a signal favour to the great St. Patrick, and to others who imitated him, by representing to him in that cave a vision of the pains of purgatory and of the joys of paradise, and that, upon this foundation, the report became noised abroad that all who enter the cave should share the same vision.” A similar explanation of the name is given in a Louvain treatise of the seventeenth century, entitled *The Mirror of Penitence*. It states that the Saint removed from the distractions of the world into that cave, and there prayed that the pains of purgatory might be revealed to him. His request was granted, and he was so overawed by the vision that he departed from the cave and ordered that henceforth the island should be made a terrestrial purgatory, where sinners could atone for their sins by prayer and fasting. In like strain runs a local legend which relates that the cave was tenanted by all the evil spirits which St. Patrick had banished from other parts of Ireland, in consequence of which no one dared to approach this spot. The Saint heard of this, and rowed out alone in a little boat to the island. He entered the cave, and finding it admirably suited for a penitential retreat spent forty days there in fasting and prayer. He not only drove Satan from his last stronghold in Ireland (would that the expulsion had been permanent), but also obtained from God the privilege of seeing the pains by which the temporal punishment due to sin is expiated in Purgatory.⁷ It should be noted that some writers refer the origin of the place to an abbot named Patrick.

Let us now see what may be said with respect to the early ecclesiastical history of the place. At one time Station Island was known as St: Dabheoc's Island, from which the cave and surround-

ing district took the name of Termon-Dabheoc. This saint, whose name sometimes appears under such forms as Beoc and Mobheoc, following a recognised method of treating Irish saints' names, and is latinized Dabeocus, Abogus, Arvogus, and perhaps Beanus, is held to be the patron saint of Lough Derg. Three festivals were annually held in his honour—viz., January 1st, July 24th, and December 16th. In the *Martyrology of Tallaght* occurs the following allusion to him:—

“Aedh, Lochagerg, alias Daibheog.”

Lochagerg, or Loch Gerg, being other forms of Lough Derg. St. Cummian of Connor, in his poem on the characteristic virtues of Irish Saints, credits him with performing the following austerities, which were also practised by other persons eminent for sanctity in Ireland and the East:—

“Mobheoc the gifted, loved,
According to the synod of the learned,
That often in bowing his head
He plunged it under water.”

His memory is still perpetuated in the townland-denomination of Seeavoc on the southern extremity of the lake. This name means “St. Dabheoc's Seat,” and this curious structure may still be seen in the vicinity, though it is not now reckoned as on the above townland.⁸

It is certain that at some remote date a saint named Dabheoc lived at Lough Derg, and was very probably the original founder of the monastery there. Beyond this all is mere conjecture. There exists some uncertainty as to whether there were not *two* saints of the same name connected with the spot, the one a Welshman, son of a king named Breacan, who ruled over a district now represented by Brecknock, the other an Irishman, descended from Dichu, St. Patrick's convert.

But that an important Celtic monastery flourished here at an early date is made certain by the irrefragable arguments of stone. On Saints' Island are the remains of an ancient oratory and cemetery, while the large *lis*, or circular earthen enclosure there, probably marks the site of the original monastic establishment. On Station Island are the remains of the “penal beds,” which so great an authority as Wakeman, after a careful examination, considered to be the ruins of what were originally bee-hive oratories, probably of the ninth century, of which examples are to be found along the west coast of Ireland. It seems probable that the two islands were held as one by the Celtic monks, forming together the monastery of Lough Derg. Add to the above the remains of carved stones, inscribed monuments, and fragments of crosses, and some small conception may be formed of its erstwhile importance.

But, as unfortunately happens so often in Ireland, the mists

settle down very speedily, and the history of the site is blotted out. Under the year 721 the Four Masters record the death of Cillene of Lough Derg, who was probably an inmate, or perhaps abbot, of the establishment. It is quite probable that at some unrecorded date the monastery was wiped out by the Danish invaders in their terrible forays.

After the lapse of unreckoned years the mists commence to roll away. The deserted site was again tenanted, this time by an Order from over-seas, the Canons Regular of St. Augustine, during whose lengthy tenure of possession occur the highly interesting accounts of visits made by pilgrims from all parts of Europe and of visions seen by them. It is said that this Order was introduced into Ireland early in the twelfth century, and that they took possession of Lough Derg between 1130 and 1134, the establishment there being constituted a dependent priory on the abbey of SS. Peter and Paul, Armagh.¹⁰

NOTES.

1. A possible rival to this place existed at one time in France. "La forêt de Longhoël, avant les grands défrichements qui l'ont bouleversée, possédait un *trou de Saint Patrice*, qui donnait entrée dans l'enfer. Il va sans dire que ce trou était purement idéal, et que jamais personne n'a pu le montrer."—*Mélusine*, t. I, col. 13.

2. O'Connor, *St. Patrick's Purgatory, Lough Derg* (Dublin, 1910), p. 18.

3. Wright, *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 2.

4. O'Connor, p. 154.

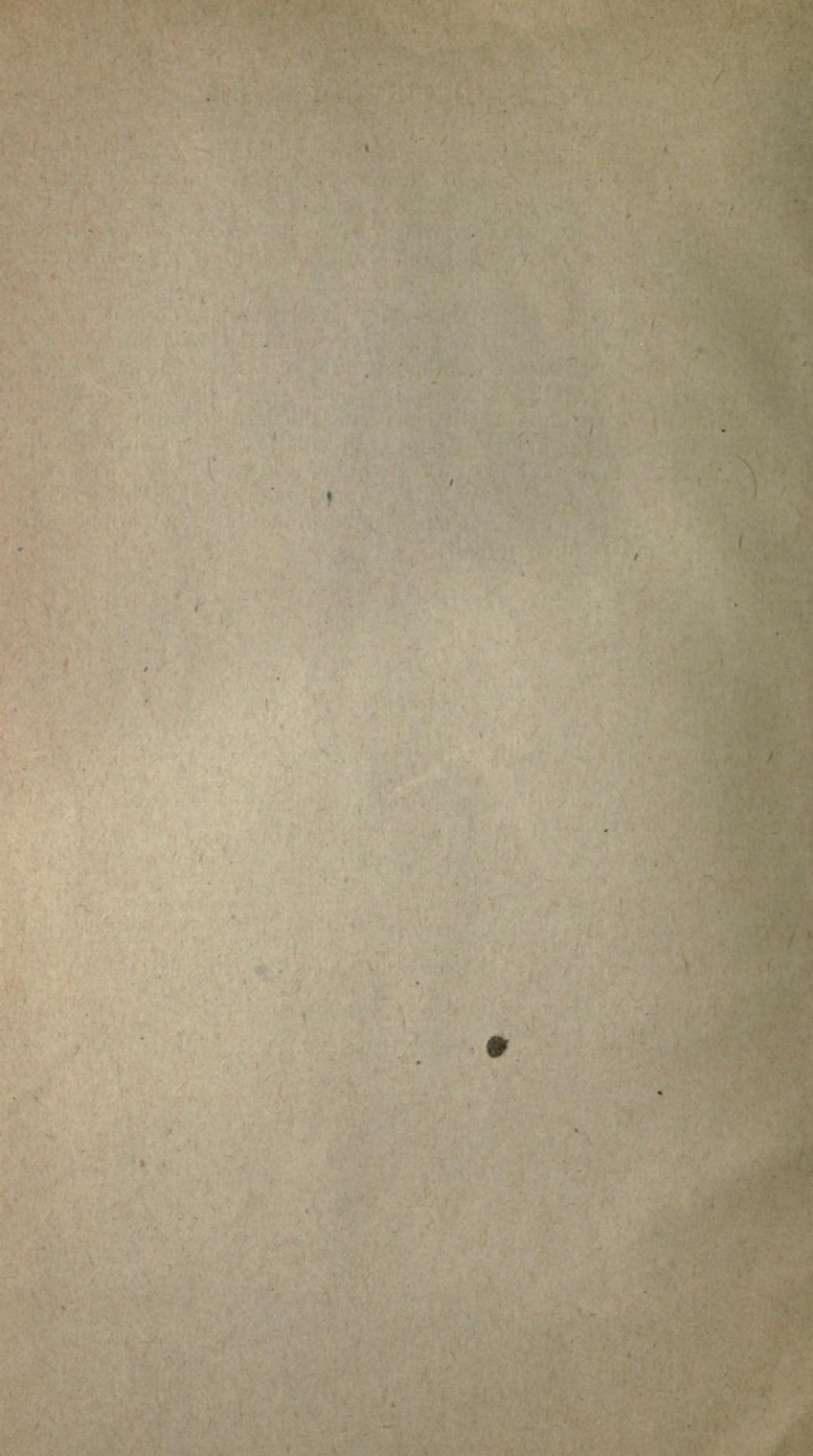
5. Acta. SS. Boll. t. II (Martii), p. 585.

6. Golden Legend; Chronicles of Matthew Paris; Hörstman, *Alt-Englische Legenden* (Paderborn, 1875), p. 153.

7. O'Connor, pp. 12, 115; McKenna, *Lough Derg* (*Cath. Truth Soc. Pubs.*), p. 4.

9. O'Hanlon, *Lives of the Irish Saints*, Vol. I, No. I, p. 11; Vol. VII, No. 79, p. 354; O'Connor, p. 38.

10. *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XII (s.v. St. Patrick's Purgatory).



CHAPTER II.

THE EVIDENCE OF DAVID OF WÜRZBURG—OF JOSCELIN —OF GIRALDUS CAMBRENSIS—OF HENRY OF SALTREY. LIST OF PILGRIMS DURING THE FIRST PERIOD.

FROM the statements made by four twelfth-century writers, three of whom were contemporary, much valuable information, albeit it will be found unsatisfying on certain points, may be gleaned with respect to the history of the Purgatory during that period, the first appearance of the vision-stories in written form and the date of that occurrence. These writers are David of Würzburg, Joscelin of Furness, Giraldus Cambrensis, and Henry of Saltrey.

The first-named, David *Scottus*, 'or of Würzburg, is said to have written *circa* 1120 a book entitled *De Purgatorio Patritii*.¹ Of the contents of this, however, nothing appears to be known. Therefore we are only entitled to infer from the name that early in the twelfth century there existed a "Purgatory" of which St. Patrick was reputed to be the founder, and which was of sufficient importance to warrant a book being written about it. Nor is it at all certain that the "Purgatory" above-mentioned was at Lough Derg; David may have been referring to some such place as Croagh-Patrick, as we find Joscelin doing. This appears to be the first allusion in literature to St. Patrick's Purgatory. David of Würzburg stands about midway between the date of the arrival of St. Patrick in Ireland (432), and the present day.

The first of the three contemporary writers, Joscelin, who was a monk of Furness Abbey in Lancashire, wrote his *Life of St. Patrick* between the years 1180-85. He connects the Purgatory with the towering peak of Croagh-Patrick in Mayo. According to him St. Patrick ascended to the summit of that mountain and there spent the forty days of Lent in fasting and prayer. In order to divert him from his holy labours the devils appeared in the shape of hideous black birds, which swooped down upon him with savage beaks and claws, and made the sky resound with their discordant

shrieking. Strong in faith he rang his famous bell against them, and by the power of God routed them, and then drove them westward over the sea. In process of time the custom arose of climbing the sacred mountain in order to fast and pray on its summit. Joscelyn adds that those who do so consider "that they will never enter the gates of hell, because this boon was obtained from God by the merits and prayers of Patrick. Certain who spent the night there say that they suffered terrible torments, by which they held that they were purged from their sins; hence they call the place St. Patrick's Purgatory."²

Thus Joscelyn locates the Purgatory, not at Lough Derg, but at Croagh-Patrick. It is true that the Bollandist editors explain this by saying that he was deceived by a similarity of names, and confused Croagh-Patrick with the "mountains of St. Patrick"—*teste suis tabulis Mercatore*—between Loughs Derg and Erne. This explanation seems a very forced one. Croagh-Patrick has a good right to be connected with the National Saint; to it pilgrimages were made at an early period, and the custom still prevails.

Our next witness is Giraldus Cambrensis, who composed his *Topography of Ireland* about 1186-87; In Dist. I, Chap. 5 of that work he says:—"There is a lake in Ulster containing an island divided into two parts. In one of these stands a church of especial sanctity, and it is most agreeable and delightful, as well as beyond measure glorious for the visitations of angels and the multitude of the saints who visibly frequent it. The other part, being covered with rugged crags, is reported to be the resort of devils only, and to be almost always the theatre on which crowds of evil spirits perform their rites. This part of the island contains nine pits, and should anyone perchance venture to spend the night in one of them (which has been done, we know, at times by some rash men) he is immediately seized by the malignant spirits, who so severely torture him during the whole night, inflicting on him such unutterable sufferings by fire and water, and other torments of various kinds, that when morning comes scarcely any spark of life is found left in his wretched body. It is said that anyone who has once submitted to these torments as a penance imposed upon him will not afterwards undergo the pains of hell, unless he commit some sin of a deep dye. This place is called by the natives the Purgatory of St. Patrick. For he, having to argue with a heathen race concerning the torments of hell reserved for the reprobate, and the real nature and eternal duration of the future life, in order to impress on the rude minds of the unbelievers a mysterious faith in doctrines so new, so strange, so opposed to their prejudices, procured by the efficacy of his prayers an exemplification of both states even on earth, as a salutary lesson to the stubborn minds of the people."³

This account calls for some comment. In the first place, though Cambrensis does not expressly name it, Lough Derg is undoubtedly the lake that is referred to. He appears to be the only early writer who speaks of the bipartite isle, though we shall encounter an aspect of this question again in the fifteenth century. The nine "pits" are almost certainly the penal beds or circles on Station Island, though the custom of the pilgrims spending the night in one or other of them, instead of in the purgatorial cave, to which he does not allude, is not described by any other writer. Of the points mentioned by Henry of Saltrey—viz. : the House of Augustinian Canons, the permission to be obtained from the bishop and prior, the preparatory fast, the formalities employed, he mentions nothing. In fine, his rather contemptuous opinion of the whole matter appears to be that the native Irish had a tradition that St. Patrick had there been shewn a glimpse of the other world, but that anyone who acted on that belief, and spent a night in one of the pits, was nothing but a fool, and deserved all he got.

The last of the three contemporary witnesses is H[enry], a Cistercian monk of Saltrey in Huntingdonshire. He it is who committed to writing the earliest known account of a descent made by a visionary, the Knight Owen, in the year 1153, and of his strange and terrifying experiences therein ; this he says he heard recited by a monk named Gilbert, who declared that he had had it from Owen's own lips. Henry also gives us the earliest description of the preliminary formalities which had to be observed by each pilgrim prior to his entrance into the Purgatory. It runs as follows : "It is a custom established by Patrick and his successors that no man may enter the Purgatory unless he have licence to do so from the Bishop in whose diocese it is ; or who may choose of his own free will to enter there on account of his sins. When he shall have come to the Bishop, and indicated what his purpose is, the Bishop shall first exhort him to desist from such an undertaking, saying that many have entered in and have never come out. If he perseveres he receives letters from the Bishop to the prior of the monastery ; when the latter shall have read these he shall dissuade the man from entering the Purgatory, and shall diligently advise him to try some other penance, showing him the great danger that lies in it. If he persists, however, he brings him into the church, where he remains for fifteen days in fasting and prayer. At the end of this period the prior summons the neighbouring clergy, the penitent is fortified with the Holy Communion and sprinkled with holy water and is then led with procession and litany to the entrance of the Purgatory. The prior shall then declare again to him the danger, and the fact that many have been lost in that ditch (fossa), opening the door for him in the presence of all. If he remains firm the priests present bestow their benediction on him, and commending himself to their prayers, and marking himself on the forehead

with the sign of the cross, he enters. The door is then closed by the prior, and the procession returns to the church. The following morning they come back and the door is opened by the prior; if the pilgrim is there waiting he is joyfully conducted to the church, in which he spends another fifteen days in vigils and prayer. If, however, he does not make his appearance he is given up as lost, and the door is locked."⁴ In the following chapters we shall see this ceremonial carefully carried out, though sometimes with modifications and amplifications.

Now, to sum up. Our witnesses fall chronologically into two groups, David of Würzburg being in the first, and the three contemporary writers in the second. Of the first sufficient has been said; he simply bears witness to the existence of a Purgatory believed to have been founded by St. Patrick, or else dedicated to him, and at some undetermined locality which was possibly, though not certainly, Lough Derg.

But what are we to say to the fact that our three contemporary witnesses differ from each other on almost every point? Joscelin applies the title of "St. Patrick's Purgatory" to a mountain many miles away from Lough Derg, and either is ignorant of, or ignores, that spot. Probably the latter explanation is the correct one; he may have regarded Lough Derg as an interloper which would be likely to detract from the awful dignity of Croagh-Patrick's rugged peak, and so through jealousy made no mention of it. If this supposition be correct it would help to shew that the final shaping of the legend took place at a late date, and that at the period 1180-85 Lough Derg was still a shrine of secondary importance, for if Joscelin had written even fifty years later than he did he could not possibly have adopted such a contemptuous attitude without damaging his literary reputation; even then Lough Derg was rapidly nearing its zenith.

Cambrensis writes a year or two later. He says nothing in his *Topography* about Croagh-Patrick, but places St. Patrick's Purgatory at a lake in Ulster, and then proceeds to give what is in substance the same legend as Henry of Saltrey has worked up into literary form in his story of the Knight Owen. In details he differs somewhat from the latter, and this difference may be perhaps explained by the fact that Cambrensis followed a variant of the tradition, or else that the unknown source (oral or written) from which he received the legend did not report it too correctly.

Our third witness, Henry of Saltrey, presents at the same time the fullest information and the greatest difficulties. He tells the traditional origin of the Purgatory, describes the well-developed and elaborate ceremonial that was practised whenever a pilgrimage was made there, and then relates minutely the adventures of a pilgrim in the abodes of pain and bliss. Strangely enough he says

nothing about the exact location of the Purgatory; though one might infer, from his account of its origin, that the cave or pit visited by Owen and others lay on the mainland in the midst of a barren wilderness.

It has generally been assumed that Henry of Saltrey wrote his narrative in the year 1153, at which date Owen is supposed to have made his descent. Our assumption is, that he did not finally commit it to writing until after 1186, and for this reason we have hitherto been treating him as a literary contemporary of Joscelin and Cambrensis.

Let us see what proof may be brought forward in support of this. Of Henry of Saltrey, apart from what we learn from the story of the Knight Owen, nothing is known. In it he assures us that he obtained his information from the tale related by Gilbert in his presence, and that he wrote it down at the request of Henry, abbot of Sartis. Now this Gilbert, whom Henry represents as a simple monk charged with the ownership of a newly-constructed monastery in Ireland, became abbot of Basingwerk *circa* 1157-9. Furthermore, the Irish bishop Florentian, whom Henry consulted with respect to the truth of the story before he took the step of giving it permanent form, may certainly be identified with Florence O'Carolan, who was placed over the see of Maghera (afterwards Derry) in 1185. This would bring down the date of the committal of the story to writing to as late as 1185, and it is quite possible that it must be carried down to an even later point. At this period councils were held at Canterbury (1189), at Westminster (1190), and at London (1191). It seems quite possible that Florentian was present at one or other of these, and that in the consequent assembling of clerics at Saltrey or elsewhere the story was told and discussed, and Henry had the opportunity of consulting him and the Irish abbots with respect to it. The date seems fixed to 1186 at earliest by another fact. In that year the relics of SS. Patrick, Brigit, and Columcille proved the object of solemn and splendid ceremonies at Downpatrick, and this "translation" would tend to focus public opinion on the National Saint, and thus would naturally encourage the circulation and publication of legends concerning him. On the other hand, the earliest manuscripts of the story go back to the late twelfth century, so that if we place the actual committal to writing not earlier than 1186 on the one hand, we cannot allow it to be later than *circa* 1190 on the other. Neither Joscelin nor Cambrensis seem to have known anything of Henry of Saltrey's work.⁵

This does not imply that the tales of visions only came into existence between those dates—quite the contrary. We can well imagine that for years, if not for centuries, legends of strange purgatorial visions had been gathering round Lough Derg in the

vague timeless way that legends have, and that they only awaited an opportunity and a narrator to make them known to the world at large. Henry of Saltrey and the translation of the relics supplied the deficiency. That author took the story of Owen, which probably contained a nucleus of truth, and worked it up into literary form, no doubt considerably embellishing it in the process.

One of the difficulties in Henry of Saltrey's narrative is, that he presents us with the description of the elaborate ceremonial which was practised before the pilgrim was permitted to enter the cave; this cannot have sprung into existence all at once, but must have been a gradual growth, and would seem to imply that the Purgatory had occupied a position of considerable importance for some years. On the other hand, the weight of evidence seems altogether against the idea that the place enjoyed any general favour until Henry of Saltrey wrote his narrative, though it must be admitted that our twelfth-century authorities are few and unsatisfactory; we have here preserved for us an instance of the practice of local ceremonial, which was only of local interest, and for this reason not noticed by general writers. It is probable that other places of pilgrimage in Ireland at this period had their own peculiar ceremonies and customs attached to them.

Another argument of late date for the prominence of the Purgatory and the final literary form of the legend may perhaps be drawn from the widely-known story of Tundal. That wicked knight beheld his vision in the year 1149, only four years prior to the alleged descent of Owen. If the story of St. Patrick's Purgatory, and the great spiritual efficacy of a descent therein had been widely known throughout Ireland, it is quite reasonable to suppose that the author, Brother Marcus, would have sent his hero to expiate his many crimes in the body at Lough Derg, instead of in the spirit at Cork.

Why it was that the Purgatory at Lough Derg achieved a European reputation, and so by its brilliancy eclipsed all the other places of pilgrimage in Ireland, is a question not easy to answer; but it seems probable that what principally contributed to its favour was the belief that in *Ultima Thule*, the remotest corner of the earth, there was an actual entrance into the other world, or at all events the less pleasant regions thereof—no dream-gate of dazzling ivory through which fantasies might ascend, but a cave or grotto of stone, through which *facilis descensus* men could wend in the body to behold sights hidden from mortal eye.

Whatever explanation we may essay to give at all events the fact remains that very speedily after Henry of Saltrey's literary effort St. Patrick's Purgatory became renowned throughout the western world to a degree which we can scarcely realize at the

present day ; to make this fact patent shall be our task in the succeeding chapters. Its subsequent history may be divided into two periods :—From the end of the twelfth century to the suppression of the Purgatory in 1497 ; and from 1497 to the present day ; while the literary side of the two periods is dealt with in the final chapter.

This chapter may be brought to a conclusion by an attempt at compiling a list of the names of all the pilgrims at present known to have visited the Purgatory between the end of the twelfth century and 1497, at which latter date the purgatorial cave was demolished by order of the Pope. From the very length of the list we may argue its incompleteness ; the names of many pilgrims, and the accounts of their strange visions and experiences are lost, or as yet undiscovered, while there appear to be some in existence on the Continent, the exact location of which is not at present known. Others, too, whose whereabouts is definitely ascertained have only been partially published and await an editor. Incidentally this list is of interest as shewing the extent to which foreigners, who were not merchants or traders, came into Ireland during the 13-15th centuries through motives of piety or curiosity. The names of persons printed in italics are here inserted for the sake of completeness, as they and their adventures are alluded to at greater length elsewhere, or else form the subject of separate chapters.

Canon O'Connor states (p. 128) that King Alfred of Northumbria had visited the spot, and that about the year 1050 Harold, afterwards the ill-fated King of England, had made pilgrimage to "the miraculous cave of St. Patrick." Unfortunately he does not give the slightest clue as to where these interesting allusions occur. He also states (p. 93) that it was while Tiernan O'Rourke was on pilgrimage at, according to local tradition, Lough Derg, that Dermot MacMurrough ran away with his wife. If this tradition be correct it would merely prove that St. Patrick's Purgatory was resorted to by pilgrims, like Clonmacnoise and other venerable sites, before 1170—as we would naturally expect ! We shall therefore commence our list with

1153. THE KNIGHT OWEN. His adventures have been so often and so fully described that they need not be related here. See amongst other places, Roger of Wendover's *Chronicle* ; Wright's *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, Chap. III ; Baring-Gould's *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*, essay XI. The account of his experiences had no small influence on European literature, as will be seen further on ; manuscripts of it in French, Latin, or English are to be found in nearly all the great libraries at home and abroad ; while from the date of the invention of printing the presses were engaged in putting forth versions of the story, books which treated of it in a greater or less degree, attacks and apologies. Even at the close of the nineteenth century this output had not entirely ceased. The full Latin text may be found in Migne *Patr. Lat.*, t. CLXXX. It is said that translations into Irish also exist. See Hull. *Text-book of Irish Literature*, Part II, p. 241.

- NICHOLAS. This pilgrim is a most mysterious being. He is alluded to by Stanihurst in his *De vita S. Patricii* (p. 66), who calls him "nobilis vir," and by Fazio degli Uberti in his *Dittamondo*. He is also mentioned in the certificate given to Rathold by the prior, and in Mannini's story, in both of which he is described as "beatus" or "saint." In the *Golden Legend*, and in O'Sullivan Beare's *Patritiana Decas* (IX. 9) an account is given of his adventures in the Purgatory, which closely agrees with that of Owen. There is nothing to shew to what period his date should be assigned, or whether he is a real person or an idealized character.
- GUARINO DA DURAZZO.⁶ The Papal Nuncio, Chiericati, writing in 1517, says that this was the first name to be read in the volume containing pilgrims' names which was in existence at Lough Derg at that date. At the time he deemed him to be a fabulous personage, but afterwards found his journey described in "an ancient parchment manuscript." Is this character to be identified with Guerino il Meschino, the hero of a wild romance into which the Purgatory is introduced?
- An anonymous pilgrim.⁷
- EUGENIUS DICTUS OBRIAN DE ANGLIA; which may be rendered "Owen O'Brien (resident in) England." He is alluded to in the certificate given to Rathold.
1248. GODALH.⁸ His vision in old French is said to be at Turin. However, a letter to the Biblioteca Nazionale of Turin elicited the following reply from the chief librarian: "The reference 4.22. K. given by Champollion-Figeac (*Documents Historiques* III, 325) to a Turin MS., containing the "Vesion de Godalh" is certainly an error, as it does not correspond with any reference in use at any time in this library. No trace of this manuscript is to be found in our catalogue; and there is reason to believe that it was destroyed by the fire of 1904."
- Between 1300 and 1350. LE SIRE DE BEAUJEU. "He was of the lineage of the Counts of Flanders; and of the blood-royal of France. By his great courage he went into St. Patrick's Purgatory, where he beheld the infernal torments, as Heronnet his squire tells, who relates many marvellous tales of that place. Heronnet says that he beheld Burgibus, the porter of hell, who caused a wheel to make a hundred times a hundred thousand revolutions in the space of a single day, and on it there were fixed a hundred thousand souls. He saw the bridge which had to be crossed, and it was as sharp as a razor. He saw the souls in the fields of fire, and recognised some of them. He saw the gallows of hell. He saw the pit of hell. He saw the gulf of hell. Afterwards they came into the terrestrial paradise."⁹
1353. GEORGE CRISSAPHAN (Chapter III).
1358. LOUIS DE SUR. The account of his visions, written in barbarous Latin, is preserved in Cod. 3160 in the Palatine Library in Vienna. In certain respects it resembles the narrative of the Knight Owen, while in other points it agrees with the Irish Vision of Tundale. The form of prayer to be used by the pilgrim was:—*Verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis*. When Louis came out of the cave he saw Malatesta Ungarus *cum familia magna, et cum monachis S. Patricii, in processionibus euntem*. This proves that he did actually enter the Purgatory in the year 1358. See *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, Vol. XVII, p. 50 ff.
1358. MALATESTA UNGARUS OF RIMINI, knight, and NICHOLAS DE BECCARIIS OF FERRARA, donsel, visited the Purgatory. On the 24th October in that year they both received letters testimonial to that effect from King

Edward III. In that given to Malatesta it is stated that " he visited the Purgatory with great labour of body, and remained shut up therein for a day and a night, as is the custom." The Malatestas of Rimini were a well-known Italian family, and it has been conjectured that this member (who was *not* a Hungarian) visited the Purgatory by way of penance for having quarrelled with the Pope.¹⁰

Before 1360. } FRA TADIO DI GUALANDI of Pisa, Lector of Ara Coeli at Rome. His name occurs in the introduction to the vision of Louis de France.

1360. LOUIS DE FRANCE. The account of his vision is contained in Cod. 384, class I, in the Correr Museum at Venice; it is in Italian, with many words in the Venetian dialect. It is probably derived from that of Louis de Sur (see above).

1366. JOHN BONHAM and GUIDO CISSY received a letter of recommendation from Milo Sweteman, Archbishop of Armagh, dated the 15th of March. This is still preserved in his Register. In it he states that these persons have for devotion's sake gone on pilgrimage and visited many places, and for the health of their souls desire to visit Lough Derg. He commends these, therefore, to the hospitality of the prior, and to the clergy and laity of the province of Armagh.¹¹

2nd half of 14th cent. } A unique instance occurs at this period of an intending pilgrim not being permitted to go. A Carthusian monk, Giovanni, of Rome, desired to leave his monastery in order to visit the Purgatory; but fell into great trouble of mind at failing to get permission to do so from his superior. On hearing this St. Catherine of Sienna (1347-80) wrote to him counselling submission and obedience.¹²

1394-5. SIR WILLIAM DE LISLE and another English knight (see chapter VIII).

1397. RAYMOND, VISCOUNT DE PERELHOS (chapter IV).

1397. At the time the last-named visited Lough Derg there was to be found there a throng of pilgrims of different nationalities. One of these entered the Purgatory with him; in the Latin version this pilgrim is alluded to as " Anglus Eques Taresi Dominus," i.e., his surname was Tracey; but in the Languedoc version he is named " Mossenhor Guilhem, senhor de Corsi."

1399. " In the year of Our Lord 1399, in Lent, went MASTER JOHN OF BREDERODE to St. Patrick's Purgatory in Ireland, and he came home again on St. Odulph's Day in the same year. He founded also the chapel in the Zandpoort in honour of God and St. Patrick, with two masses a week."¹³

1406. WILLIAM OF STRANTON (chapter V).

Before 1411. ANTONIO DA FOCHA, a priest of Rome (see chapter VI).

1411. ANTONIO MANNINI (chapter VI).

1411 LAURENCE RATHOLD DE PASZTHO (chapter VII).

1430. MESSIRE GUILLEBERT DE LANNOY, in his *Voyages et Ambassades* (p. 121), gives the following interesting account of his visit to the Purgatory: " In this year, the 4th day of March, I set out from Ecluse, a village in Flanders, upon an embassy from Monsigneur le Duc to the King of Scotland, and from thence to pass on upon a pilgrimage to St. Patrick's hole in Ireland, beyond the realm of England. . . . We went to a village and island called Roussaux-moustier, and all the houses are of lath, and it belongs to a duke who has fully fifteen hundred boats, whose name is Macanienus (MacGuinnis), subject to king Maguier (Maguire), which duke lent us a boat (chimbe) to go to St. Patrick's hole, in which we embarked, and rowed to St. Patrick's Isle. We passed several islands upon which we landed to sleep and dine of which I make no mention because of the poverty therein; we found

some little old churches, and poor abbeys. From this said lake [Lough Erne ?] to the lake of St. Patrick the distance is four miles by land ; we left our boats there, and went these four miles on foot. We reached the Island of St. Patrick's Purgatory in another boat, the distance being half a mile, and they say there are twelve islands in this lake, on one of which is the cloister and priory of St. Patrick, and all this is within the territory of the aforesaid King Maguier. The island of St. Patrick's Purgatory is long for its breadth, and measures two hundred *dexters* in its circumference, there is a chapel of St. Patrick and four or five huts of lath thatched with straw. The place of St. Patrick's Purgatory is like a Flemish window, fastened with a stout key and a single door, and is as high off the ground as the chapel, and is situated four paces to the north near the north-east corner thereof (*est de hauteur à la terre de la chappelle, et siet noord à quatre piez près du coing noord-ost d'icelle*) in a straight line with the said corner. And the said hole is nine feet long from east to west, and then turns round five feet towards the south-west, its length being from fourteen to fifteen feet in all ; and it is built of black stones, and is about two feet wide, and barely three feet high ; and at the end of this hole, in which I was shut up for two or three hours, they say is a mouth of hell, but St. Patrick stopped it with a stone which he placed upon it, and it is still there."

1446. CONRAD DE SCHARNACHTHAL, a Swiss knight, went into Ireland and repaired with certain noble natives of that country to the cavern known as St. Patrick's Purgatory. A. Way, who contributed this item of interest to the *Archæological Journal*,¹⁴ says that he found it in "a singular contemporary document, bearing date 1449, which gave a detailed narrative of his travels ;" but unfortunately he omits to tell us where this document might be found. The family of Scharnachthal had estates near the town of Thun in Switzerland.

Before) In a French book published at Bruges this year the author states

1464. } that he had spoken to different people who had been in the Purgatory. Amongst these were a CANON OF WATERFORD, who had entered eight or nine times, and a knight of Bruges, SIR JOHN DE BANST ; neither had any strange experiences.¹⁵
1485. JOHN GARHI and FRANCIS PROLY, priests of Lyons, together with their servant JOHN BURGES, entered the Purgatory, and received a certificate to this effect from Octavian de Palatio, Archbishop of Armagh. In it he stated that they had visited the Purgatory "in which, even in this world, the crimes of sinners are purged ; and the mountain [Croagh-Patrick] in which the holy Confessor Patrick remained without temporal meat forty days and forty nights. After the customary fasting and prayers they remained a certain time in the said Purgatory, and armed by Christ overcame all the deceits and fantastic temptations of the Devil."¹⁶

Before) A certain BLASIUS BIRAGUS visited the Purgatory, and describes it as

1494. } follows :—"There is an island, where a pit descends by six steps into the rock, not into an open square (forum) as the myth-makers say. I entered and saw everything."¹⁷ This occurs in the *Britannica Historiæ* of Ponticus Virumnius, a book which was printed in 1508, though this may have been merely a reprint, and not the first edition. Consequently it seems permissible to date Biragnus's visit before the close of the first period.

1494. THE MONK OF EYMSTADT, who was the innocent means of having the Purgatorial cave demolished by Papal authority (see chapter VIII).

NOTES.

1. *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, Vol. XII; *Ulster Journal of Archæology*, Vol. III (1859), pp. 240, 296; Dictionary of Nat. Biography.
 2. P. de Félice, *L'autre Monde* (Paris, 1906), p. 18ff; Archbp. Healy, *St. Patrick in the Far West* (Cath. Truth Soc.), p. 13.
 3. Ed. by T. Wright (Bohn's Library), p. 63.
 4. In Messingham's *Florilegium* (reprinted in Migne, *Patr. Lat.* t. CLXXX)
 5. P. de Félice, *op. cit.* p. 28ff; H. L. D. Ward, *Catalogue of Romances in MSS. of British Museum*, Vol. II (1893), pp. 436-40.
 6. J. Cartwright, *Life of Isabella d'Este*, Vol. II, p. 177.
 7. *Analecta Bollandiana*, t. XXVII, p. 36.
 8. *Ibid.*
 9. S. Luce, *Chronique des quatre premiers Valois* (Paris, 1862), p. 22.
 10. *Anal. Boll.*, t. XXVII, p. 36-7; Wright, p. 135.
 11. *Anal. Boll.*, p. 37; *Proc. Roy. Ir. Acad.*, Vol. XXIX, sect. c., No. 8, p. 274 (Register of Archbishop Sweteman).
 12. O'Connor, *op. cit.*, p. 105.
 13. Johannes a Leydis, *De origine et gestis dominorum de Brederode*, cap. XXXIX.
 14. Vol. XVI, p. 360.
 15. *Ulster Journal of Archæology*, Vol. IV (old series), p. 237.
 16. *Anal. Boll.*, p. 39.
 17. Bishop Henry Jones, *St. Patrick's Purgatory* (London, 1647), p. 119.
- The "open square" which Biragus places to the credit of the myth-makers is obviously the cloistered hall in which the Knight Owen is assaulted by demons after he has had conversation with the old men.

CHAPTER III.

THE DESCENT OF GEORGE CRISSAPHAN

(A.D. 1353).



GEORGE CRISSAPHAN, of whose adventures in St. Patrick's Purgatory some account is given in this chapter, was born in the year 1329, and was the son of Count Crissaphan, a powerful Hungarian noble. George entered the army of King Louis I of Hungary, and served in the wars against Queen Joan of Naples. Though only about twenty years of age at this time he had evidently given sufficient proof of military ability, for his king "constituted him Captain in the region of Apulia, and placed him over several states and camps, and especially over a certain state which is commonly called Troya, and over the state of Bari and Barribi, which is commonly called Barbeton." In this high position he did not conduct himself in a manner becoming a Christian knight; he perpetrated or instigated many acts of cruelty, while it is said that he was guilty of two hundred and fifty murders, not to speak of other crimes, before he was twenty-four. At length struck with remorse for his numerous sins he determined to seek pardon through penance, and for this purpose went on pilgrimage to the famous shrine of St. James of Compostella, in which region he spent six months leading the life of a solitary. While there he heard for the first time of St. Patrick's Purgatory in Ireland, and of the many benefits that would accrue to such a sinner as him from a visit to the cave, and so he determined to make his way thither.

He visited the Purgatory in the year 1353, and probably entered it in the first week in December. The account of the twenty-eight visions seen therein by him is, as one would naturally expect, of extreme prolixity; it has never been published in its entirety, and so until it find an editor and translator it will be impossible to compare it minutely with the other vision-legends

of the Purgatory. However, F. Toldy has printed as footnotes to his article on Crissaphan in the Hungarian magazine *Századok*¹ four of the twenty-eight visions (i.e., 1, 9, 12, 28), as well as the concluding chapter, and of these a free translation is given below. Unfortunately he has not seen fit to reproduce the introductory portion, which most probably contained an account of the preparatory ceremonies, as well as a description of the purgatorial cave.

Presumably George underwent the preliminary fast, and entered the purgatory with the accustomed ceremonial. On leaving the chapel he came into a wide plain—inside the Purgatory—in which he found awaiting him more than three thousand devils in animal form, such as lions, bears, and the like, which belched forth from their throats a fierce and stinking fire. These had ranged themselves on either side of the path by which George had to travel, and as they stood facing each other the whole road was hidden by the bursts of smoke and flame through which he would have to make his way if he desired to reach his destination. Seeing him approaching, the largest and most terrible-looking of the demons advanced towards him, and said in an awful voice :—

“ George, what do you seek ? ”

He replied “ I seek the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The devil answered : “ Jesus Christ, a wicked sinner, was deservedly crucified for His misdeeds by the Jews and Pilate. He did not rise from the dead, but for His evil works is plunged in hell, there to be crucified for ever. Therefore do not believe in Him, unless you desire to commit sin, for the faith—it should rather be termed perfidy—of those Christians who believe in Him is a form of madness, and is displeasing to God. Do not believe in Him, but follow our advice : promise us eternal obedience, do all our will, and give yourself to us body and soul. In return we shall do two things for you. First, within two days we shall bestow upon you abundance of gold, silver, and precious stones, above all that your heart can desire, you shall enjoy prosperity, and be more wealthy than any of your family all the days of your life ; secondly, after your death we shall bring you to our kingdom, where you will be as powerful as we are, and enjoy eternal happiness with us as our friend and minister.”

George was not deluded by these seductive words and lying fallacies, but recognising them as so many wiles of the Evil One, stated his firm belief in the Incarnate Son of God, Who was crucified of His own free will for the sins of mankind, and Who had risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven ; and then ejaculated the pilgrim's prayer : *Domine Jesu Christe, fili Dei vivi, miserere mihi peccatori.*

Hearing this the demon was filled with rage at George's obdu-

racy, and seizing him flung him into the midst of the flames to the intent that he might be burnt to ashes. George thus fell into the fire, and through the weakness of human nature well-nigh lost his senses, in which case he would have been reduced to nothing, had he not been suddenly strengthened by the Lord, and so betook himself to his prayer *Domine Jesu Christe*, on uttering which he immediately found himself safe and sound outside the fire, which had not left the slightest mark on his body or clothes. Moved with anger at this all the baffled fiends together raised such a yell that the whole world would have been terrified if it had heard it.

Michael Denis² here gives an abstract of the eighth temptation, which is headed :—“ Of the apparition of George’s father and three brothers.” It would seem that four evil spirits took upon them the semblance of these members of his family, and endeavoured to seduce him to deny the Christian faith, as in the last temptation, but without success. It would appear from this chapter that his youngest brother was named Stephen.

The next vision published by Toldy, the ninth, contains the description of a most insistent temptation, in which the Devil displays his power of citing Scripture to his purpose. When leaving the district of Apulia George had entrusted some valuable property, viz., three belts ornamented with silver, and other treasures, to the care of a certain nobly-born damsel of his acquaintance, in whom he placed implicit confidence. The father of lies, whose delight it is to hinder men’s pious works in every possible way, took upon himself the form of this damsel, imitating her very looks, and gestures, and dress, and carrying as well a semblance of the actual casket in which the valuables had been placed. This apparition met George, and said to him :—

“ Dearest friend and brother, welcome ! My heart is filled with joy at meeting you, for these two reasons. First, because I have not seen you for a long time ; and I behold you as joyful as an angel of God because through reverence for Him you have exposed yourself to so many and great dangers and torments. Secondly, because I see you have suffered so many illusions of evil spirits, (and have overcome). I have come hither by God’s will, to whom all things are possible. His angel has beheld our pious love, and wishes me to have a participation in your pilgrimage and in the fruits thereof, in order that we may behold His wonders in purgatory, in heaven, and in hell, so that by the sight of these our souls may be strengthened and made more zealous for God’s service. The angel who bore me thither commanded me to bring the coffer with your jewels, so that by making use of them you might receive some comfort of consolation. Being unwilling to disobey the divine command I carried out his behest, and behold, here are your jewels in the coffer ! Take one of these belts, dearest brother

mine, and gird yourself with it, and receive this bejewelled hood, in order that in a manner befitting your nobility you may make your appearance in the presence of God and His angels, whom you shall certainly behold in paradise."

When George considered the well-known appearance of the damsel, as well as the casket containing his jewels, and her expressions of feigned devotion, he wondered greatly. But his firm faith warned him that the figure which addressed him was not that of a real woman, but of a fiend in her likeness who was endeavouring to lead him into the sin of vain-glory and luxury. Accordingly he replied :—

"It is not fitting for a man on his pilgrimage to make use of the pomps and vanities of the world. Moreover, in accordance with the ordinance of St. Patrick, whose footsteps I follow, I was taught by the venerable prior, Paul by name, not to have any other garments than those which he put on me—that is to say, these three white tunics which you see, and my head and feet bare ; and so I have no desire for the girdles and hood which you proffer me."

To this the apparition answered :—"Dearest friend and brother, I know that Paul the prior is a devout and holy man ; nevertheless it is certain that his holiness is not as great as that of the angel of God. Moreover, the latter, who sees God face to face, must know His will far better than any mortal can, who only knows God, but does not see Him, and cannot perceive the secret things of Him except through the revelation of angels. And although St. Patrick ordered that such garments as you have on should be worn by the pilgrim, nevertheless he did not thereby mean to imply that these should be retained throughout the entire course of the pilgrimage, but only as long as the vision of the demons should endure, through which, by the grace of God, you have come victorious. Now, because you are speedily to enter paradise it is time to receive these ornaments, especially since the angel who sees God face to face, and knows His will, has told me that it is not merely the pleasure, but the command, of the Deity that you bedeck yourself with these, and thus adorned make your appearance in paradise before God and His saints ; just as in the world devout men, clerics and laics, are wont to adorn themselves on festivals through reverence of God and the feast. Now it should be plain to a rational being, such as you are, that the greatest feast of all is the feast of paradise, which never fails nor can fail, concerning which the Psalmist has said, *One day in thy courts is better than a thousand years.* Since this is so, it is clear that whoever desires to be present at that feast should, out of reverence for the Bridegroom, put on a wedding-garment, and not be in filthy attire, lest perchance it be said to him as to another, *Friend, how camest thou in thither not having on a wedding-garment?* Wherefore I tell you

of a surety that unless you go to the wedding-feast in comely apparel you will be dragged therefrom, and cast into outer darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth. You are assured that I love you well, and so I advise you that you bedeck yourself with these ornaments, lest in any way you act contrary to the commands of God, since it is written, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.* Do you therefore, who desire to enter paradise, keep the commands of God and His angel, lest you sin mortally ; for you are aware that if a pilgrim on his pilgrimage fell into mortal sin immediately by divine judgment he is seized by devils, and cast body and soul into hell. Therefore, dear brother, lest you be damned eternally, keep the commands of God, and put on these jewels."

George listened to the words of this most insidious temptation, but recognising it to be such betook himself to his prayer *Domine Jesu Christe, etc.*, upon which the damsel disappeared, leaving a foul stench behind.

In the twelfth vision George leaves a certain house (evidently the scene of the eleventh vision), and when he advances a little on his way he comes across a pit of immense depth, at the bottom of which lay a countless multitude of souls shrieking and wailing piteously. Up from this pit ascended a dense cloud of smoke, the stench from which exceeded all the smells in the world. The narrow path that George had to follow lay directly by the edge of this abyss, and as he was making his way along it he was suddenly hurled into the depths, but by whom he knew not. When he found himself at the bottom he fell to his oft-quoted prayer, and at that instant was liberated from the pit, and so escaped the wiles of the Devil.

Subsequently George reached Paradise, for the twenty-eighth and last vision is taken up with messages which Michael the Archangel directed him to deliver to certain persons on earth. The recipients of these divine instructions were Richard Fitzralph, Archbishop of Armagh ; Edward III of England, and the Queen-mother ; Jean le Bon, King of France ; Pope Innocent VI ; and the "Soldan" of Babylon (Egypt). The exact nature of these messages was not to be divulged to anyone except those for whom they were intended ; nevertheless George appears to have been permitted to make some portions of them known. Primate FitzRalph was told, amongst other things, that he should remove the interdict which he had laid on a certain state in his Archdiocese, not indeed unjustly or unlawfully, but because that state would not discharge certain obligations incumbent upon it. The message to the Kings of England and France contained many admonitions to them to make peace. That to the Pope concerned the furtherance of the same, while he was also directed to absolve a certain prince, not mentioned by name, who had been dead a considerable time. As regards

that to the Soldan of Babylon it merely indicated that it contained some instructions which would prove of the greatest benefit to the whole of Christendom.

When St. Michael had imposed the giving of these messages upon George, the latter asked him two questions. First, as to how the various recipients could be induced to believe that the bearer of them had actually been in purgatory, hell, and paradise, and had spoken with an angel face to face. In response the Archangel taught him certain secret signs which no man could know except him to whom they were sent. Next he enquired in what way he might journey to the Soldan of Babylon, seeing he was a Saracen miscreant, and the enemy of Christendom. The angel replied: "Go fearlessly and without hesitation to him, for God knows his will, and what he has to do with reference to it (the message); but do you fulfil the command of God."

The twenty-ninth and last chapter treats of the return of George to the upper air. When everything had been seen the Archangel took him by his right hand, while in his left he carried a golden cross set with precious stones, and then led him to "the chapel of St. Patrick, where is the door of the Purgatory through which George entered." There his coming was awaited by the prior and his canons, as well as by the King, Machacham by name, who was accompanied by a throng of nobility and gentry who were desirous of seeing George, and of hearing of the wonders which he had seen. As they stood in expectation he appeared in company with a beautiful youth, the latter clothed in gorgeous emerald robes, crowned with a diadem so richly bejewelled that it outshone the mid-day sun, and bearing in his hand the golden cross. They recognised George, but as to the other they could not tell if he were man or angel.

St Michael and the pilgrim stood conversing together for a certain space of time in the presence of them all. In the course of their conversation the Archangel warned him of two things; first, that he should diligently observe the divine precepts, on which hung all the Law and the Prophets; secondly, that he should deliver all the messages entrusted to him. Then Michael made the sign of the cross with his right thumb after the manner of a bishop, saying, *Our help is in the name of the Lord Who hath made heaven and earth*; after which he blessed George and the bystanders, saying, *The blessing of God the Father Almighty, etc.* Then he said to George, "Know of a surety that when I return to heaven I shall with all the angels petition the Blessed Virgin to ask her Son to free thy mother from the pains of purgatory;" so saying, he disappeared.

George then ascended all the steps leading out of the Purgatory

(totaliter gradus Purgatorii), and was welcomed by the prior and all the convent, since they had visibly beheld the wonders of God made manifest in him. As he stood in the midst of the admiring throng, all were overwhelmed by the ineffable odour of paradise that was given off from his garments, so much so, that seizing knives they cut and hacked at the "femoralia" in which he was clad, being desirous to keep the rags as relics, until at length they left him naked. Then they attempted to cut off his hair for the same purpose, and would have succeeded had not their impetuosity been restrained by the powerful influence of the king, who threw his own garments over the nude pilgrim.

On leaving George received the pilgrims' certificate from Paul the prior. It stated that "he had laudably performed the pilgrimage of St. Patrick's Purgatory, according to the rules and regulations of our monastery. In which Purgatory he suffered divers torments, and after these St. Michael the Archangel appeared to him, and remained with him an entire day, and finally conducted back the said George in the body . . . as has been made plain to us by the confession of the said George. For having confessed, we gave him absolution by the authority of St. Patrick and our Order, and thus absolved we permitted him to enter the pit, and the ladder of the pit which is very steep (intrare puteum, et scalam putealam, et profundam valde), by which descent is made into the Purgatory, and thus we send him to you [the Bishop of Clogher, or the Primate] who has truly seen the Purgatory and many marvels." This was dated "at the ends of the earth," December the 7th, 1353.³

In all George was the recipient of six documents:—

1. The above-quoted.
2. A certificate from Nicholas MacCasey, Bishop of Clogher, dated at Clogher the 26th of December, 1353.
3. A certificate from John de Fronwich, prior of the Hospitallers, dated at the Manor of Kilmainham the 20th of January, 1354 (or probably 1355).
4. An invitation from Richard FitzRalph, Archbishop of Armagh, at Dromiskin; date not given, but probably early in 1354.
5. A certificate from the same, stating that he had given George letters of admission to the Purgatory, and that the latter had fulfilled his pilgrimage there. Dated at Dromiskin, the 22nd of February, 1353-4.
6. A similar certificate from the same to his beloved nephew, Richard radulfi (FitzRalph), rector of the church of "Lycholoi," and canon of Nubla at Rome. Same place, day, and year as the last.⁴

Out of the first document an interesting point arises. The certificate appears to have been usually given by the prior a couple of days after the pilgrim completed his vigil in the cave. On the other hand the lengthy account of the visions seen (twenty-eight or so in this particular case) can hardly have been reduced to writing for some considerable time. How then are we to account for the fact that in the certificate (which must therefore be the earlier of the two documents) there is an allusion made to George's interview with the Archangel Michael, which incident forms an important part of the subsequent story? May it not be that through reading or listening to the adventures of former pilgrims in the Purgatory, as well as through lassitude induced by the preliminary austerities, George was worked up into such a state of superstitious dread, that, aided by the soporific qualities which the cave seems to have possessed, he fell into a heavy sleep, in which he actually beheld some sort of nightmare which he related on coming out. Some such general explanation seems to lie at the base of the vision-stories, though nearly all the ones we possess are obviously worked up into a recognised literary form.

The story of Crissaphan's vision seems to have been exceedingly popular, its popularity continuing, strangely enough, down to the present day. Four manuscripts are known to exist: 1. A Latin version in Codex Asceticus, No. 1398, in the Imperial Library of Vienna. This H. Gaidoz considers to be the original version, taken down by some priest or scribe; 2. A Latin version in the Benedictine convent of Melk; this was written by one Nicholas of Newburgha in 1414. 3. A version in the German language is said to be amongst the manuscripts of Queen Christina of Sweden in the Library of the Vatican. 4. A version in Czech, of which an account is given in the appendix to this chapter.⁵

The popularity of the story is further evinced by the fact that it was printed in the Czech language, and ran through several editions. One of these was published at Lytomyšl in 1878. A still later edition, entitled *Wideni Jirika Poustevnika*, was published in 1896, a copy of which is in the University Library of Prag; this agrees substantially, though not verbally, with the Czech MS. described in the appendix.⁶

TABLE OF CONTENTS OF THE CZECH MANUSCRIPT.

Amongst the manuscripts in the University Library of Prag is one of the fifteenth century, classed XVII. E. 2, which contains an account in the Czech language of the descent of George Crissaphan into St. Patrick's Purgatory. On this manuscript see Truhlar, *Katalog ceskych rukopisu*, p. 179, and Gebauer in *Listy filologické* (1879), p. 30. By the kindness of the *Directeur en chef* we have been enabled to reproduce here the opening words of the different chapters, which gives a sufficient clue to the contents of the manuscript.

- Fol. 198a.—George, a worthy gentleman, was son of a Hungarian nobleman named Cryssaphan.
- Fol. 199a.—The first vision of George. On passing through the door he came into a beautiful field.
- Fol. 200a.—Second vision. On leaving this chapel he entered another field, wherein he saw more than three thousand devils.
- Fol. 200b.—Third vision. Continuing on his way G. came to a very wide place, where he saw two thousand men on horseback.
- Ibidem.*—Fourth vision. Then G. walked further, assured by the grace of God, and continuing on his way he saw a large town out of which came a very beautiful lady.
- Fol. 201a.—Fifth vision. Then G. entered this town, and saw there many men and women, shopkeepers.
- Fol. 201b.—Sixth vision. Then G. entered a town, where he saw a great fire, in the midst of which were devils beyond count, having the appearance of men.
- Ibidem.*—Seventh vision. Then, crossing a field, G. met with Dominican friars.
- Fol. 202a.—Eighth vision. Continuing on his way G. saw a fair procession of priests—that is to say, canons.
- Fol. 202b.—Ninth vision. When G. left this field a devil appeared to him in the guise of his father Cryssaphan.
- Fol. 203a.—Tenth vision. Having overcome this temptation G. gave thanks to God, and kept on his way. Then the devil took the form of a virgin.
- Fol. 203b.—Eleventh vision. Continuing his course G. saw a large town all burning with molten lead, pitch, and sulphur.
- Ibidem.*—Twelfth vision. Keeping on his way G. saw a house which was a league in length and breadth, and it was enveloped in fire.
- Fol. 204a.—Thirteenth vision. Continuing on his way he saw a fountain of such depth that he could scarcely see the bottom, in which was a multitude of souls.
- Ibidem.*—Fourteenth vision. Pursuing his course G. saw a very high mountain which was covered with a cloud, on the summit of which was a great host of souls uttering piteous cries.
- Fol. 204b.—Fifteenth vision. By this time G. had come to an immense and deep abyss, which was hell.
- Ibidem.*—Sixteenth vision. Then a handsome young man, about 32 years of age, approached G.
- Fol. 205a.—Seventeenth vision. The Archangel Michael took G. by the hand.
- Fol. 206a.—Eighteenth vision. In purgatory G. perceived four things.
- Fol. 206b.—Nineteenth vision. St. Michael took G. by the hand, and led him to the abyss of hell.
- Fol. 207a.—Twentieth vision. The angel said to G. "Hast thou already seen hell?"
- Ibidem.*—Twenty-first vision. Then he saw a beautiful garden full of all kinds of trees.
- Fol. 207b.—Twenty-second vision. On coming out of the garden G. said "I beg of you to tell me, St. Michael, if this garden where the birds sing is the true paradise?"
- Ibidem.*—Twenty-third vision. Having entered paradise G. saw a broad plain, of which he could not see the end.
- Fol. 208a.—Twenty-fourth vision. G. saw a number of angels in the form of young men.
- Ibidem.*—Twenty-fifth vision. Then G. saw a large number of Benedictines.
- Fol. 208b.—Twenty-sixth vision. Then St. Michael ordered G. to ascend a little mountain, in appearance like an altar.
- Ibidem.*—Twenty-seventh vision. Then St. Michael said to G. who was on the mountain: "Lift your eyes towards heaven."

Fol. 209b.—Twenty-eighth vision. Then G., almost fainting with irrepressible joy, fell asleep.

Fol. 210a.—St. Michael said: "What is it you are to do? First you must go to Richard, Archbishop of Armagh."

Fol. 201b.—St. Michael left G., and he saw the Archangel, with all the saints and the Blessed Virgin, beseeching on behalf of the soul of George's mother.

NOTES.

1. For April, 1871, pp. 229-47.
2. *Codices Manuscripti Theologici Bibliothecae Palatinae*, Vol. I, pt. 2, col. 2444-50.
3. *Századok*, pp. 236-7.
4. Denis, *op. cit.*
5. *Revue Celtique*, t. II, pp. 482-4; t. IV, pp. 105-6.
6. *Revue Celtique*, t. IV, pp. 105-6; letter from University Library of Prag.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DESCENT OF RAYMOND, VISCOUNT DE PERELHOS (A.D. 1397).



THE visit paid to St. Patrick's Purgatory by the Spanish nobleman, Raymond, Viscount de Perelhos, in December, 1397, is, next to that of the Knight Owen, the best-known of the purgatory legends owing to its incorporation in his *Catholic History* by Don Philip O'Sullivan Beare, the celebrated Irish historian.

Before proceeding to the narrative proper it will be necessary to give a brief account of the two versions on which it depends. The original version was written in the Catalan dialect either by Raymond himself, or under his direction, but the present location of this manuscript, if indeed it be in existence, is not known. In the seventeenth century it was examined by O'Sullivan Beare at the Castilian court, who inserted it in his Latin *Historiæ Catholicæ Iberniæ Compendium*, which was published at Lisbon in 1621. O'Sullivan's version appears to be rather an adaption than a translation; he has changed the order, and has suppressed or abridged certain passages which are of extreme interest. This writer also states that he saw a *printed* copy of the Catalan version, which was published at Perpignan, and of which a specimen was preserved in the Franciscan convent of that town, but nothing appears to be known of this. The second version, which is written in the dialect of Languedoc, is contained in a manuscript in the Municipal Library of Toulouse, and has been published by M. M. Jeanroy and Vignaux in *Bibliothèque Méridionale*¹; as this seems to differ in many details from O'Sullivan it will not be unprofitable for anyone who can read this particular dialect to compare the two accounts.

The hero of the tale, Raymond, who is known to us from several sources, was Viscount of Perelhos, a hamlet in Rousillon,

and of Roda, a little town of Catalonia, the latter title having been bestowed upon him by King John I of Arragon in the year 1391. As to the barony of Serret or Sereta, which appears in both versions of the tale, it is said never to have existed; but in the fifteenth century the Perelhos family became Lords of Ceret. His father, Francis, a gentleman in the service of the King of Arragon, was a friend of the King of France. He was sent to Paris in 1355 to conclude an alliance between the two sovereigns, and again in 1360 to bring nine galleys to the King. His latter years were devoted entirely to the service of France, for in 1367 he was Chamberlain to Charles V., and raised to the dignity of Admiral of France; he died in 1369.

His young son Raymond was entrusted by him to Charles V, and remained in France until the death of that prince, when he went to the kingdom of Arragon, where he was welcomed and received into high favour by the King, John I. Combining in his person the qualities of soldier and diplomat we find him in consequence frequently employed on different errands of state. In 1390 he was one of the ambassadors who was sent to Charles VI. In the commencement of 1395 he set out for the Island of Cyprus to treat about the marriage of the eldest son of the King, John of Lusignan, Prince of Antioch, with the Infanta Isabella, daughter of the King of Arragon. He is subsequently found at Avignon, having entered the service of his compatriot, the Arragonese Peter de Luna (Pope Benedict XIII), and when there heard of the death of his friend King John I of Arragon. Accordingly he determined to set out for St. Patrick's Purgatory, partly by way of penance, partly in order to know how it fared with the soul of John I. He received a safe conduct—to be hereafter alluded to—from Richard II. of England on September 6th, 1397, and left Avignon two days later.

Even at the risk of some repetitions we may allow the Viscount to give the account of himself and his adventures in the Purgatory as englished by Dr. Henry Jones in his *Patrick his Purgatory*.

“ I Ramon by the grace of God Viscount of Perels and Baron of Sereta was a follower of Charles, King of France, to whom my father (being intimate with him, and commander of his army) on his death-bed recommended me, and with whom from my childhood I was instructed. The court of this so great prince was famous for the resort of many noble persons, as well strangers as subjects. Many of these did I often hear discoursing of strange and remarkable things in several parts of the world, which I did earnestly desire to see. But I shall only speak of those things which concern my going into St. Patrick's Purgatory. Neither will I divulge all that there I saw, only those things which I might lawfully relate.

“ When Charles the French King was dead, to whose care I was recommended by my dying father, I did repair to John King of Arragon in Spain, whose subject I was by the law of nations, my possessions lying within his dominions. He did always esteem of me as much as a king would a subject, and mine observance of him was as great. He first made me Master of his Horse, and after gave me command of three galleys for the service of Pope Clement. And after his death I served under his successor, Pope Benedict XIII, at which time the news was brought to me of my king’s death, with which sad relation much perplexed I did earnestly desire to know in what state the king’s soul was, or if in purgatory it were, and what pains it suffered, whereupon I called to mind what I heard reported of St. Patrick’s Purgatory, and resolved to visit it, that I might as well know some certainty of the king, as for obtaining pardon of God for my sins.

“ And first, fearing I might fail of my duty, if without leave from the Pope I had undertaken the pilgrimage; to him I made known my resolutions, desiring his favour that I might be gone. But he so mainly opposed himself to mine intentions, that scarcely did I know how to gainsay. But at the last by much importunity I gained so far with Pope Benedict that I was with his blessing confirmed in it, and so departed from Avignon, where he then was, in the year 1328 [*recté* 1397], in the month of September, about the even of that day which is sacred to the Blessed Virgin [Nativity of B.V.M., Sept. 8th].

“ First I went to the French court in Paris, where I departed with the King’s letter of recommendation to his son-in-law the King of England, of whom I courteously was received, and with his letters sent away into Ireland.”

The letter from Richard II is printed in Rymer’s *Foedera*,² and briefly runs as follows:—The King to all constables, marshals, etc. The nobleman Raymond, Viscount de Perilleux, Knight of Rhodes, and Chamberlain of the King of France, has come to England, and proposes to visit St. Patrick’s Purgatory with twenty men and thirty horses in his company. The said Raymond is taken into the King’s protection, and the said constables, etc., are to protect him from injury provided that he presents these letters, and pays for any food or necessities he takes. Given at Westminster, Sept. 6th, 1397. The discrepancy in the dating strikes one immediately. Possibly the Viscount mis-dated the commencement of his journey. He embarked at Chester, touched at Holyhead [Olyet], and the Isle of Man [yla d’Arman], and finally landed at Dublin [Belvi].

“ When I was come to Dublin, the metropolis of the kingdom, I did address myself to the Earl of March, brother’s son to Richard,

being then Deputy of Ireland, he having received the king's and queen's letters did receive me honourably. But understanding my resolution, he laboured by all means to dissuade me, laying before me the great dangers of that Purgatory, in which many had miscarried ; but prevailing with me nothing he sent me to Drogheda, to the Archbishop of Armagh, to whom in matters of religion all the Irish are without contradiction subject. Who having perused the letters entertained me lovingly and freely, and endeavoured to divert me, shewing how difficult the enterprise was, and that many went thither who never returned. But seeing my resolution he did advise me, dismissing me with letters to O'Neill the king, from whom with gifts I departed to a village called Tarmuin—that is to say, Protection or Sanctuary. The lord of this place with his brother shewed me great curtesies, and in ferrys waisted me and my followers into the island where the Purgatory was, together with many others who from several nations flocked thither to visit this Purgatory.

“ I was conducted into the church of the monastery, and being by the prior in the presence of many questioned I shewed the reason of my resolution that I proposed to commit myself into the Purgatory, then he said ‘ Thou hast undertaken a difficult and dangerous thing, which some few have attempted, yet could not compass. I do confess indeed that to descend into the Purgatory is easy, but the chief work is to return thence.’ To all which I answered, that seeing I came thither purposely and to that end, it was expedient I should succeed. To which he said ‘ If such be your resolution, then doth it behove you to observe the rites of this place, in manner as they were by St. Patrick appointed, and by my predecessors observed.’

“ Shortly after the priests adjoining, with all the religious of the convent, being called together, that mass was celebrated with music and solemnity, which is used to be said for the dead ; which being finished, and all ceremonies observed, the priests being placed in order, I was in procession brought to the door of the cave.” The Languedoc version contains some points omitted by O'Sullivan, one of which is, that prior to his entering the cave Raymond made four knights, viz. his own two sons, an Englishman named Thomas, and a Spaniard named Peyre Masco. When he had been sprinkled with holy water, and the Litany had been sung, the prior unlocked the door, and warned him about the meeting with the twelve men, and the subsequent encounter with the demons. “ After this I kissed them all, and said farewell, and so going into the cave after me followed an English knight.” In the Latin version this latter pilgrim is styled Taresi Dominus ; evidently his surname was Tracey ; but in the Languedoc version he is a foreigner of high rank, and is named “ Mossenhor Guilhem, senhor de Corsi.” They are

forbidden to speak to each other on pain of death, and the prior locked the door, and withdrew.

“ Now when I was shut in, and had taken notice of the greatness of the cave, which I conceive to be about four elnes (ulnas), I found the inner part thereof to turn and extend itself a little to the left hand as I went in. Where I had trodden I found the ground under me weak and shaking, that it seemed as though it could not bear a man ; therefore fearing to fall into some unknown depth I did step back, and having settled myself in the Catholic Faith, and being firm in my resolution, I did cast myself upon my knees to pray, supposing there had been no more to be done. But about one hour after I did begin to tremble every joint of me, to sweat and be heartsick, to vomit also, as if I had been on a long voyage at sea. In which troubles I was overtaken with sleep, but again roused up with the noise of a great thunder, which was not heard by me alone, but by as many as were in the island, with which they were the more astonished, in that it was a clear and fair day.

“ The fear of which sudden thunder was not over, when a new and greater terror seized on me, for scarcely was I awake when that I did slide downwards about six elnes, with which sudden fall notwithstanding that I were fully awakened and affrighted, yet did I not recover myself until I had said those words the prior taught me :—*Christ, the Son of the Living God, have mercy upon me, a sinner*

“ After which I did perceive the cave to be larger and higher and the further I went, for now I went alone having lost my companion, it was still more deep and large. Neither rested I until I had entered into a place extremely dark and utterly destitute of any light, but the darkness soon passed. I did come into a very large hall, yet having no more light than in our twilight in winter. It had not one long continued wall, but was arched, and stood on pillars. In which after I had walked here and there, thinking I had been at my journey's end, I sat down admiring the structure, elegance, and beauty of that strange work, which in mine opinion surpasseth all human skill.” Then enter the twelve men clad in white, who advise him as to his future conduct. On their departure the devils arrive, who endeavour to seduce him with promises, and on Raymond's refusing to hear them they light a fire in the middle of the hall, and cast him into it, but he is delivered by his prayer. The devils fled at this, but “ some of the spirits remained in the hall, who drew me through a long way set with briars and thorns, being dark, and full of wicked spirits, where also was so fierce and terrible a wind that it took away my hearing, and seemed to pierce even my body.”

The devils conduct him successively into the four fields of

punishment, and in the fourth "I met many men and women whom I knew, and such as were allied to me, here I met with John my king, of whom I demanded for what fault it was he was here; although he did confer of many other things with me, yet to this question he only answered that it behoved princes and great men of this world not to wrong any one in favour of others, although never so dear to them. There also did I see a certain religious man [in the Languedoc version "friar Francis del Pueg, a Franciscan of Gerona"] grievously punished for some sins he had committed, for which it wanted little, but he was eternally punished in hell, and assuredly it had gone hard with him had he not expiated his fault with much grief at heart, many tears, and strict penance. There also I met the lady Aldonsa Carolea, my kinswoman [in the Languedoc version "Aldosa de Queralt, my niece"] of whose death I did not hear before. For when I began my pilgrimage she was alive. She was chiefly punished that she had spent so much time in trimming and painting her face: yet were all these in the way of salvation."

The remainder of Raymond's journey through the regions of pain and bliss corresponds to that of Owen. Finally he returned to the hall, where he meets with the knight who had entered the Purgatory with him. "But my companion the knight was so tired with labour and torments that he could not return without my help; when we had gone a little way, we found no way nor passage to get out, wherewith being much terrified, and on our knees beginning to desire the Lord, that as He had freed us from former dangers, so He would not now leave us. In our praying we were overtaken with deep sleep, being wearied out with so much watchings and so many temptations of devils, and out of this sleep we were awakened by a great thunder, yet less than the former, and we were lifted up and laid in great astonishment at that place of the cave whence we fell, and near the entrance. Now had the prior and priests, with the rest who were present, opened the gate, and received us with great joy and gratulation, bringing us both into the church, where we did give thanks. Thence having saluted the venerable prior and the rest of the religious, I went through England to Paris. And such was my pilgrimage to St. Patrick's Purgatory."

Raymond returned to France, apparently in the spring of 1398. In November of that year Pope Benedict XIII, who was then besieged in his palace of Avignon, sent him on an embassy to Paris. In the service of the Pope he made constant journeys between the two towns; his subsequent history, and the date of his death are not known, but his name appears for the last recorded time in 1405.

Raymond's narrative is obviously modelled on the prototype of

Owen, though with some slight differences. In the earlier story no mention is made of the treacherous quaking ground down which Raymond slips, nor of the peals of thunder at the commencement and close of the pilgrim's vigil. In the fourth field Owen recognises some of his former friends and acquaintances ; so does Raymond, with this addition, that he gives their names as well as some description of the sins for which they were punished. These variations may be due to the inventive powers of O'Sullivan Beare, though, as Montalvan reproduces them in his account of Louis Enius, it is just possible that both these writers drew them from a variant of the received text that may have been current in Spain.

NOTES.

1. 1 Série, tom. VIII.
2. Vol. VIII, p. 14 (London, 1709).

The portions of Raymond's tour in Ireland which have been omitted by O'Sullivan, but are included in the Languedoc version, have been translated into English in *Hermathena*, xl.

CHAPTER V.

THE DESCENT OF WILLIAM OF STRANTON

(A.D. 1406).

THE account of the descent of William of Stranton into the Purgatory in the year 1406, and of the many strange and terrifying sights that he beheld therein is contained in two fifteenth-century manuscripts in the British Museum—viz., Royal 17B. XLIII, and Addit. 34193; the former of these has been published for the first time by G. P. Krapp in his *Legend of St. Patrick's Purgatory*,¹ and in the footnotes he has indicated the difference between it and Addit.

Both manuscripts appear to be copies of a lost original, and differ on some points from each other. The Royal MS. is in the southern dialect, and consequently introduces a southern saint, Ive of Quethiock in Cornwall, substituting her name for that of Hilda of Whitby in Yorkshire, who appears in the Addit. MS. which is written in the northern dialect. Furthermore, Royal calls the hero William *Staunton*, while Addit. terms him William *of Stranton*, a township and parish of Durham on the sea-coast. As it seems more probable that an obscure local place-name should be turned into a more intelligible and better-known surname, than that the opposite should occur, we have adopted the form *of Stranton*, as appearing to be the more correct of the two; while as Addit. is evidently the most accurate in details we have followed it in preference, and so have taken from it the date of the vision, 1406, which is given as 1409 in Royal. It is probable that the manuscripts contain the account of an actual visit made to the Purgatory by an Englishman; but it is evident that the general purpose of the story is not to glorify Lough Derg and its famous cave, but to run a tilt against certain evils prevalent in society at the period, such as extravagant fashions in dress, the laxity of the secular clergy, the decadence of monasticism, and so on.

In the original William of Stranton tells the story in the first

person. He states that he was born in the bishopric of Durham, and entered the Purgatory, of which he gives no description, on Easter Sunday, 1406.² He was put in by prior Matthew,³ and was instructed to write on his forehead the first word of the prayer *Jesu Christe, fili Dei vivi, miserere mihi peccatori*;⁴ by the use of which he might be able to test the nature of any spirits that should appear. After a little William came to the resting-place of St. Patrick and there slept for a little. He then became aware of a light like the dawn, and then saw before him a man and woman clad in white, the former attired as a canon, the latter in a nun's habit; these were St. John of Bridlington and St. Hilda of Whitby.⁵ At the sight of them William marked his forehead, and said his prayer *Jesu Christe*, at which they both laughed, and wished him Godspeed. St. John then warned him that hard by he should find two roads; that leading to the left would be fair and clean, while that on the right hand, which he was to follow, would appear at first narrow and foul. In that road he would find those having the appearance of human beings, but who were in reality demons.

Accordingly William proceeded until he came to the parting of the ways, and took that to the right. As he had been warned by St. John he then encountered evil spirits in the guise of men, who feigned themselves to be his friends, and said that they had been sent out by God to turn him back from this way, lest he should come to destruction; but he put them to flight by the use of his prayer.

A little further on he met with demons in their proper shapes. Some had four faces, some seven horns, some had faces on their elbows and knees, and all made such hideous noises, crying, and thrusting out their red-hot tongues, that William lost all courage, and forgot to call upon God, for which he would undoubtedly have perished, had not St. Hilda come to him and exhorted him to use his prayer, at which the devils vanished incontinent.

When William had proceeded about a mile St. John and St. Hilda again appeared, this time accompanied by a sister of William's who had died many years before in a pestilence, and a man who had been in love with her in his earth-life. At their meeting him his sister accused him to the saints because he had hindered her lover from marrying her, whereby they would have begotten three children. For this St. John rebuked William severely, directing him to confess himself to the prior as soon as ever he came out of the Purgatory, and to perform whatever penance the latter enjoined.

St John then conducted him to a fire great and stinking, the stench from which was so strong that it would have killed all the people in the world had they smelt it, so accordingly he led him between the fire and the wind. Therein William beheld men and women, some of whom he had known in life. The men had collars

of gold or silver about their necks, while their clothes were cut the latest fashions. The women had long trains to their gowns trailing behind them, and some had chaplets of gold set with pearls and precious stones on their heads. As William watched he beheld the collars and girdles become red hot, and the fashionable attire of the men turn to adders, toads, dragons, and other horrible beasts, which bit and tore at their erstwhile wearers. The long trains of the women were cut off and burnt on their heads by fiends, or else were thrust all burning into their mouths and ears, while their gay chaplets turned into red-hot nails which other fiends hammered into their heads. This was the doom of those who gave themselves up to vanity, and took more heed of their bodies than their souls.

The saint then led William to another fire in which was brass and lead and other metals in a molten mass, and in this many souls of men and women. The fiends were very busy with these hapless beings ; some were tearing out their eyes, and then filling up the cavities with the molten metal, or else striking them with their swords, and treating the wounds so made in a similar manner. Others again were smiting off their arms, and throwing these into the metal until they became red-hot, when they again fixed them in their proper places, and this they did continually. As William stood there it seemed to him that the arms cried out to heaven, saying, " We have not deserved this pain, but only the heart and the tongue." Upon this the fiends took out the heart and tongue, cleft them in twain and filled them with the red-hot metal, and so put them back into the body again. St. John then said to him " These be they that swore by God's members, such as His eyes, His arms, and His wounds, and as they dismembered God by horrible swearing so will they be tormented in their own members."

In the next fire was all manner of filth and dirt which the devils crammed into the bodies of their victims, as one would stuff a pillow. This was the doom of those who had neglected to keep holidays, and had spent the feasts in gluttony and drunkenness in taverns.

In the fourth fire lay those who in their lifetime had dishonoured their father and mother, and now were treated contumeliously by the demons.

William was then conducted to the next fire. In it he saw souls with all manner of goods burning on their backs ; others were cut and gashed by swords and knives which attacked them of their own accord ; while others again were bitten and torn by horses and oxen. This was the doom of thieves. In the same fire were punished the executors who had been remiss in carrying out the wishes of the deceased.

In the sixth fire were souls into whom the devils were pouring molten gold and silver, while over some hung woods, hills, and lands all burning, and ready to fall upon them and crush them. These were they who had borne false witness in inquests and assizes. There were also souls standing about the fire, but feeling no pain. These were the souls of the persons who had been defrauded by those tormented in the flames, and it was decreed that they should suffer no other pain in purgatory than that of watching the agony of those who had over-reached them.

In the seventh fire the fiends were tearing the souls with crooks of burning irons, or cutting and stabbing them with swords, spears and knives, while a grisly cry arose to the Judge for vengeance upon them. This was the fate of murderers, and the cry for vengeance came up from their hapless victims.

The next fire to which William was led was hot out of measure, and black as pitch, with small blue flames coming out of it. In this were punished the incontinent. Those who had sinned in desire were suspended by the heart; those who had not restrained their eyes from wandering were suspended by them; while those who had sinned in deed were suspended in a befitting manner.

In another fire were men and women being beaten by their own children with brands of fire. This was the doom of those parents who had neglected to correct their offspring.

St. John then bade William look above his head, and he saw a great rock hanging over all the fires. He led him up above this, and shewed him many souls enclosed in a wall of stone. These souls lay grovelling on their bellies, and the stench and smoke of all the fire below rose up into their nostrils; on their backs swarmed dragons, adders, toads, cats, and other reptiles, gnawing and biting them, while to increase their torment the fiends strode and stamped upon them. This was the punishment meted out to backbiters.

The saint then conducted William forth a great space, and shewed him two towers, one full of fire, the other of ice and snow. In the former were many souls heated almost to melting-point, which the fiends then caught and threw into the second tower, where other fiends heaped the snow and ice upon them, which pained instead of relieving them. Then William beheld other souls with fire-brands in their hands and their bodies full of snakes and toads and other horrible worms knocking at the gate of the tower, and when they were admitted they beat the souls in the fire with their brands, while the serpents and toads leaped from their bodies to the sinners that were pained in the cold, and bit and stung them sorely. Those in the two towers were bishops who should have taught the people by their words and examples, but neglected to do so; while those who sought admission were the prelates'

servants who had followed the evil example of their masters, and had in consequence given themselves over to vanity in their attire, the "jaggs and daggs," or ornamental cutting of their cloaks, being turned into toads and snakes.

The souls in the next fire were swollen as large as barrels, out of their fingers came divers loathly worms, which sucked these souls until they were reduced to their normal dimensions, and then proceeded to sting them until they swelled up again. Many voices were heard crying to the Rightful Doomsman, "Avenge us on this people; for they had the goods of Holy Church more than they needed, and suffered us to perish of want." The souls pained here were those of monks and canons, who gave nothing of their abundance to relieve the destitute.

In another fire were souls wrapped round with red-hot plates of iron, on which plates were letters and words through which hot nails ran into their flesh, while devils tore out the hearts and tongues of some of them, and shredding them small cast them back into their faces. Amongst those William saw an uncle of his, the parson of such a parish, who had died sixteen years before. These souls were those of rectors, vicars, and priests. The letters were those of Divine Service which they should have said with devotion, but forasmuch as they had more desire for worldly lusts they were punished as above; and because they had occupied their hearts and tongues in thoughts and words of sin, therefore those organs were now pained by the fiends.

Then William and his guide came to a great house strongly walled, in which lay souls all naked, and oppressed with the most bitter cold. Therein too were presses piled with clothes out of which came moths and worms, which the demons took and thrust into the mouths of their victims. On others they threw doublets which gave them pain; the house was open to the sky, and great hailstones came hurtling in which smote some of the souls. Saint John said to him: "These be the souls of parsons and vicars who should have taught good doctrine, but did not do so; therefore they suffer these pains to teach them what the poor and the naked suffered. The worms that came out of their clothes were the moths that bred therein, because they did not distribute them to the needy; therefore they shall be fed with none other meat but these same worms. The doublets thrown on the souls were those formerly used in the world by nice priests, as if they had been laymen. These that are bruised and smitten by the hailstones are the souls of those clergy who took no care to see that their chancels were properly roofed, but allowed the rain and snow to fall upon the altars."

St. John then led him to a lake of water of foul blackness to look upon, wherein were many fiends yelling and making a grisly

noise. Over this water was thrown a broad bridge, upon which William seemed to see a bishop going, with his clerks and officers, and a great retinue; and when he had gone a good way upon it, suddenly the devils pulled away the pillars with great force and the bishop and his followers fell into the lake, where divers fiends and souls dragged and tore them. This was the soul of a bishop who had not lived the godly life that his high dignity and estate demanded. The bridge was one which he had caused to be built for the convenience of the people; but, forasmuch as he had erected it principally for vain-glory, and with money unjustly attained, God suffered the fiends to pull it down, for if it had been built in true charity it would have stood him in good stead, and enabled him to reach paradise. The souls that tore him in the water were the souls of those whom he had suffered to live in sin for love of lucre.

When William had seen these and many other sights of woe he asked his conductor if it were possible in any way to mitigate the pain of their souls. To which St. John replied "God forbid it else! For thou shalt understand that these souls may be helped out of these pains principally by the mercy of God, and the good deeds of their friends in the world may do for them; as to learned men, by saying of masses and singing of psalms; as to unlearned men, by the Paternoster, the Ave Maria, and the Credo. So many good deeds may be done for them that they might be delivered from the pains of purgatory."

Then St. John went on a little way with William, and suddenly vanished out of sight, at which his companion was sore adread. He approached the water, expecting to find a bridge over it, but there was none, at which he became more terrified; while to add to his fear he heard behind him the grisly noise of many fiends approaching. At this last his courage failed him utterly, and he would surely have perished, had not St. Hilda come to him, and reminded him of his prayer, on using which the noise ceased.

William then came to the water's edge, and saw on the far side a rock, on which was built a high tower. On the summit of this stood a fair woman, and when he saw her he knelt down devoutly and recited five Paters and Aves, and marked him with his prayer. On rising from his knees he beheld a ladder come down from the top of the tower, which he gladly took hold of; but it looked too fragile to bear his weight, and when he placed his hand upon the bottom rung, which was almost out of his reach, it seemed as sharp as a razor. Again he heard the noise of fiends coming behind him, so he used his prayer, and it ceased. As he looked again at the ladder he saw a rope coming down from the tower, which the woman bade him fasten about his waist: he did so, and aided by this commenced to climb the ladder, the rungs of which

no longer felt sharp to the touch. As he was climbing up he heard in the water under him the baffled fiends making a more hideous din than ever. He reached the summit in safety, and fell on his knees in thankfulness before the woman, who told him that the cord which had aided him was one that he had formerly given to a chapman that was robbed by thieves. .

The woman then left the tower, and brought William into a fair country, the clay of which was clear as crystal. No grass grew there, but many trees, in the branches of which were wonderful birds singing most sweetly. Anon there came to meet him a company of monks and priests clothed in white, who welcomed him lovingly, and as he stood talking to them there approached a bishop, barefoot, and carrying a crucifix, at whose coming all fell on their knees and begged a blessing, which he gave with right good will. William had a lengthy conversation with him, at the conclusion of which he was directed to return to his own country, as it was not permitted him to remain any longer in paradise.

Before his departure, however, he was allowed to witness the examination of a prioress of a convent, whose soul had come hither for judgment. The bishop and his company went to where the trembling soul stood surrounded by fiends. Then one of the monks offered a book of all the evil deeds she had committed,⁶ and questioned her on it point by point in order to see how she had ruled her establishment. She had little to say in her own defence; and the fiends accused her to the bishop that she had adopted the religious life for pomp and pride, and to have abundance of this world's goods and ease for her body, not for devotion, meekness, and holiness, as religious men and women ought to do. They declared that she had more ornaments and rings, more easy lying of nights, and more delicate meat and drink than an empress. The prioress weeping sore admitted her sins, and the bishop sentenced her to pain evermore until the Day of Doom. It was then necessary for William to return, so anon he found himself at the door where he first went in. "Wherefore all Christian men that hear or read this, I beseech you for the love of God that ye have me in your prayer; and ye shall be in mine."

At first sight the narrative of William of Stranton, briefly related in the foregoing pages, may seem to the reader to be coarse and grotesque to the verge of absurdity; but a little reflection will show that such criticism would be too sweeping. It is a mediæval work of religious fiction in which eternal truths are emphasized, as we must admit, despite the fact that the trappings with which they are invested may seem very strange to our modern eyes, though no doubt the fifteenth-century readers found nothing out of the common in them. The author is ever on the side of the poor and oppressed, and lashes out fiercely at the sins that were prevalent

in his day, endeavouring in each instance, with a considerable amount of success; to adapt the punishment inflicted to the sin committed. There is something striking, for example, in the very moths, which swarmed in the hoarded-up garments, being given as food to those who might have distributed those garments to the needy, but would not, and in their utter selfishness stored them up till they bred these insects and so became useless to their owners.

Several incidents of the story appear to be personal to the writer, such as the mention of his sister and uncle, and the introduction of local English saints. Nevertheless there is a general connection, though with important variations, between this and the vision of the Knight Owen. The "resting-place of St. Patrick" corresponds to the cloistered hall, while the place of the body of men in white is taken by the two saints. The four fields of Owen are expanded into several fires, while it must be admitted that the punishments inflicted therein are much more appropriate in the later vision than in the earlier one, where there often appears to be no special fitness. The most important change is that with respect to the bridge-episode. It is no longer the bridge over hell, but is one of the evil works of a sinner who is punished by it. The real place of the old bridge is taken by the ladder and cord which are let down from the summit of the tower.

NOTES.

1. Baltimore, U.S.A., 1900.
2. *Roy.*, "the Friday next after Holyrood day in Harvest."
3. *Roy.*, "the prior of St. Matthew."
4. This from *Roy.* *Addit.* has "Jhesu fili dei miserere mei."
5. *Roy.* substitutes St. Ive of Quethiock, a Cornish saint, for St. John of Bridlington, a popular Yorkshire saint—see Krapp, p. 57.
6. *Roy.* "a book of the nuns' rule and law."

CHAPTER VI.

THE DESCENT OF ANTONIO MANNINI

(A.D. 1411).



THE narrative of Antonio di Giovanni Mannini's visit to St. Patrick's Purgatory in the year 1411, which is here for the first time rendered into English from the original Italian,¹ is the most valuable document yet published in connection with the first period of the history of Lough Derg. In its naive straightforwardness, and its almost complete freedom from the supernatural and miraculous, it furnishes us with a most circumstantial and veracious account of a pilgrimage made to that spot early in the fifteenth century, and shews us as well the state of mind in which a devout and penitent pilgrim approached the Purgatory; while its wealth of minute detail, and its allusions to two other pilgrims, the adventures of one of whom form the subject of the next chapter, make it of extreme value in the history of the Purgatory.

The account of Antonio's purgatorial tour was originally sent by him in letter-form early in 1412 to a friend and compatriot living in London, Corso di Giovanni Rustichi by name. The original letter is presumably lost, but it was sent to Florence by Rustichi, and there was copied by Salvestro Mannini, Antonio's brother, who amplified it from the verbal account given by the latter when he finally reached his native city. We have inserted the complete document here, printing in italics the portions at the beginning and end which are the work of Salvestro.

Did we not know we might safely infer from other sources what cause brought Antonio Mannini to Ireland. As it is, a chance allusion has placed the matter beyond all doubt. Gammurrini, in his *History of the Gherardini*² (Florence, 1671), states as a fact, now rather controverted, that that noble Italian family and the

Irish Geraldines were of the same stock, and adds that the account he gives in Vol. II "tallies with one given by the Earl of Kildare to Antonio di G. Mannini, a Florentine merchant who had been in Ireland." So our pilgrim was one of the numerous merchants and traders—though apparently not too prosperous a one—who flocked into the country from the city on the Arno. Florentines were to be found in Ireland possibly as early as 1217, while a note by Salvestro Mannini shews that several families were settled here, no doubt for business reasons, in 1413. Nor had such any reasonable excuse for being ignorant of St. Patrick's Purgatory; apart altogether from the fact that there was a literary connection between that spot and Florence in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries it is well known that the Italian merchants employed maps of Ireland, called *portolans*, to aid them in their travels, and on many of these the cartographers had marked in the purgatory more or less accurately.³ So Antonio's story fits perfectly into the known commercial conditions of Ireland in the fifteenth century. We may now permit him to give the account of his experiences.

"I, Salvestro di Giovanni Mannini, have here written of the pilgrimage to the Purgatory of St. Patrick which is in the island of Ireland called Hibernia, and I have also written what Antonio wrote with his own hand in this form, and also said by word of mouth when he returned from Ireland, which he did on Thursday the twelfth of October, 1413."

"Truly, O Corso! when I consider rightly, I may repeat the words of David the psalmist: God hath chastised me, but he hath not left me to die, nor suffered me to perish; therefore I think that out of the depths of my tribulation He has heard my prayer, and I hope in His immeasurable mercy and grace that He will deign to raise me up, and perchance to raise both me and our house, for when I think of the great losses and numberless tribulations of the last twelve years, and how patiently I have suffered and endured therein, not indeed like Job, for I was, and am, a sinner, but His mercy has outnumbered my sins, and I believe that He will restore me as He did Job, who, after his tribulations endured patiently and with great fortitude, recovered his health, lived sixty years and was made king of his land, and was called Jobbo⁴ in honour. I can, likewise, secondly quote to you in this my letter the words of Dante at the end of the *Paradiso*: 'One single moment is more effectual to make me forget my vision, than twenty-five ages are to forget that enterprise which made Neptune wonder at the shadow of Argo's fleet.' For you will perhaps wonder more when you have read this letter than did Neptune, god of the sea, who in astonishment and admiration, when he saw the first ship that ever set sail, followed after it for two thousand five hundred

years ; but Corso will not marvel that the Divine mercy is immeasurable.

“ I wrote to you on the 8th of June by a gentleman of Pollana, called M. Guasparre, and by him I sent you in a little box the letter of the Mayor of Dublin, by which he bears witness of my request, and also a letter to Norton, and one to John Burlington ; and I remember that I wrote to you that if I did start I would be there before Michelmās. I did not know what was in store for me ; however, no one can or ought to start against the will of God ; Whom I humbly invoke and call upon to be my witness, that I may write the absolute truth of what occurred, and what I did.

“ Many times I made ready to start, sometimes there was no ship, sometimes the wind was contrary, and sometimes I was without money. I had but two horses with which I desired to come, and I knew myself wellnigh forsaken by all men, and with no counsel or comfort or hope of anything save the grace and mercy of God in whom I have hoped. And being in this state of mind it pleased God that there should come hither a noble gentleman of Hungary, named M. Lorenzo Rattoldi, on his way to the Purgatory of St. Patrick. I visited the gentleman, and held long converse with him ; and seeing his holy intention and devotion, for he had come from the head of all Christianity in the world to the end of the earth for the good of his soul, and that I was here close to the said Purgatory, and in such pain and trouble, considering what my life had been hitherto, sinful, and thinking but of worldly things, comforted by good hope I turned to God, and inspired by His mercy I resolved and determined for the good of my soul to go to the said Purgatory, hoping and believing in the divine mercy that perhaps in the future I might have better grace and fortune and an end to my long tribulations ; and though I had long wished to go to that Purgatory, especially since I came to Ireland, I was dissuaded therefrom until then by a Roman gentleman, a priest called Master Antonio da Focha, by whom I sent you a letter long since. He went to the said Purgatory, and upon his return he persuaded me I should not go thither, saying that I was of a delicate constitution for so much hardship, with many other reasons which there is no need to give you here. Nevertheless, as I have already told you, fortified by the will of God, I resolved to make the said journey and pilgrimage with the said gentleman, and we set out from Dublin in the name of God on Friday the 25th of September, 1411. I thought indeed to go and return in three weeks at the longest, but through the perilous roads and other occasions we have spent three months and a half in going and returning.

“ The Purgatory lies in a lake among high mountains, and is like a well, ten miles in circumference, in which there are thirty-four islands, great and small. We reached the island in that lake

on which the priory stands⁵ in safety on Thursday the 4th of November [1411], which island is a mile measured by water from the island of the Purgatory ; and the said island of the Purgatory is 129 paces long and 30 paces wide, and is in the very centre of the said lake. That day, as soon as I arrived, I confessed myself to the prior of the said priory and began the usual fast on bread and water as observed by others, according to their desire to do so and the constitution of the pilgrimage. I wished to fast for more days, but the prior, urging that it was winter and very cold, would not allow me to fast for more than three days one after the other.

“ On Saturday the 7th of November, 1411, preparing to enter the Purgatory that day, though the prior was very unwilling, I rose before dawn, and when he had confessed me he said the Mass of our Lord Jesus Christ for me, and then gave me Communion ; and after that I heard another Mass of the Annunciation of Our Lady, and then I urged the prior that he should send me to the Purgatory. When he at last consented with great trouble and difficulty, the canon who said the Mass of Our Lady for me, whose name is brother John, and who is one of the canons of the said priory, was commanded to take me to the island of the Purgatory, and put me into it. The said canon put me in a little boat, which was like a piece of roughly-hewn hollow tree-trunk, and four persons could hardly find room in it. The prior accompanied me as far as the water, and put me into the boat himself, first kissing me and giving me his blessing ; you must note that I was barefoot and bareheaded, and was wearing a riding tunic and a doublet over my shirt. Then the canon, who sat facing me with his back to the island, began to row with two small oars, and I sat facing him, with my face to the island of the Purgatory.

“ The weather was still and fine, and it was calm. When we were within half a bowshot of the said island of the Purgatory I saw a bird blacker than coal take flight ; it had not a single plume or feather on its back, save only four or five on each wing, and it was shaped like a heron, but rather larger. And when I saw and noticed it I thought it a great marvel, and I began to tremble, and my heart beat fast with fear, and my hair stood straight upon end so that I could scarcely smooth it down with my hands and make it lie flat. The canon knew quite well what it was, for he began to make the sign of the cross, and he signed himself four or five times. I asked him what it meant, and what this bird might be and the reason of the great fear which had come upon me.

“ But he answered, trying to put me off, as if he did not wish to tell me, saying [in Latin] *Nothing! it's nothing! don't ask questions! don't ask questions!* and bidding me be of good cheer, and hope in God, and commend myself to Him. This made me the more suspicious, and I instantly and piteously besought him in

God's name to tell me fully what this might be. Thereupon he replied that since I asked him in the Lord's name, and in such a manner, he could not refuse, and he began as follows :—

“ At the time when our Lord shewed St. Patrick this Purgatory, after him, and one of his disciples called St. Nicholas, many went in, and most of them perished and came forth no more and were never heard of again. St. Patrick marvelled greatly at this, and devoutly prayed to God with constant prayer and discipline, until he saw by the Holy Spirit that the reason of it was a wicked demon called Corna, who by his many and various temptations caused all the people to perish. Then St. Patrick made special prayer to God, beseeching Him to destroy the power of this demon : and God heard his prayer, and appeared to him in visible form in this place on the island, and said :—‘ Patrick, I have heard thy prayer,’ and shewed him the wicked bird, saying : ‘ I have bound him in this shape, and he shall never again have power to harm any man, and he shall retain this shape until the Day of Judgment, and he shall not have power to abide anywhere but on a stone or a withered tree. And when any Christian comes to this island he shall go forth therefrom and abide in some other island, but he shall not be able to leave the lake.’

“ Then the canon added that when the accursed bird Corna blows the horn with his beak, like a man, it is a sign of perdition for him who is about to enter the Purgatory ; but, God be praised he did not blow the horn for me, and I heard nothing. If I marvelled do you likewise now marvel, when you hear these words, for to this hour my heart beats when I think of it.

“ While the canon was telling this story, rowing gently, we had drawn near the island, and as far as I can judge were within six of our *braccia* [12 feet] thereof, when the canon stood up as a man does who wishes to bring his bark safe to shore, and seeing this, I stood up also, and had hardly done so than I was flung out of the boat as I think for more than three *braccia*, I do not know how or why, and fell head first into the water, where the depth as I am told is three fathoms, each fathom being three of our *braccia*. I found myself lying at the bottom, and you will believe that I was frightened without my oath upon it ; and as I touched the bottom with my hands and head, and found there was grass there, it pleased God that I should remember a prayer which the prior had instructed me to say in moments of peril or temptation, which is as follows :—*Domine Jesu Christe, fili Dei vivi, miserere mihi peccatori.* Which having said in my heart, since in words I could not, I suddenly rose and floated on the water, as it pleased God, and the canon, who cried aloud *good! good!* He grasped my right hand, and holding me with the one hand, and rowing with the other, he

brought me with great difficulty to the island of the Purgatory, where he bade me kneel down and thank God who had brought me safe through this danger, which I did. I had a little book in my left pocket which I always carry about with me ; thinking it must be wet I put my hand into my pocket, and drawing out the book I found it quite dry, nor was there a drop of water in any of my pockets, nor in my bosom, though it was dripping from me, nor had it reached my shirt and doublet, though my tunic was all wet on the outside ; a notable thing, at which the canon marvelled greatly.

“ On the said island of the Purgatory is a very devotional little chapel, 15 *braccia* long and $7\frac{1}{2}$ wide [30 ft. x 15 ft.], which stands almost at the end of the island to the east. The canon led me to it, discouraging and dissuading me from going further into the Purgatory, saying that I had come through peril enough. But I, fortified and encouraged by the good hope and grace of God, ever answered that he should do his office, and let me into the Purgatory, for I had made up my mind once and for all, and had come thither for that reason. Seeing the firmness of my will and purpose the canon placed me on my knees before the altar in the chapel, on which was a carved crucifix and a devotional picture of Our Lady with her Son in her arms, and a picture of St. Patrick.

“ Having placed me on my knees he stripped me of my tunic and doublet, and left me in my shirt and breeches only, barefoot and bareheaded. Then he clad me in a white garment, which he blessed first with holy water ; it reached to the feet and half a *braccia* beyond, and was fashioned like the white vestment called a dalmatic, which the priest wears at the altar. And when he had said certain numerous prayers, and sprinkled me with holy water, he bade me stand up, and led me by the right hand to the entrance of the said chapel, holding in his hand a cross with the figure of the Crucified One. Having placed me flat on my back as though I were dead, he closed my eyes and commanded me not to open them till the office was over ; he crossed my hands upon my breast, and having said over me the vigil and all the Office of the Dead, he signed me three times with holy water, with the same prayers and solemnity as is used for the dead, neither more nor less. Then he opened my eyes with his own hands, put the cross in my right hand, and made me stand up.

“ I was so weak that I could not stand without his aid, but he helped me, saying : ‘ Walk on,’ and so we did, and went out of the chapel. Then he began to say the litanies, and bade me make the responses, and I did so as we walked in procession round the said chapel, which we did three times. When the litanies and their prayers were said he led me before the door of the Purgatory which is outside the said chapel, about five paces distant to the north.

And he made me kneel down before the door, and opened it with a key, calling upon me by my name, and saying: 'Antonio, this is the door of the Purgatory which Our Lord Jesus Christ shewed to St. Patrick'; and again he dissuaded me from entering, urging and saying that many had been found dead therein, and many had been thrown out of it dead upon the other islands, and they who came forth were crazed for ever after by terror.

"Now when the door was opened, and I looked in and saw the darkness, a dreadful and trembling fear came upon me, and my heart began to flutter and beat as it did when first I saw the evil bird Corna, and my hair stood up in the same way. And in a little while, fortified by the Divine Mercy, I recovered heart and courage, and with good hope replied to everything that I was determined to enter, and that I had come hither for no other purpose. Seeing my firm and unalterable determination the canon told me that if I had not a perfect belief in God I must not enter there; and I remembered that I answered that I believed absolutely in God without a shadow of doubt, even as the Church believed in Him. To which the canon, who could do nothing else, said 'Wait,' and he went into the chapel and returned at once, blessing me with holy water, and signing me three times. Then he kissed me, and bade me enter in the name of God. Thereupon, comforted by grace and divine mercy, I took better heart than before, and standing up, weeping bitterly, I called aloud on the mercy of God, and still holding the cross in my right hand in the name of God I entered on my knees. And as I did so I saw coming towards me on the wall of the Purgatory to the right a spider as black as coal, and larger than the palm of my hand; immediately I said that prayer, *Domine Jesu Christe, etc.*, and it disappeared at once. When I was within the canon locked the door and returned to the island of the priory in the same boat, and left me shut up in the Purgatory.

"The place is three feet wide, nine feet long, and high enough for a man to kneel, but not to stand upright. It is exactly like a sepulchre, for it is vaulted overhead, and lies towards the south—that is, there is a niche about three feet long in the direction of the chapel, in which the prior had told me to remain and wait, saying my prayers the while. When I reached it I remained on my knees in prayer, with the cross in my hand as the prior had bidden me. I said the seven Penitential Psalms and the Litanies, and then a Salve Regina, and fifteen Ave Marias in honour of the fifteen joys of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and I remember that with great lamentation and most bitter tears I turned to her with all my soul, calling upon her by name and beseeching her to intercede for me with her Beloved Son that He might aid me in the salvation of my soul. And as I was praying thus I fell asleep, and whether my soul was rapt in ecstasy out of my body, or whether indeed I journeyed in my actual body, and in what way, I cannot tell you. What I saw,

and what was shewn to me, and what I did, I may not write in a letter, nor can I utter it save in confession, but if ever it pleases God that we should meet again I will tell you all things in due order.

“ The canon, sent by the prior, returned at night, and opened the door of the Purgatory and entered ; and as he says he found me senseless and breathless with my head resting upon the cross which I held in my right hand. He says he passed his hands over my face and arms and hands and legs and feet and nearly all my body, and found all colder than ice, so that he doubted of my life, and seizing me by the left arm he shook me violently, and I awoke. I was fearful of danger, as one who is awakened suddenly in terror, and he said ‘ Arise ! arise ! come to the prior, for he will not have you stay here any longer.’ And I rejoicing at the grace of God followed him out of the Purgatory ; and he led me back to the chapel with great delight and joy, making me kneel before the altar, and bidding me render thanks to God with all my heart, which I did. Then he took the cross out of my hand, and stripped the white garment from me ; and I myself put on my own clothes. When I was dressed the canon put an ancient Psalter before me on the altar, and bade me open it and read a verse of a psalm. I did so, and chanced upon this verse :—*For thy mercy towards me is great, and thou hast delivered my soul from the nethermost hell.* And the canon hearing it recited the Te Deum ; note well, Corso, how much I am beholden to God.

“ Then the canon took me back in the same boat to the island of the priory, and the prior and others stood on the shore watching for my return ; and when I had landed from the boat they all kissed me, and rejoicing over me the prior led me to the chapel where he had given me Communion in the morning, and said the Te Deum.

“ In my judgment I was five hours in the Purgatory. It is usual to remain there for an ordinary day—that is, twenty-four hours, but in such cold weather the prior would not suffer me to remain longer. I think that place—that is, the whole of the lake, is the coldest country in which I have ever been ; the mountains of Brigha are not cold in winter compared to that place. I wonder now how I endured it so long almost naked. Be certain, Corso, it would have been impossible, save by the grace and mercy of God,

“ The bearer of this will tell you how I came out marked, for I shewed him that he might tell you ; perhaps I shall bear the mark for ever. God’s will be done. And so I will end, advising every man to keep himself carefully from vice and sin, for God is Truth and absolute Justice.

“ This is all I can tell you with the pen at present, save that after many visions and temptations I prayed to God for four graces, as the prior had instructed me. As to three of these it is best I should be silent ; for the fourth, I asked of God’s mercy that I might

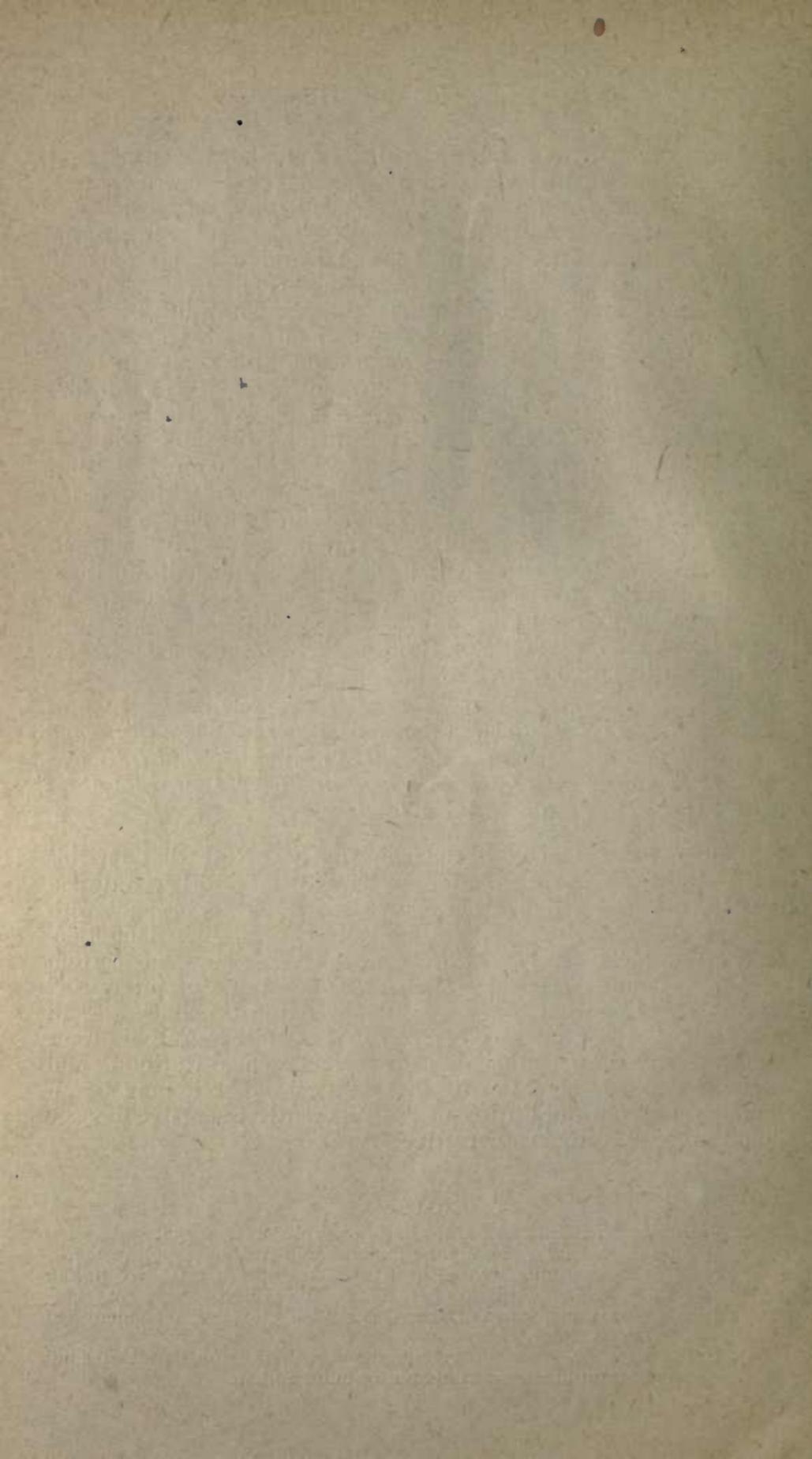
recover my honour and state, and that of our house, whenever it might be; whereupon I was told by one who could do so that on my return I should go to see a place called Doverano, which was almost in our way, and there, as in future would be shewn to me I should build a church in honour of Our Lady, and there I should recover my state and honour, and so, before God, I trust. Therefore I have remained in that country, where, if you will believe me, we shall be in good estate once more, and so I warn you. And I pray you, Corso, write to Salvestro to come hither, and to bring with him my wife Maddalena and Giovanni my son, which before God I believe will be for our good. I send you this letter by M. Lorenzo Rattoldi, knight of the king of Hungary, and I commend him well to you for the good company he has borne me, and I beg you for love of me to honour him, and aid and counsel him as far as possible, and also write to my brothers in Florence to do him honour if he should come thither. And he knows Antonio and Fronte di Piero, and has asked me that you should write to them and bid them give good news of him to the king of Hungary, who loves him well, and tell him that he is in health, and has been in the Purgatory on the 11th of November, St. Martin's Day, and bore himself like a good knight."

"This is an exact copy of the letter written by Antonio Mannini to Corso di Giovanni Rustichi, in London, written at Dublin in Ireland on the 25th day of February, 1411 [1412 N.S.]. The said letter was sent here by Corso, and reached us here in Florence on the 12th of April, 1412. Deo gratias. Amen."

Salvestro Mannini adds the following:—"Note that on this day, October 12th, 1413, Antonio Mannini our brother returned from Ireland where he had been three years, and he brought with him a gentleman of these parts, and of that notable island they relate what follows." Then follows some account of certain Florentine families settled in Ireland, which piece of interesting information is omitted by Frati, and the writer concludes:—"In that island is the Purgatory of St. Patrick, whither Antonio went with a Hungarian gentleman called M. Lorenzo Rattoldi, and what they found there I write in this record that it may be an example to all faithful Christians." Apparently the above passage should precede Antonio's narrative.

NOTES.

1. *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, Vol. VIII, p. 154.
2. Quoted in *Journal of the Roy. Soc. of Antiq. of Ireland* (1877), p. 247.
3. See this subject fully treated by T. J. Westropp in his *Early Italian Maps of Ireland* (*Proc. Roy. Ir. Acad.*, Vol. XXX, sect. c, No. 16).
4. Jobab, who is mentioned in *Genesis* XXXVI, 33, is not to be identified with the patriarch Job.
5. It appears the monastic community then dwelt on Saints' Island. The purgatorial isle was apparently uninhabited.



CHAPTER VII.

THE DESCENT OF

LAURENCE RATHOLD DE PASZTHO (A.D. 1411).



LAURENCE RATHOLD DE PASZTHO, whose adventures at St. Patrick's Purgatory are set forth in this chapter, was descended from a noble Hungarian family of which mention is made from the thirteenth century on. He himself was brought up from his boyhood in the court of Sigismund, King of Hungary, and subsequently became chief butler, having also apparently in his charge the housekeeping accounts of the royal establishment. He seems to have been a faithful and reliable servant to Sigismund, and the latter employed him in diplomatic matters.

The account of his adventures in Ireland was written down in Dublin early in the year 1412 by James Yonge, who describes himself as "a notary imperial, and the least of the citizens and scribes of Dublin." Yonge's original narrative appears to be lost, but a copy of it, which M. Delehaye has published for the first time,¹ is included in a manuscript in the British Museum, classed Royal 10B. IX; and which was completed in 1461 by a monk named Henry Cranebroke.

Laurence reached Dublin, and entered the metropolis richly attired, and accompanied by a herald and a numerous retinue as befitted his rank and station. He then proceeded to the church of the Holy Trinity (now Christ Church Cathedral) in order to venerate the celebrated relic, the Staff of St. Patrick, the *baculus Jesu* or *bachall Iosa*, with which it was said the Saint had traced the circle within which the chasm of the Purgatory had opened. At the same time he exhibited to the citizens of Dublin his credentials in the shape of a letter from Sigismund, King of Hungary, dated January 10th, 1408, in which that king stated that the bearer proposed visiting the shrine of St. James of Compostella and Saint

Patrick's Purgatory, and beseeching all kings, princes, etc., to give him aid and protection. He then made his way to Armagh, or perhaps to the Manor of Dromiskin, and presented himself and his letter to the Primate, Nicholas Fleming, who received him with due honour and permitted him to have a chaplain for hearing his confessions; of this there is a contemporary record in the Registers of that Archbishop.²

Next he went to Downpatrick and there venerated the relics of SS. Patrick, Brigit, and Columcille, and as well spent some days there in fasting and prayer. During his stay in that town St. Patrick appeared to him in a vision and assured him of good success in his enterprise, at which he was overjoyed.

Finally Laurence arrived at Lough Derg and exhibited letters from the Primate to the prior of the Purgatory. Having scanned them the latter proceed to warn Laurence of the great dangers he was about to incur, stating that some of the pilgrims had died, others had become demented as a result of the attacks made upon them by evil spirits, while others had disappeared soul and body and were never heard of again; and added, that unless the pilgrim had a firm faith in Christ and a contrite heart he should not presume to enter the cave.

To this the soldier humbly replied:—"Reverend sir, according to the teaching of Holy Mother Church I believe in the Trinity."

The prior answered joyfully:—"If you really desire to complete the pilgrimage it will be necessary for you to undergo a preliminary fifteen-days fast on bread and water, with other pious works, as is incumbent on all those who enter the Purgatory." The knight assented, but fearing that such rigorous abstinence would weaken him too much he was permitted to substitute for it a five-days fast in honour of the five wounds of Christ. When the appointed day arrived Laurence confessed himself to the prior and received the Sacrament from him, and then the two, together with a canon, embarked in a small boat and rowed about a mile in a southerly direction to the island of the Purgatory.

Here the author, James Yonge, breaks off his narrative in order to give a description of the purgatorial isle. He says that it measures one hundred and twenty paces by twenty, and is divided into two parts. Of these the larger portion lying between north and west is called in Irish "Kernagh," in Latin "Clamoris Insula;" it is all overgrown with brambles and bushes, in which rest myriads of ravens, screech-owls, and other unclean birds, which make the air hideous with their cries. Here, too, according to certain "Irish manuscripts," Satan and his satellites have dwelt from time immemorial. Pre-eminent in the number of these is a certain demon, called in the Irish language "Cornu," in appearance resembling a heron without feathers, who when he utters a cry like the

blare of a trumpet, foretells the death of the pilgrim who is about to enter the Purgatory. The smaller portion of the island is called that of the angels, in Irish "Regles." It looks towards the south and east, and measures thirty paces by five and a half, and abounds with handsome trees, in whose branches the birds sing melodiously.³

In this latter portion is a chapel dedicated to St. Patrick, which measures four *brachia* by two and a half.⁴ Into this the prior conducted Laurence with many exhortations that he should not enter the Purgatory. Finding his entreaties of no avail, he proceeded to undress him, and take off his shoes, and then clad him in three "canons' albs," and a new "femoral," this being the customary attire of the pilgrims. When this was done Laurence prostrated himself on the ground, and the prior and canon chanted the litany of the dead over him. After this the prior raised him from the ground and conducted him out of the little chapel four paces to the north-east to the cave, which was built of stone, and vaulted overhead. The first and principal chamber (introitus) was eleven palms long, three wide, and four high; the second, "versus Gerbinum," did not exceed nine palms by three by four.⁵ The prior unlocked the door, sprinkled Laurence with holy water, and then introduced him into the cave and again locked the door. Left in the gloom to his own reflections the knight crossed himself and repeated his prayers. Suspended round his neck was a costly bejewelled reliquary containing, amongst other things, four pieces of the true cross, and three fragments of Our Lord's garments. He had also a little book with him which contained the seven penitential psalms, and a candle which he divided into nine portions, one of which he kept continually alight.

When he came to the entrance of the second cave he threw himself on the ground, and recited the seven penitential psalms and the litany. As he lay there in prayer two evil spirits came invisibly and dragged him by the feet three times up and down the cave in such a violent manner as to tear the garments which were on him. Unterrified by this unexpected assault the knight made the sign of the cross, and uttered his prayer *Domine Jesu Christe, fili Dei vivi, miserere mihi peccatori*; upon which the demons fled.

Strengthened in the Lord the knight again betook himself to his prayers, when another devil appeared in the likeness of a venerable pilgrim with flowing locks and long beard, who seemed to regard him with pious glance. Disturbed by this sudden apparition the knight breathed a prayer to Christ, upon which the *soi-disant* pilgrim shewed himself in his true colours, and said, "Foolish man, I ought indeed to pity you in your folly, since I have heard you uttering unlawful words about Jesus, to whom you have attributed honour and worth. For that Jesus, whose faith you

blindly follow, was a seducer of the people, and is condemned for ever to the pit of hell. Reject these erroneous beliefs, my friend, and follow my counsels, and so you will without doubt obtain everlasting life." Perceiving from this speech the true nature of the being who stood before him Laurence made him no answer, but crossed himself and uttered his prayer *Domine Jesu, etc.*, upon which the devil spat on him and disappeared.

A third trial still awaited him. Shortly after another demon appeared, this time in the form of a beautiful woman who was well known to the knight, and who endeavoured to tempt him with the lust of the flesh. Against this too Laurence remained firm, declaring that he recognised in this the wiles of the Evil One, for she whose form stood before him could not be there in bodily presence, as he had left her behind in his native land. At this the devil withdrew in confusion.

As Laurence continued at his devotions a beautiful youth appeared, clad in a green robe, and a red stole over his shoulders, who saluted him in Hebrew, "Laurence, shalom alecha!"⁶ On the knight asking whether he were an evil spirit or a messenger from on high, the youth replied that he was his patron Michael the Archangel, in whose honour he had built a church in his native town. Recalling how the three previous visions had proved to be attacks of the devil the knight not unnaturally professed his disbelief in this statement, at which his visitor declared his faith in the Incarnate Son of God, and then asked him what had brought him thither.

Falling at his feet Laurence humbly said "My lord and father I beseech thee to shew me the souls of my deceased relatives, in order that I may know if they be in hell, purgatory, or heaven.

To which the angel replied: "I have been permitted by the Almighty to shew thee whatever thou art worthy to see, but thou shalt behold them in the body, but not in reality (corporaliter sed non in re). Therefore follow me in the name of Jehovah, Hak-kodesh, Adonai, Alpha and Omega, the Ever-present, Ab, Ben, Ruach Kodesh."⁷

The knight followed his angelic guide to the entrance of the [inner] cave, where immense squared stones appeared. The angel raised these, and another opening was seen, into which he led Laurence by circular steps for about a mile. When they arrived at the end of these they found themselves in a green meadow so vast in extent that its limits could not be perceived; this land had its own sky and clouds, and was lit by a divine light. On reaching this the knight renewed his request, and in order to gratify it the angel shewed him an immense gulf filled with flame, in the depths of which countless souls, under the appearance of human beings, were tormented with terrible tortures. Amongst these Laurence recognised all his relations, both male and female, his parents, his

cousins, his friends, except one soul. Greatly moved with compassion at the sight, he said to his guide, "My lord, what is this fire and how is it named? For I behold all the souls I desired to see, except one, miserably tormented in this flame."

The angel replied: "My son, this is purgatory, in which are purified the souls of these destined for salvation, and there is no other purgatory. Nevertheless thou dost not behold me, nor the fire of purgatory, in reality, but only as God has seen fit to permit thee."

The knight asked: "My lord, who are these vile tormentors who so cruelly torture these hapless souls?"

The angel replied: "These are the devils against whom I waged war in Heaven, and cast out into the abyss with Lucifer their prince. Nevertheless thou dost not see them in their true form, but only as is given thee from above."

Laurence then desired to see the soul of his well-beloved, which up to this had not been granted him, and accordingly besought his guide to vouchsafe him a glimpse of her, and as well of the joys of Heaven and the pains of Hell.

To this the angel answered: "Thou canst not see this soul since the vision of her is for the present hid from thee by God. Neither canst thou see Hell or Heaven, for thou didst not come hither in sufficient humility of mind." With terrified countenance Laurence said, "Lord, did I not come hither confessed, contrite, and armed with the Faith as taught by Holy Church?" The angel responded: "True, but thou canst not behold these things at present, because thou art unwilling to relinquish the world." And the knight answered: "Lord, thou hast judged justly."

Again he asked the angel: "Are those whom I see here eternally lost?" The angel answered. "They cannot be lost, since there is not despair here as in Hell, where all hope of coming redemption is given up. But the help of God is given lavishly to these souls"

The knight said: "If this is permitted me I would wish to know what is this 'help' of which thou speakest?"

The angel replied: "Twice in the seven days—that is to say, on Sunday, when the Incarnate One was born, and on Friday, when He died for our sins, I come to these souls and say to them 'God will speedily have mercy upon you.' And they cry out with one accord 'Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy upon us. As is Thy willingness to forgive, and as is Thy knowledge of our sins, so have mercy upon us, for greater is Thy mercy than our iniquity, though that be great. Blessed be thou who comest in the name of the Lord, hosanna in Heaven and Earth.'"

At this Laurence said in amazement: "How is it that, notwith-

standing all the masses, the almsdeeds, and the other pious works lavishly performed by me and by others on behalf of our dead, I behold here tormented in the fire the souls which more than twenty years ago the Divine Clemency thought fit to call from the world." The angel answered gently "Thou shouldst not wonder at their torments since thou hast often read in the Apocalypse of St. John, *Their works do follow them.*" Laurence asked. "In what way may their pains be more speedily mitigated?" The angel replied: "By all good works, and especially by the celebration of the Mass."

After this the angel gave Laurence many secret messages and revelations, which the knight was not permitted to tell the compiler, James Yonge, but which he was directed by the angel to narrate (to those for whom they were intended). Then the angel said: "Follow me and I will lead thee back to the exit;" and he brought him to the cave by a shorter way. On reaching it the knight fell on his knees, and with clasped hands poured forth thanks to the Triune God, to the Virgin Mary, and to Michael, and Patrick, and all the saints, that the Almighty of His inexhaustible goodness had brought him safely through such a dangerous pilgrimage, thereby strengthening and increasing his faith. Then he wished to kiss the feet of the angel, but the latter forbade him, saying, "Touch me not, for thou art not worthy." And standing after the manner of a bishop the angel said: "Our help is in the name of the Lord who hath made heaven and earth": and blessing the knight after this form "The blessing of God Almighty, etc.," he disappeared and returned to Heaven. When the door was opened Laurence came out unharmed and joyful, at which the prior gave abundant thanks to the Lord.

On leaving Lough Derg Laurence received a certificate from the prior stating that he had duly performed the necessary rites, and had entered the Purgatory. It is very probable that such a certificate was given to each pilgrim on his departure, but as this is the only complete copy known, it may not be out of place to give a translation of it from the original Latin. It runs as follows:—

"To all the faithful in Christ who shall see or hear these letters brother Matthew, prior of St. Patrick's Purgatory in the diocese of Clogher, sends continual greeting in the Lord. Know ye that the Magnifico, Laurence Rathold de Pasztho, visited our place, and exhibited letters of recommendation from the Archbishop of Armagh; and after he had done penance in fasting and prayer he entered the Purgatory. When he had heard the Mass of the Holy Cross, and had observed all the other attendant solemnities of the pilgrimage, with procession and litany he entered St. Patrick's cave fasting and naked, except for *roselis* and a *femoral*, and abiding there suffered the attacks of unclean spirits, as we are given to understand, and also saw and heard divine revelations in that cave

wherein holy Nicholas and George Crissaphan, and Eugene O'Brien of England (formerly) bore the attacks of evil spirits. In testimony of which premises we have affixed our seal to these presents. Given in the island of saints on the fifth day after St. Martin's day [Nov. 15], in the year 1411."

On his return journey Laurence exhibited this document to Archbishop Fleming, who ratified it, and included it in a covering letter given at the Manor of Dromiskin on the 27th of December.⁸

When the knight reached Dublin he was given a reception befitting his rank by the prelates and nobles there, who rejoiced at the good success of his undertaking. While he remained in the capital awaiting a ship he related his adventures to his friends, who desired that these should be perpetuated in writing. Accordingly James Yonge, who served Laurence during his stay in Dublin in the capacity of secretary and scribe, wrote it down in Latin. Strangely enough he did not write from the knight's dictation, but had several conversations with him, and then committed the substance of these to paper. When he had finished he besought the knight to tell him his principal reasons for visiting the Purgatory, and also as to whether he had seen the visions in the body or in the spirit. To oblige him the latter appended a note to this effect: "I visited Ireland for three reasons. First and foremost, because I had heard and read that if anyone had any doubt with respect to the Catholic Faith he should enter the Purgatory in order to have that doubt resolved. I had grave doubts about the substance of the soul, and for this principal reason I entered the place of purgatory, and learnt the truth. Secondly, because I told the King of Hungary that I wished to enter the Purgatory. Thirdly, because I desired to see the wonders and saintly miracles of Ireland, of which I had heard much. Whether I beheld the visions in the body or out of the body I cannot tell; but it seems more probable that I was rapt in the body, because I lit, one after another, the nine pieces of candle, and kept them lighting until I came out of the cave."

Subsequently Laurence left Dublin early in 1412, and in 1413 is found in Venice, where he was conducting some negotiations for his master, King Sigismund. It is noteworthy that he had arrived here, as in Ireland, under pretext of visiting certain sanctuaries, so that it seems probable that on more than one occasion religious pilgrimages were used to cloak secret diplomatic missions.

There is an interesting allusion in Hungarian literature to Laurence Rathold. Tinody, a Hungarian poet and chronicler, who flourished about the middle of the sixteenth century, states in his chronicle that King Sigismund sent his chief butler, Laurentius Taar, to the Purgatory. Laurentius had a vision therein of the fiery bed prepared for Sigismund as a punishment for his

disorderly life. On relating this to his king on his return home the latter amended his ways, and as an act of atonement founded and richly endowed the church of St. Sigismund in Buda. Evidently the above refers to the hero of this chapter. Tinody read it in an old song, which must have differed in some respects from the story we have narrated, as in the latter there is no mention of a fiery bed, though the allusion finds a parallel in the vision of Louis de Sur.⁹

The account of Laurence's adventures and descent is a very valuable one, though not so much so as that of Antonio Mannini, because the historical portions have been overlaid by legendary matter, though indeed it is not very difficult to separate the two. The compiler, James Yonge, has rather over-reached himself when he represents Laurence as saying that he burnt the nine pieces of candle one after another, which seems to imply that Laurence kept awake during the entire vigil, or at most only dozed at intervals. Yonge seems to have set before himself the task of composing for the edification of the faithful a religious romance with a substratum of fact. In this he has exhibited some powers of adaption, not to say inventive restraint, when he is content to represent the visionary as only seeing the gulf of purgatory, and not being conducted to the regions of bliss. It may also be said in his favour that he shews a decided tendency to soften down the crude materialism displayed in other visions described in this book.

Whatever sources were employed by Yonge it seems certain at least that he must have known and made use of the vision of George Crissaphan. The points of resemblance between the two are noteworthy. In both the Archangel Michael, clothed in a green robe, acts as guide, and gives the pilgrims messages for living persons, which are not to be divulged, except to those for whom they are intended. The concluding portion, where the angel stands "after the manner of a bishop," and gives the benediction, is almost verbally identical in both. One temptation at least is common to both, i.e., the appearance of the devil under the form of a beautiful damsel, well-known to the visionary, who in reality is at the moment hundreds of miles away, though the nature of the suggested sin varies slightly, being in the one case the lust of the flesh, in another pomp and vanity. In another temptation the evil spirit attempts to seduce both Crissaphan and Rathold from the true faith by telling them that Christ was a deceiver. It is significant, too, that Crissaphan's visit is alluded to in the certificate given by the prior to Rathold.

Can any light be thrown on the mysterious demon, in form resembling a heron, and known in the Irish language by the name of "Cornu" or "Corna," which is only mentioned in the visions

of Rathold and Mannini, and which was actually seen by the latter? Richardson states in his *Folly of Pilgrimages* that towards the close of the seventeenth century a Frenchman, named Ludovicus Pyrrhus, came to Lough Derg for the purpose of discovering the purgatorial cave. In this respect his efforts were not crowned with success, but in the course of his excavations he happened upon an image "which is said to be the image of Caoranach, and is kept on the lesser island [Station I.] for the satisfaction of the pilgrims." According to the same authority the monster which came out of the lake, and was slain by Conan Maol, its bones being subsequently metamorphosed into great stones, was named Caoranach. He also states that the figure of this monster was cut on a flat stone at the angle of the little chapel, and denotes its position on his map by the letter (a). Skelton adds the interesting genealogical fact that this was the Devil's mother. In appearance this figure was said to represent a wolf with a serpent's tail between its legs and thrown over its back; in other words it was one of these pieces of grotesque mediæval stone-cutting which are found so frequently in connection with ecclesiastical structures all over Ireland and Europe. Whether such are emblematic of the vices, or whether they are merely sprung from the sculptor's impish fancy, is just the question. At all events it would seem that the image cut on the chapel was shewn to the pilgrims as the representation of the terrible monster slain by the patron saint, the abundant streams of blood from which gave the lake its name and colour. Thus, as no doubt happened elsewhere, an incidental piece of Christian carved work and a centuries-old pagan legend were brought into connection. That *Corna* and *Caoranach* are one and the same is beyond question, the words being radically identical. We have little doubt that what Mannini saw was a heron, or a bird of kindred species; possibly it was remarkable for its longevity, and chose the lonely isle as being a place where it would not be disturbed, and for this reason was regarded by the community with superstitious awe, local legend furnishing the explanation given by the canon to Mannini. Apparently when the heron died the legend was transferred to the image.

As Mannini and Rathold accompanied each other to the Purgatory, and most probably returned together, a chronology of their tour, compiled from the two accounts, will not come amiss. They left Dublin on September 25th, 1411, touched at Armagh (or Dromiskin) and Downpatrick, and reached Lough Derg on the 4th of November. Mannini entered the Purgatory on the 7th and Rathold on the 11th of that month. On the return journey the latter was evidently at the Primate's Manor of Dromiskin in Louth on December 27th. As they took three and a half months coming and going they must have reached Dublin in the first fortnight of January, 1412. Mannini wrote his letter to Rustichi from that

city on February 25th, and subsequently sent it to London by 12th of April. Subsequently Rathold is found at Venice in January, 1413, while Mannini arrived at Florence, after three years stay in Ireland, on October 12th of that year.

NOTES.

1. *Analecta Bollandiana*, t. XXVII, pp. 43-60.
2. Dr. H. J. Lawlor, *A Calendar of the Register of Archbishop Fleming*, pp. 122, 144 (*Proc. Roy. Ir. Acad.*, Vol. XXX, sect. c, No. 5).
3. This seems to be based on the statement of Giraldus Cambrensis, though Yonge has added some details which evidently represent local tradition. Yonge is obviously alluding to *Station Island*; but it is interesting to note that Canon O'Connor (*op. cit.*, pp. 24-5) says that at the present day the western half of *Saints' Island* is much poorer and wilder than the eastern portion.
4. These measurements differ altogether from these given by Antonio, who seems to furnish them correctly.
5. The text here is very corrupt.
6. "Peace to thee!"
7. "The Holy One, Lord . . . Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." The Hebrew in the text is very corrupt; it runs:—"Hecados, adonay . . . ebuy, rahot kodes."
8. This is not preserved in Fleming's Register.
9. O'Connor, pp. 250-1, quoting notes by L. L. Kropf; *Anal. Boll.*, t. XXVII, p. 42.

CHAPTER VIII.

CLOSE OF THE FIRST PERIOD.



BEFORE dealing at length with the demolition of the purgatorial cave by papal authority in 1497, and the consequent closing of the first period in the history of Lough Derg, it will be necessary to pass in review certain events preceding this, the more so as some of them have a more or less direct bearing on the reason for the act of destruction, and the points of discussion that arise therefrom. Unfortunately the allusions in the Annals to Lough Derg and its neighbourhood are very scanty, which is the more extraordinary when we bear in mind that the cave was so well known throughout Europe that pilgrims resorted thither from every country. The silence of the annalists with respect to St. Patrick's Purgatory is impossible to explain; they ignored, not only the miraculous element, but its general history as well, and only relate a few events in connection with the monastery which were brought before their notice.

The lake and its surroundings together comprised a district which was known from early times as Termon-Daveoc. This is said to have comprised about 30,000 acres, though we cannot suppose that all this was the property of the canons of Lough Derg, else that community would have been extraordinarily wealthy, while in reality the monastery appears to have been obscure, and would never have come into any prominence but for the renown of the cave. At a later date Termon-Daveoc became known as Termon-Magrath, owing to the fact that the powerful family of the Magraths became hereditary termoners or guardians of the sanctuary and precincts. The connection of the family with the district commenced at least as early as the fourteenth century, for the Four Masters record the death of Nicholas Magrath, coarb of Termon-Daveoc in 1345, and continued until the middle of the seventeenth, when the termon became part of the see-lands of the Bishopric of Clogher.²

Some notices of this family in connection with Lough Derg are extant. In 1431 a cleric named Maurice O'Loughren, a Canon of SS. Peter and Paul, Armagh, challenged the validity of the bulls by which Matthew Magrath held that abbey, on the grounds that there was no mention made in them that he (Matthew) was at the time prior of Lough Derg; upon which the Pope directed Matthew and Maurice to be summoned, and if the latter made good his case he was to be appointed abbot. This Matthew is the prior mentioned in the accounts of the pilgrimages of Mannini and William of Stranton; he died in 1440, and was succeeded as coarb by John Boy Magrath.³

Some years later a dispute took place. Raymond Maguire, an Augustinian, was prior of the Purgatory in 1455. Donald Magrath and Thomas Treanor, abbot of SS. Peter and Paul, strove to prevent Maguire from disposing of the proceeds of the Purgatory on the plea that the above abbey was the mother-house of the establishment at Lough Derg. The prior appealed to his Metropolitan, and to Rome, with the result that the community at Lough Derg were confirmed in their right to the religious offerings of the place, and the others were ordered under pain of excommunication not to give any further annoyance.⁴

In 1469 the death of one coarb and the election of another is recorded. In that year "John Boy, the son of John Mor Magrath, coarb of Termon-Daveoc, died, and Dermot, son of Marcus, son of Maurice Magrath, was made coarb in his place." In 1496 Rory Magrath, son of the last-named, was coarb, as in that year he prevented the protection of the termon being violated by the O'Donnells.⁵

Under the year 1479 a very curious entry occurs, which is of value for more reasons than one. It was reported to Pope Sixtus IV by Nellan Magrath, a clerk of the diocese of Raphoe, that the rectory of Templecarne, in which parish the Purgatory lay, had been united time out of mind by the authority of the Ordinary to the monastery of Lough Derg, but that in the said monastery at the time of making the report there was neither rector, prior, nor convent, while to make matters worse Divine Service was not celebrated there, and its revenues were in the unlawful possession of certain powerful clerks. Magrath then proceeded to say that it would conduce to the spiritual welfare of the parishioners if the union were dissolved, and the rectory conferred upon some fit person who would take care that Mass was celebrated there, i.e., in the parish church of Templecarne. The Pope directed that the matter should be enquired into, and if found as stated, the union was to be dissolved, and the rectory conferred on the informant.⁶

We must now pass on to deal with another question. As we have seen from the foregoing chapters many of the pilgrims who

visited the dread cave have left us lengthy and detailed accounts of the visions of the other-world seen therein by them. From some brief and incidental allusions it would appear that there were several others committed to writing, some of which are in existence, though their present resting-place is not known : while it is quite possible that future students may unearth in Continental libraries matter that is absolutely new with respect to the history of the Purgatory.

But are we to assume that every pilgrim that visited Lough Derg during the first period beheld visions? Assuredly not. Many of them certainly asserted that they did, and, admitting the truth of their assertions, it may be explained as being due to overcredulity, trembling expectation, and debility through arduous travelling and rigorous fasting, the resultant state of body and mind being acted upon by the soporific qualities of the cave, which produced certain strange delusions; these subsequently found expression in a recognised literary form which was quite in accordance with the tendency of the age.

But the above statements do not constitute an invariable rule. It may be assumed on the other hand that the majority of the pilgrims came and went, submitted to the rigours of fasting and penance, remained in expectation in the purgatorial cave for the allotted time—and saw nothing. Why some were less fortunate than others is perhaps a question for the psychologist rather than the historian. We know for certain that the supernatural experiences of some pilgrims were *nil*, and that they came away rather sceptical as to the value of the Purgatory. The earliest instance of this occurred in the fourteenth century—a period which, by a strange contrariety, has furnished us with more known visions than any other. In or about the year 1394 Froissart states in his *Chronicle* that he had a conversation with a certain knight, Sir William de Lisle, who said that he had been in the Purgatory. He stated that he and another English knight had entered the cave, and were shut in as the sun set, and that they remained there all night, and left it next morning at sunrise. On Froissart asking if he had seen any of the strange sights or visions commonly spoken of he replied that when they had passed through the gate of the Purgatory they had descended as though into a cellar, and that a hot vapour rose towards them, and so affected their heads that they were obliged to sit down upon the stone steps. After sitting there a while they felt a heavy drowsiness come upon them, and so fell asleep, and slept all night. Being further questioned he answered that they had been oppressed with many strange fancies and wonderful dreams, different from those they were accustomed to in their chambers; and in the morning when they went out they had clean forgotten their dreams and visions; whereupon he concluded that the whole matter was fancy.

There is adverse testimony from other pilgrims in the latter half of the next century. In the *Mirror of the World*, printed by Caxton in 1481, but originally published in French at Bruges in 1464, the author says "It may well be that of ancient time it hath been thus; but I have spoken with divers men that have been therein, and one of them was a high Canon of Waterford, which told me he had been therein eight or nine times, and he saw nor suffered no such things. And in like wise told to me a worshipful knight of Bruges, Sir John de Banst, that he had been therein in like wise, and see none other things as afore was said."⁷

That a spirit of scepticism with respect to the wonders to be seen within St. Patrick's Purgatory was commencing to spread abroad is shewn by the foregoing paragraphs. It also manifested itself in another way, i.e., through the medium of literature. From allusions in books it can plainly be observed that the belief was commencing to lose its hold on the world in general; men were no longer overawed by the supernatural terrors of the cave, with the natural result that they commenced to ridicule what once they feared. Did not the prescribed chronological limits of this chapter forbid it, we might shew from many literary allusions of a slightly later date how widespread was the change of thought which was due to the spirit of the Renaissance; as it is, one or two passages occur so close to the end of the first period, and manifest so clearly the new trend of opinion, that it will be sufficient to quote them. Though in order of time they occur after the actual closing of the cave in 1497, yet they are indicative of the feeling that was abroad at the end of the fifteenth century and the commencement of the sixteenth.

The celebrated Albert Krantz (who died in 1517), in his posthumous work *Daniae, Sueciae, Norvegiae Chronica* says:—"The Irish remember a Purgatory of a sometime saint called Patrick, but such dreams and flitting phantoms, mere old women's tales, I did not think proper to insert in a history of real transactions."

Erasmus in his *Adagia* (pub. in 1500) considers that the legend was derived from the classical cave of Trophonius, and adds:—"Nevertheless there are many who descend into the cave at the present day, but they are first exhausted by a three-days fast lest they should enter it with a clear brain. As for those who descend it is said that ever after they have no desire to laugh."⁸

When once the legend commenced to lose its hold on the religious side of men's characters it became a fit subject for the writer of romances to embody in his tale. He eagerly availed himself of such convenient ready-made material, and the earliest instance of this peculiar non-religious use appears to be its incorporation in the wildly imaginative Italian romance of *Guerino detto il Meschino*, which shall be dealt with at greater length else-

where, and which is said by Wright to have been *written* in the fourteenth century, while it was first *printed* in Italian in 1473, and ran through several editions before 1500. The hero of this romance is in search of his parents, who are unknown to him, and failing to find them on earth he descends to the under-world *via* St. Patrick's Purgatory, where he has the usual adventures.

A similar literary use, though a more sober one, is to be found in the celebrated mediæval romance of Fortunatus, whose never-empty purse has passed into a proverb. This romance, which was exceedingly popular was certainly printed (in Dutch) as early as 1509. Fortunatus, a nobleman of Cyprus, made his way from Scotland to Ireland with his servant Leopold, who was a native of the latter country. They then came to the town of "Bernic," in which town was a great monastery, and behind the altar of the church was a door which led into the cave of St. Patrick's Purgatory. On learning the rank of his distinguished visitor the abbot invited him to be his guest, and Fortunatus in appreciation of such a compliment, purchased by means of his magic purse a cask of the best wine procurable, and presented it to the abbot, who received it gladly, as wine was very scarce there, and very little was used in the monastery, except for Divine Service.

In the course of their visit the conversation turned on the question of the Purgatory, and the abbot gave them the following account of its origin. "Many hundred years ago this place where now this town and sanctuary stand was a howling wilderness. Not far from here there lived at that time an abbot named Patrick, a very devout man, who often came into this wilderness to do penance therein. On one occasion he accidentally found this cave, which is very long and deep. He went into it so far that he lost his way, and could not get out. Then he fell on his knees and prayed to God, if it were not contrary to His will, to help him out of the cavern. While he was thus praying he heard mournful cries coming from the depths of the cave. But God helped him, and he emerged safely. Then he thanked God, and became even more devout than formerly. And afterwards this monastery was erected by the aid of pious people.

Upon this Fortunatus asked :—"What do the pilgrims report who have visited the cave?"

The abbot replied :—"I question none of them ; yet some of them say that they have heard miserable lamentations, while others state that they have neither seen or experienced anything except that they were horribly afraid."

On hearing this Fortunatus determined to enter the cave. The abbot made no opposition, but warned him not to venture too far in, as there were numerous passages and ramifications in which pilgrims had been lost for days. Accordingly the next

morning, after receiving the Blessed Sacrament, the nobleman and his servant entered the cave, and had the door locked behind them. They wandered along in the darkness for a considerable time, until they completely lost their bearings, and at length, overcome with hunger and despair, sat down on the ground, oblivious of all around them.

After waiting for some time the monks became alarmed, and went to the abbot. He sent for an old man who had measured the cave many years before. The latter penetrated the cave by means of a ball of twine, examined passage after passage, until at length he discovered them, and brought them out in safety. In gratitude for his rescue Fortunatus presented him with a hundred nobles out of his purse. In the English chap-book the old man finds them by playing on a musical instrument. Interesting though the above is, yet it throws no light on the history of the Purgatory, and seems to be based on the story of the Knight Owen, with an obvious echo from a classical tale.⁹

During the closing years of the fifteenth century the place was visited as of yore by pilgrims; we have an undoubted instance in 1485, while it is quite possible that the visit of Blasius Biragus may be referred to this period. But it was destined that the legendary fame of the awful cave should receive what was tantamount to its death-blow, not indeed at the hand of the persecutor or reformer, but, by a strange piece of irony, through one who came in all innocence of heart as a devout pilgrim.

A certain monk of the monastery of Eymstadt, remarkable for his mortification and piety, sought permission from his superiors either to enter a strict Order or else to wander over the world as a poor mendicant. The latter request was granted to him, so he passed through several Christian countries, until at length he went to Ireland, in order that he might see and enter St. Patrick's Purgatory. On arriving at the monastery he addressed himself to the prior (praesidens), begging him to grant him his desire. The latter sent him to the Diocesan, saying that it was unlawful for any one to enter without his consent; but when he arrived there, because he was poor and without money, the servants would scarcely admit him. At length he obtained admission, and falling on his knees before the bishop, sought licence to enter the cave. The latter demanded a certain sum of money, which he said had to be paid by right to him by those who desired entrance. The monk announced that he was poor and had no money and that even if he had it he would not give it through fear of committing simony. By much importunity he overcame the bishop, who gave him certain letters, and sent him to the chieftain (princeps) of the district, in order that he might obtain licence from him also. He in his turn sought for money; but being unable to extract from him what he had not got, at length grudgingly gave him permission. The monk then returned

to the prior, and gave him the letters from the bishop and the chieftain; on receiving which the prior said to him:—"It is necessary, brother, that you should pay the accustomed fee to our monastery also": naming a certain sum. To this the monk replied that he had no money, and feared simony; but that he sought in God's name to be put into the place for the good of his soul. The prior thereupon ordered the sacristan to admit him. When the monk had confessed and received the Communion, according as he had read in the manuscripts that others had done before entering, the sacristan lowered him by a rope into a deep pit. When he had reached bottom he let down to him a little bread and a flask of water to strengthen him before he encountered the demons.

The monk sat trembling in the pit the whole night, offering fervent prayers to God, and fearing that every moment the demons would arrive. He remained thus till morning, and at sunrise the sacristan came to the opening of the pit, called to him, and let down the rope. The monk was greatly astonished that he had seen or heard nothing, nor had suffered anything unpleasant, and began to turn over in his mind all he had read or heard concerning this Purgatory. Desirous of abolishing the deception the monk left Ireland and went to Rome, where, being unable to have an audience with the Pope, he related all that had happened to the Penitentiary, a very honest ecclesiastic, and begged him to bring it to the ears of the Supreme Pontiff. This he declared he would willingly do, having received the monk's oath that all had happened as he had said. The Penitentiary accordingly went to the Pope and told him; the latter took it hardly that innocent men should be so deceived, and directed him to send letters under the Apostolic Seal to the bishop, the prior, and the chieftain, ordering them to overturn from the foundations the place in which was formerly the entrance to the Purgatory, and to signify the same to him by letters bearing their seals. The monk was sent to Ireland with the letters, on receipt of which the bishop and the other two destroyed the place, and notified the Pope of the same.¹⁰

The act of demolition occurred in 1497, and we are fortunate in having a corroboration of the above in the *Annals of Ulster*. Under that year these state that "the cave of Patrick's Purgatory in Lough Derg was destroyed about the festival of St. Patrick this year by the guardian of Donegal, and by the representative of the bishop in the deanery of Lough Erne, by authority of the Pope, the people in general having understood from the history of the Knight [Owen] and other old books that this was not the Purgatory which St. Patrick obtained from God, though the people in general were visiting it."

The same story is related in the sermons of Pope Benedict XIII

(1724-30). His language shews that he held that his predecessor was fully justified in ordering the destruction of the purgatorial cave. He says that the monk "proved by experience that the story was all fiction on the part of the custodians of the place, who had spread these reports for the simple purpose of collecting alms from a too credulous people," and adds that the Pope had it closed up with stones and earth "in order that the mistaken faith of those resorting thither should cease; . . . for if God, through the merits of Patrick, and during that saint's lifetime, performed the miracle of rendering visible to the people what faith teaches us of the punishments and rewards reserved for us in the next life, the miracle ceased after the conversion of the people to the faith, since the motive for it had ceased, and there only remained the site of the ancient and celebrated Purgatory of Ireland as a testimony of the prodigy formerly performed."¹¹ This is strong language, though we must differ from it on one small point. It is at least open to question if modern thought would be prepared to admit absolutely that the accounts of the visions were *all fiction*, and would not rather prefer to furnish some such psychological explanation as we have already essayed to give.

Two reasons are alleged for the act of demolition: first, because the place had become an occasion of shameful avarice; secondly, because it was not "the Purgatory which Patrick obtained from God." Let us examine the first of these.

In the stories at our disposal there is no indication that the earlier pilgrims were compelled to pay a fee before entering, though it is reasonable to suppose that each of them gave, according to his ability, to the monastery. But the monk informs us that the bishop, the local chieftain, and the prior each tried to get money from him, but failed, partly, though not entirely, owing to the proverbial difficulty of extracting blood from a stone. Whatever right the last had to demand money from pilgrims, surely the other two had none. We have already seen that sixteen years before the monk's visit the monastery was utterly derelict, and its revenues unduly alienated by certain powerful clerics. Some years previous to this the abbot of Armagh, pleading that Lough Derg was a daughter-house of his establishment, attempted to lay unmaternal hands on its revenues. From the above the conclusion seems irresistible that during the second half of the fifteenth century the religious aspect of the place had been largely lost sight of, and that the pilgrimage to the cave was being made use of by certain clerics to line their own pockets, while its revenues had become the object of unseemly quarrels. Naturally enough the bishop and chieftain, in whose respective jurisdiction the Purgatory lay, were not slow to follow this example, with the result that the advent of pilgrims had been made "an occasion of shameful avarice."

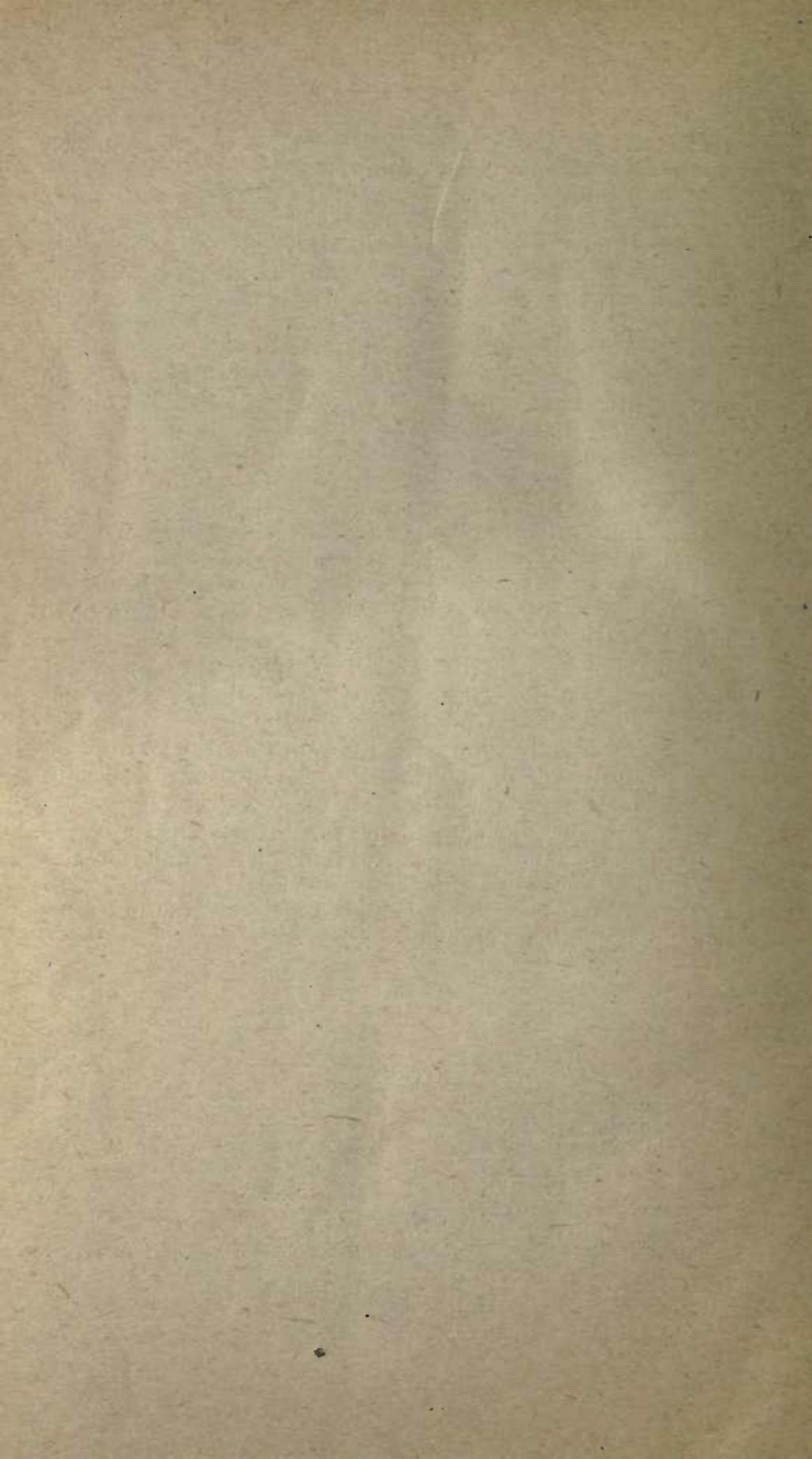
There remains the second reason for the suppression, namely that the place was not the Purgatory shewn to Patrick by God. On this difficult question the relation of the monk seems to throw some light. He states that the sacristan lowered him by a rope into a deep pit, and drew him up from thence by the same means the following morning. Such was not the experience of previous pilgrims, who are unanimous in describing the cave as a species of vault partly underground, into which a person would enter unaided, and descent into which was made by stone steps, as into an ordinary cellar. But we also learn from what Lannoy and others have said that at the extreme end of the cave lay a large stone which covered the true Purgatory, or in other words, that it concealed the entrance to a subterranean passage or chamber. Can it be that in 1494 this stone was removed, and the monk lowered into whatever receptacle was beneath it? His consequent description of the cave, which would differ from those given by his predecessors, might by a very strange piece of irony be taken for the reason for the closing of the place, because it contradicted previous accounts, and thus appeared not to be the Purgatory which God was said to have shewn to St. Patrick.

The monk of Eymstadt has been unduly censured, in our opinion; his true position with respect to the closing of the Purgatory appears to be that of the "last straw," to use a proverbial expression. It is hardly conceivable that on the mere word of an utterly unknown cleric the Pope would have gone to the length of suppressing a place which had been resorted to for centuries.

It is evident that opinions prejudicial to the Purgatory were being formed on the Continent, and it is probable that the Holy See was only waiting for evidence sufficient to warrant the closing of the cave; that of the monk was judged such, and the order for destruction was given accordingly.

NOTES.

1. O'Connor, p. 48ff.
2. O'Connor, pp. 47, 129, 160.
3. Costello-Coleman, *De Annatis Hiberniæ* (Dundalk, 1909), Vol. I (Ulster), p. 19; *Annals of the Four Masters*.
4. O'Connor, p. 107; *De Annatis Hiberniæ*, I, p. 38.
5. *Annals of the Four Masters*.
6. *De Annatis Hiberniæ*, I, p. 283.
7. Quoted in *Ulster Journal of Archæology*, Vol. IV. (first series), p. 237.
8. Quoted in Krapp, p. 43.
9. G. Schwab, *Fortunat und seine Söhne* (Halle).
10. Acta. SS. Boll. t. II (Martii), p. 588.
11. Quoted in O'Connor, p. 110.



CHAPTER IX.

THE SECOND PERIOD (1497–present day).

SOME PROBLEMS DISCUSSED.

HOUGH looked at from a certain point of view the destruction of 1497 was a break in the history of the cave, yet in other respects it can scarcely be termed such, for the life of the Purgatory went on, though with certain modifications and changes, and pilgrimages still continued to be made to it as heretofore. The earliest chronological allusion to it in the second period is that in 1504 Turlough Maguire, prior of Lough Derg, fell down a stone staircase at Athboy, and died as a result of the accident.¹ It is evident that in ordering the destruction of the purgatorial cave the Pope had no intention of suppressing the monastic establishment at Lough Derg.

It is said that George Cromer, who became Archbishop of Armagh in 1521, petitioned Rome to the effect that the Purgatory should be reopened, and that in accordance with this the Pope revoked the bull of his predecessor and issued another, in which he granted indulgences to the pilgrims, and certain privileges to the community.²

This gave a fresh fillip to the life of the Purgatory, and increased the number of devotees, though it is curious to note that before this permission could have been granted the cave must have been rebuilt, and pilgrims were commencing to come from overseas, either in ignorance or evasion of Pope Alexander's decree. In 1516 the Four Masters record that a French knight came there on his pilgrimage.

But the most interesting visit recorded in this period is that of the papal nuncio Chiericati, about the year 1515. He and his retinue arrived at the lake-side, and by sounding a horn and waving a handkerchief succeeded in attracting the attention of the canons' servant, who ferried them over one by one in a rude boat

made out of a hollow beech-trunk—in fact, exactly the same class of barque as is described by Mannini. For this portage they paid one penny each. After alluding to the penal beds, and the penitential ceremonies the nuncio states that behind the little oratory towards the east lay the celebrated cave, or rather its rebuilt successor. He describes it as follows:—"Behind the church to the east is the Purgatory. The door, which is made of iron, is about three cubits from the ground. The Purgatory is a grotto made in the rock, on the level of the ground; it enters so far that twelve persons can stand at their ease in it. It is two-and-a-half cubits wide. It is true that at the back the grotto turns aside for two cubits, where, they say, St. Patrick used to sleep. . . . At the turning of the grotto there is a round stool, which looks like a millstone; when it is struck it seems to resound like an echo. They say there is a well there, and that this is the origin of the stories which are told of the well of St. Patrick."

Chiericati frankly admitted that he was afraid to enter, lest he should see terrible sights, so he contented himself with remaining a few paces from the door, and in watching the pilgrims being conducted in by canons carrying torches. Two of his retinue, together with five other pilgrims, entered the cave on this occasion, and from his remarks it is evident that the vision-period was not definitely closed, but that, despite the act of Pope Alexander VI, the terrors of the place still possessed the popular mind. "Of those who entered the cave when I was present two saw such fearful things that one went out of his mind, and when he was questioned declared he had been beaten violently, but by whom he did not know. Another had seen beautiful women, who invited him to eat with them, and offered him food and fruit of all kinds; and these were almost vanquished. The others saw nothing, but experienced great cold, hunger, and weakness, and came out half dead next day. We revived them as best we could." The names of all the pilgrims were recorded in a book especially kept for that purpose in the church—would that this unique and priceless manuscript were still extant! The nuncio examined it, and says:—"The first name I read was that of Guarino da Durazzo, which I thought must be fabulous, but now I have found his journey described in an ancient parchment manuscript."³

A much more prosaic account of the Purgatory is given by a visitor in 1545. Jean de Monluc, Bishop of Sens, was French ambassador at the court of Scotland, and as he had negotiations to conduct in Ireland, sailed with his suite from Dumbarton in January of that year, and arrived in Lough Foyle on Shrove Tuesday. During his stay in Ireland he was conducted to St. Patrick's Purgatory, doubtless as being one of the sights of the country. He describes it as resembling "an old coal-pit which had taken fire,

by reason of the smoke that came out of the hole." It would appear that these fumes did not arise from "ever-burning sulphur unconsumed," as one might imagine, but were rather exhalations from the fetid atmosphere within.⁴ A very different sort of pilgrimage is recorded about the same time. A certain Aeneas M'Mechall, a layman of Armagh diocese, had murdered his son. By way of reparation he was directed to make pilgrimages to all the principal penitential stations in Ireland, amongst which is enumerated St. Patrick's Purgatory at Lough Derg.⁵

Apart from the above there are many statements which make it abundantly evident that pilgrims again flocked to the *replica* (for such we conceive it to be) of the mysterious cave, as in the first period. It is only necessary to deal with the earliest of these, for before the close of the sixteenth century the place appears to have been as much frequented as ever, and visions occasionally seen, though commonsense was commencing to tone down the crude and vivid colours of heretofore. Campion states in his *History of Ireland* that "devout persons have resorted thither for penance, and reported at their return strange visions of pain and bliss appearing unto them. They used to continue therein four and twenty hours, which doing one while with ghostly meditations, and another while with a dreadful conscience of their deserts, they saw, as they say, a plain resembling of their own faults and virtues, with the honour and comfort thereto belonging, that one so terrible, the other so joyous, that they vainly deem themselves for the time to have sight of heaven and hell." This seems that a euphemistic tendency was beginning to work.⁶

Campion also gives the first-hand experience of a pilgrim. "I met with a priest, who told me that he had gone the same pilgrimage, and affirmed the order of premises; but that he, for his own part, saw no sight in the world, save only fearful dreams when he chanced to nod, and these, he said, were exceeding horrible." Stanihurst, writing some few years later, says that those who entered the place experienced no terrors unless a deep sleep fell upon them: all of which bears out what has already been advanced respecting the true nature of the visions, and which shews that this cause was becoming generally recognised in the sixteenth century.⁷

Before passing on to deal with other matters it will not be out of place to give a chance mention, in a private document, of the Purgatory, which seems to indicate that in Protestant England the place was still proverbially alluded to. It is contained in a letter written in 1598 by Henry Cuffe to Sir Charles Davis. Lady Leicester is desirous of having her niece married, and Davis is the person looked upon with most favour, so Cuffe writes jocularly: "Send me your resolution whether you can be contented to have

your Purgatory in this life, or had rather defer it to another world. In a word, *avisez-vous*, and before you take your journey to yonder wicked country (whether I understand you are bent, and can imagine none other cause but some sudden devotion to St. Patrick's Purgatory) I pray you let me receive some light from you touching this other purgatory."⁸

Another incidental allusion, though not so polite a one, is to be found a few years earlier. In 1573 Nicholas Harpsfield published an argument against Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, which he termed "Foxe's Lies." Upon this the enraged martyrologist assailed him with uncomplimentary epithets, calling him, amongst other things, "a wild Irishman crept out of Patrick's Purgatory."⁹ Heywood, in his play *The Foure PP* (printed before 1547) mentions the Purgatory in the list of places visited by his Palmer.

The ceremonies that had to be observed by the pilgrim during the earlier part of the second period prior to his entering the purgatorial cave have been described by many contemporary writers, but the best description is that given by Bishop David Rothe, from whose treatise (incorporated in Messingham's *Florilegium*)¹⁰ we have taken some passages.

The austerities lasted for nine days, during which the pilgrims only received one meal of dry bread and lake-water in the twenty-four hours. Each day the stations had to be gone around three times, at morning, mid-day, and evening, and during the night they lay on hay or straw without any bedclothes. "The stations themselves are gone around in this order. Being admitted by the spiritual father, who is over the Purgatory, to make the peregrination, the devotees take off their shoes and stockings, and barefoot enter the church which is dedicated to St. Patrick. Having prayed there, they go around the sacred enclosure seven times within the church itself, and as many times without in the cemetery. When this is finished they go to the penal houses, or penitential cells of the saints, which are [in the shape of] a circle. They go around the outside of each of these seven times barefoot, and around the inside on bended knees. In a similar manner they approach the cross in the cemetery, and then to another which is fixed to a heap of stones. So many rounds having been completed on rough and stony paths they come to the lake, and place their feet, which are sometimes lacerated and always tired, on a stone under the water; and [being there] for at least a quarter of an hour they feel themselves so refreshed by the stone under their feet (on which St. Patrick is said to have prayed, and to have left his footprints) that they are ready to commence a second round, which is not permitted unless a certain space of time intervenes."

"These austerities are repeated for seven days, and on the eighth day they double the rounds in order to make satisfaction

for that day and the following one, on which they must enter the pit, for it is not permitted on that latter day to make rounds, nor to go out of the cave, which they enter with the following ceremonies. A band of nine, whose turn it is to enter the cavern, come before the spiritual father. In a discourse he warns them to have repentance and courage, in order that after confession and Communion they may arm and prepare themselves against principalities and powers of darkness, against spiritual wickedness in high places. He tells them of the danger, if they are in sin, and of the reward, if they go with cleansed consciences, and describes pictures of horror sufficient to move the dullest, to soften the most hardened, or to terrify the boldest. When they are absolved, and given the Holy Communion, with the cross preceding they are led to the penitential ceremonies. . . . While in the cave they must fast, and are allowed nothing but a little water."

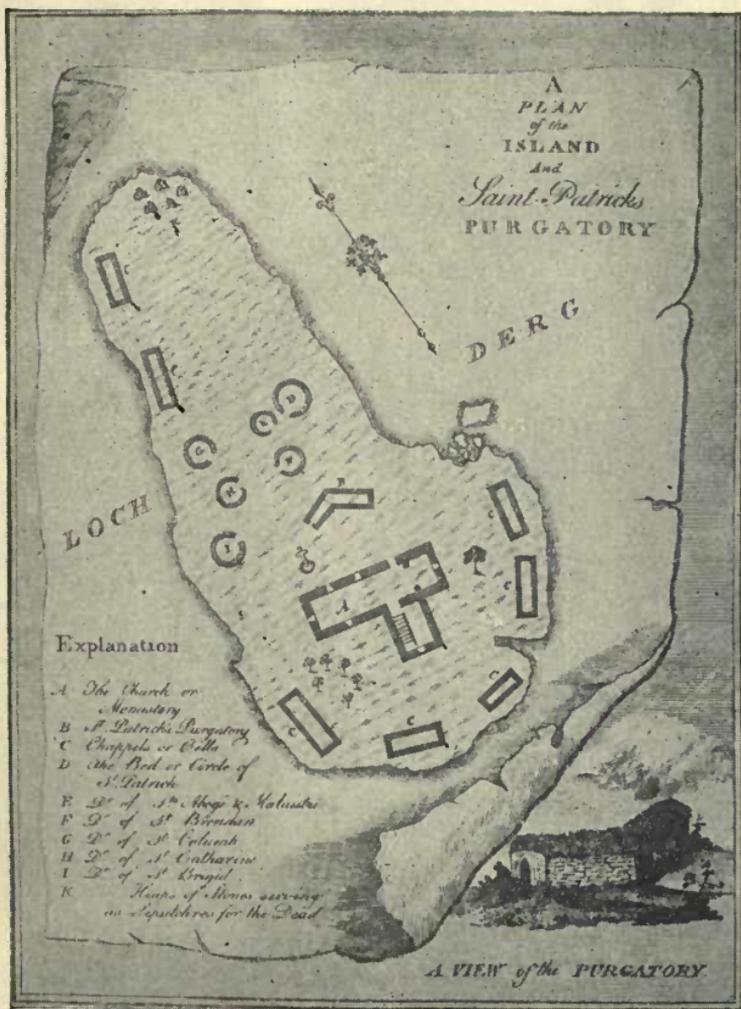
There appears to be no record in the *Fiants* of the dissolution of this monastery at a time when all such establishments in Ireland were being so treated, yet it is certain that some misfortune befel it, for in 1603 it is shewn to have been derelict and forsaken for a considerable period. Under that year the Ulster Inquisitions speak of "a house of canons called the priory of Loughdarge, which is very much in decay, and which for many years past has been totally derelict and dissolved. At the time of dissolution the prior was seized of . . . a very ruinous old church and stone walls recently levelled . . . and of the whole island, containing ten acres." This refers to the buildings on Saint's Island, though it may be assumed that the Purgatory and church on Station Island were equally in decay. In 1610 the site of the late priory with certain lands were granted to James Magrath.¹¹

The remainder of the seventeenth century may be briefly dealt with. In 1625 Archbishop Fleming, of Dublin, wrote that the throng of pilgrims was so great that many of them had to leave without ever landing on the island. About this time, and for the above reason, the prior contemplated the erection of additional penitential cells or "purgatories" for their accommodation. This plan was subsequently adopted. In 1631 the Archbishop of Armagh wrote suggesting that the Purgatory should be assigned as a residence to the Franciscans of the Province. In May and September, 1632, the Lords Justices ordered the suspension of the pilgrimage and the demolition of the buildings. James Spottiswood, the Protestant Bishop of Clogher, had charge of the proceedings, and describes the purgatorial cave as "a poor beggarly hole, made with some stones laid together with mens' hands without any art, and after covered with earth." Queen Henrietta Maria wrote in favour of the place to Lord Deputy Wentworth in 1638. The Purgatory must have been again rebuilt, for it suffered a further demolition in 1680,

as appears from the following entry in a Commonplace Book in Trinity College, Dublin: "Lately the friars began to build therein, and penitents resorted thither in a great number till about three years ago. The Duke of Ormonde and the Privy Council ordered certain gentlemen to see it demolished again, which was done accordingly." Hewson, in his *Description* (p. 130) alludes to this. The last attack on the part of the Government was by means of an Act of Parliament of 1704, which forbade pilgrimages, especially those to the Purgatory.¹²

From this on the Purgatory was left undisturbed, and in consequence flourished exceedingly, the abuses and follies which admittedly existed being put an end to. At the present day during the period of the Station thousands of pilgrims flock annually to Lough Derg. Be his religious opinion what they may there is no Irishman but should feel a deep interest in a place for which so many centuries has had such a remarkable series of incidents attached to it, and has played such a prominent part in the ecclesiastical and literary history of Europe.

It only remains now to discuss at some length certain problems which have presented themselves in our study of this most interesting and puzzling place. First of all, what was the appearance of the Purgatory prior to its destruction in 1497, and what was the nature of its construction? Certain pilgrims have given us descriptions of it—viz., Mannini, Rathold, L. de Sur, Crissaphan (in the prior's certificate), Biragus, R. de Perelhos, Sir W. de Lisle, Lannoy—and the monk of Eymstadt. All these agree in general, and corroborate each other, except the last-named. The measurements as given by some of them differ slightly from each other; probably these were pure guesswork, being merely an apparent calculation made by the eye, and as such would naturally be out of agreement. At all events, by piecing together the various accounts, we can form a general picture of the original cave. It had stone walls and a stone roof, and stood a little above the level of the surrounding ground. It was entered by a door, and descent was made to the underground floor as into a cellar, by a flight of six stone steps, down which a pilgrim could go without any artificial support or assistance, such as a rope. The interior consisted of *two* small rooms, an outer and an inner. The former measured approximately nine feet in length, three in breadth, and four in height. The latter room, which was the smaller of the two, being anything from three to five feet long, and the same width and height as the former, did not have its axis in a straight line with that of the outer room, but inclined somewhat to the left hand side; as we have shewn in the previous chapter it would seem that under the floor of this inner room there actually was some



ST. PATRICK'S PURGATORY IN 1790.
From Ledwich's *Antiquities of Ireland*.

subterranean receptacle. The entire structure seems to have been artificial, but whether it was of mediæval construction or dated from prehistoric times is not clear.¹³

We may assume that the demolition of 1497 must have been only a partial one. At least the foundations, and probably a goodly portion of the side-walls, would have remained, the interior being filled up with débris, and the roof broken in. Consequently it was an easy task for the community to restore the building at the commencement of the second period practically on the same plan as the original cave, though the floor would not have been so much underground owing to the rubbish that had been cast in, and so the roof may have been raised correspondingly. It may further be assumed that the interior of the reconstructed Purgatory consisted of only *one* chamber, though it is clearly shewn by the maps of Carve (1650) of Ware (1654, but probably representing it before the demolition of 1632), of Richardson (1727), and of Ledwich (1790), that the *outline* of the pre-reformation Purgatory was followed, despite frequent reconstructions, down to the nineteenth century, for on all these the end portion bears considerably to the left in imitation of the small inner apartment or niche. The small window, which is frequently alluded to at this period, was situated at the "elbow" of the building, and through it at one time food and water were handed in to the pilgrims, while those of them who were bound to read their office were stationed by it in order that they might have sufficient light.

Jones, writing in 1647, describes the building as it existed in his day: "The entrance was without any or very little descending; the walls thereof being built of ordinary stone, the tops covered with broad stone, and overlaid with earth, being overgrown with grass. It was two foot and one inch wide in most places, and three feet high, so that they are enforced to stoop that go into it, the length was sixteen feet and one half, whereof right forward twelve feet, and the reverse; or turning towards the church four feet and one half. At the corner of said turning there was a little crevice." Ledwich, writing in 1790, gives the same length and breadth, and adds:—"It is so low that a tall man cannot stand erect in it. It holds nine persons, a tenth could not remain in it without inconvenience. The floor is the natural rock, and the whole is covered with large stones and sods." Skelton describes it as consisting of two parallel rows of pretty large stones, and pervious here and there to the light. The penitents had to sit with their chins almost touching their knees.¹⁴

When Dillon, Earl of Roscommon, visited the Purgatory in the reign of James I the number of pilgrims was so great that the construction of other purgatorial caves was contemplated by the

prior. In 1647 there were *two*, one for men, the other for women. In 1701 Hewson saw *three* caves, one constructed to hold thirty persons, one to hold sixteen, and one to hold fourteen—this last was probably the original one, and the others seem to have speedily fallen into disfavour owing to their novelty. The cave was finally superseded by a church, it is said about the year 1780, though it did not immediately fall into disuse, while slight traces of it remained until recently.¹⁵

We now come to the problem of the celebrated "penal beds," or stone circles of Station Island, the making rounds at which forms such an important part of the devotional exercises at Lough Derg at the present day. Wakeman, the well-known antiquary, is quoted as stating that they are the remains of beehive oratories of the ninth century. Giraldus Cambrensis is the first writer known to mention them; in his day there were nine pits, in one or other of which he says rash men sometimes spent a night, and encountered terrible visions of demons. All through the first period there is no allusion to them, from which it may be concluded the custom of making rounds at them as part of the penitential ceremonies enjoined prior to entering the cave did not come into existence until the second period. The papal nuncio Chiericati, in 1515, is the first to allude to this custom, and it is clear from the accounts of Henry of Saltrey, Mannini, and others that the preliminary penitential austerities consisted of a fifteen days fast and vigil in the church.

The number and nomenclature of the penal beds varies in a most extraordinary manner. Cambrensis mentions nine, but does not say to what saints, if any, they were dedicated. Chiericati gives three, and names their dedications as Columba, Brigit, and Patrick. Archbishop Lombard gives seven, but names no saints. In the 40th appendix to the *Martyrology of Donegal*, which was completed in 1630, in what are supposed to be miscellaneous notes compiled by O'Clery and Colgan, a certain Ferghal is alluded to as saying that there were "five beds of hard penance," dedicated to Patrick, Columba, Brigit, Adamnan, and Dabheoc; in the next line a mysterious authority, "the *bc. ml.*"—probably, as Canon O'Connor suggests, Brother Michael O'Clery, the celebrated annalist—is cited as stating that there were only two there, Patrick's and Columba's. Ware (1654) gives six or seven—viz., those of Dabheoc and Molaise (sometimes reckoned as two, sometimes as one), Columba, Catherine, Brendan, Brigit, and Patrick; with him agree Hewson (1701), Richardson (1727), and Ledwich (1790). On the other hand the Commonplace Book of 1683 agrees in names and number with Chiericati. At the present day there are four single "beds," dedicated to Brigit, Brendan, Catherine, and Columba, and one double one to Dabheoc; that dedicated to Patrick has

disappeared. Their walls are irregular, and vary in height from a couple of feet to about six inches. The great variation in name and number would seem to imply that at different times, and for various reasons, certain of the "beds" were temporarily left without a tutelary saint, and so were not used for devotional purposes.

Some of the changes that have taken place in the various ceremonies and customs may next be noticed. In the first period permission to enter the cave was only obtained with the greatest difficulty from the bishop and prior; and when leave had been granted the penitent had to spend fifteen days in fasting and prayer in the church, apparently that on Saints' Island—though the duration of these exercises was frequently abbreviated. In the earlier portion of the second period the preliminary ceremonies consisted in the main of rounds made at the penal beds for eight days, the Purgatory being entered on the ninth. At the present time the "Station" occupies three days.

But it is with respect to the sojourn in the cave that the most radical change has taken place. In the first period the inclusion in the dread cavern was the culmination of the pilgrimage; during fifteen days the trembling pilgrim bent all his thoughts towards this terrible ordeal, and prepared himself for it by rigorous fasting, while his actual entry thereto was accompanied by solemn ceremonies which were calculated to make the most profound impression on his mind. In the second period the sojourn in the cave was still maintained, but, whereas this had been in the first period the principal portion of the penance its importance was somewhat detracted from by the fact that at this time considerable stress was laid on the preliminary exercises of the penal beds. At the present day it is the lengthy and varied list of devotional austerities that really forms the main part of the pilgrimage, while the stay in the purgatorial cave is represented in an atrophied form by a vigil in St. Patrick's church, or "prison chapel," at the commencement of the three days' station. Thus briefly the process of change can be traced down the centuries.

The class of persons that frequented the pilgrimage has also undergone a change. In the first period it principally comprised either poor and devout pilgrims, travelling humbly and wearily to the distant shrine, or wealthy foreigners, many of whom were of noble birth, and who came attended by retinues from Spain, France, Italy, and even far-off Hungary. It is a very strange fact, one of the many strange facts in connection with the Purgatory, that during this period the Irish or Anglo-Irish do not seem to have frequented it to any extent, while no native of our island has, as far as we know, left any vision on record. From the commencement of the second period onwards the people of Ireland and their kinsmen from overseas have formed the vast

majority of the pilgrims who have thronged thither. The annual numbers, too, have naturally increased. During the first period when travelling was tedious and dangerous very few pilgrims can have attended each year, and it is probable that as a general rule only one or two were allowed at a time into the cave. At a later date when travelling became safer, and better methods of communication prevailed, the numbers increased considerably, so much so that at one period *ihree* caves were in existence, each of which was crammed as full as it could hold. Up to this pilgrims visited the Purgatory at every season of the year; at the present day the pilgrimage season only lasts from June 1st to August 15th; about 3,000 pilgrims visit it annually. The cloud of vision-stories has rolled away, and Lough Derg is now a place of penance for those who practice the Roman Catholic religion. As Father Delehaye says "Plus de visions de l'autre monde, plus de révélations, mais la prière et les austérités, sous le patronage de l'apôtre national, voilà tout ce qui reste des pratiques de l'ancien pèlerinage."

NOTES.

1. Annals of the Four Masters.
2. O'Connor, p. 117. Cromer was an ardent supporter of the papal supremacy as against Henry VIII.
3. Cartwright, *Life of Isabella d'Este*, Vol. II, p. 177—see *Hermathena* xl. Hardy, in his *Descriptive Catalogue of MS. Materials for the History of Great Britain*, Vol. I, notes (No. 256) a Vienna manuscript entitled *Registrum de Purgatorio S. Patricii*. It is hardly to be hoped that this is the interesting codex alluded to above.
4. *Ulster Journal of Archæology*, Vol. V (1st series), p. 62.
5. O'Donoghue, *Brendaniana*; *St. Brendan the Voyager* (Dublin, 1895), p. 82; *Journal of the Roy. Soc. of Antiq. of Ireland* (1883), p. 36.
6. *Ulster Journal* (as before), p. 64.
7. *Dè Vita S. Patricii* (Antwerp, 1587), Vol. II, p. 65.
8. Hist. MSS. Comm. (Salisbury MSS, pt. VIII), p. 284.
9. J. H. Wylie, *Reign of Henry V* (Cambridge, Univ. Press, 1914).
10. Migne, *Patv. Lat.*, t. CLXXX.
11. *Inqu. Ult.* quoted in *De Annatis Hiberniæ*, Vol. I, p. 52; Patent Rolls of James I, p. 187.
12. Report on Franciscan MSS. at Merchants' Quay, Dublin (Hist. MSS., Comm.), p. 37; Bp. Henry Jones, *op. cit.* pp. 127, 129, 132; *Ulster Journal of Archæology*, Vol. IV (1st series), p. 74; O'Connor, p. 152; MS. T.C.D., I. 1. 12, f. 215; Wright, *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, p. 163.
13. Hewson, in his *Description of St. Patrick's Purgatory* (1701), terms the three caves "coves," this word being used in Ulster to denote a souterrain (see Andrews, *Ulster Folklore*), apparently from the general resemblance they bore to such a structure. But it is doubtful if there is anything more than resemblance between the two.
14. Jones, p. 5; Ledwich, *Antiquities of Ireland* (1790), p. 447; Skelton's Works (ed. Lynam), Vol. V, pp. 15-20.
15. Jones, pp. 5, 133; *Ulster Journal*, Vol. V, p. 78; O'Connor, p. 177; Hewson, p. 133.

CHAPTER X.
LITERARY DEVELOPMENTS AND
ALLUSIONS.

N this, the concluding chapter, we propose to give a brief account of the development of the legend of St. Patrick's Purgatory in European literature, and as well to note some allusions to it by various writers. Though our treatment of this branch of the subject might be amplified, yet it will fulfil its object if it succeeds in drawing attention to an almost forgotten fact, viz., the importance of the purgatorial cave and the views that were entertained almost to the present day on the Continent with respect to it.

IRELAND.

It has already been shewn that the Irish people did not regard the wonder in their midst in the same way in mediæval times as the inhabitants of other countries did, and that no Irishman has left on record any account of visions seen by him in the Purgatory, with the doubtful exception of the Knight Owen. The same odium rests on Irish writers, as they have, with the few instances noted below, entirely ignored the awful cave, and the many strange legends connected with it.

The earliest known mention of it in literature comes from the pen of David Scottus, or David of Würzburg, as he is variously termed, in a book which is entitled *De Purgatorio Patritii*. Of this nothing appears to be known except what may be gathered from the title, and it is not critical to deduce too much from that. It is not certain if the author were an Irishman or a Welshman. He was a teacher at Würzburg *circa* 1110, and accompanied the Emperor Henry V into Italy as chaplain and historiographer. In 1120 he became abbot of Bangor, and probably died in 1139. He was author of several works.¹

James Yonge, who wrote in Latin the account of Laurence

Rathold's visit to the Purgatory, is not unknown to fame as a litterateur. He belonged to an Irish family settled in the parish of St. John's, Dublin, and about the year 1423 translated into English the *Secreta Secretorum*, "which is perhaps the only lengthy work known to have been written in the English of the Pale early in the fifteenth century." As we have already shewn he seems to have drawn to some extent on the visions of Crissaphan, but has freely handled the materials at his disposal, with the result that he has succeeded in producing a work which, from a literary point of view, is superior to most of the other accounts of pilgrims' visions.²

The celebrated David Rothe, who was Roman Catholic Bishop of Ossory from 1620 to 1650, wrote a treatise on St. Patrick's Purgatory. This does not appear to be in existence as a separate entity—possibly it was never printed—but has been incorporated, in whole or in part, by Messingham in his *Florilegium Insulae Sanctorum* (Paris, 1624). Rothe deals with the question of Purgatory in general, and then passes on to the argument as to the Patrician origin of the Purgatory at Lough Derg. He mentions the curious belief held by some of his contemporaries that the grotto then in use did not represent the true site of the original Purgatory, but that the latter was hid from the eyes of men and would only be revealed at the Day of Judgment; this opinion he combats, as well as that put forward by Jacques de Vitry that those who came out therefrom never laughed again. The most valuable portion of his pamphlet is that which describes the purgatorial cave as it appeared early in the seventeenth century, as well as the various penitential ceremonies then practised there. The extracts from his book given by Messingham, who distinguishes them by the letter A, occupy about nine columns in Migne's *Patrologia Latina*.³ Messingham also reproduces Henry of Saltrey's account of the Knight Owen.

Richard Stanihurst, in his *De Vita S. Patricii* (Antwerp, 1587), devotes some pages to the Purgatory, the most interesting point in which is his allusion to the deep sleep that fell upon those who were shut up in the cave. Some information with respect to the place is given by Campion in his *History of Ireland*, by Archbishop Lombard in his *Commentarius de Regno Hiberniae*, and by Thomas de Burgo in his scarce and valuable *Hibernia Dominicana*. Another de Burgo, Baptist, a member of the Clanrickard family, in his *Viaggi de Cinque Anni* (Milan, 1686), alludes to the Purgatory, and states that on one occasion it was visited by his maternal aunt, who derived so much benefit from the pilgrimage that in gratitude she left all her money to the Church instead of to her expectant relatives.⁴

But of all the Irish writers the one who did most to spread abroad the knowledge of the legends was the celebrated historian

Philip O'Sullivan Beare, who was a member of a well-known Co. Cork tribe. In 1602, while yet a boy, he was sent to Spain with his cousin, and was educated at Compostella ; when he arrived at manhood he engaged in the wars of the King of Spain, serving in the navy. In 1621 he published at Lisbon his *Historiæ Hiberniæ Catholiciæ Compendium*, better known as his *Catholic History*, in which he related at length the adventures of Raymond de Perelhos in St. Patrick's Purgatory. In another of his works, *Patritiana Decas*, published at Madrid in 1629, he devotes the whole of the ninth book to the question of purgatory. In the eighth chapter of the same he quotes the story of Tundal as a proof of the existence of that place, while in the ninth chapter he deals with St. Patrick's Purgatory, and relates in detail the adventures of three pilgrims therein, viz., the mysterious Nicholas, the Knight Owen (whom he names Egnus), and Raymond de Perelhos.

Early in the eighteenth century a little hand-book to the pilgrimage was in existence, entitled "The Pilgrimage to Lough Derg, by B.D.," which was certainly printed at Belfast as early as 1726. The author of this was a cleric named Dominick O'Brullaghan or Bradley, who transposed the initials of his name in order to escape detection. He was educated, like many another Irishman, at Louvain, that ancient seat of Roman Catholic learning which the cultured and scholarly Huns of the twentieth century have reduced to ashes ; he died in Co. Derry in 1746. According to Krapp the above was a translation of Brullaghan's *In nomine Jesu Opusculum de Purgatorio S. Patricii*, now a very rare little volume. The edition he made use of cannot have been the first, as it was published at Louvain in 1735.⁵ Canon O'Connor's ample volume on Lough Derg, to which many allusions have been made in the foregoing pages, is the best general guide to the pilgrimage, and contains many details which are especially interesting to the pilgrims ; the latest and fullest edition was published in 1910.

But if the pilgrimage to St. Patrick's Purgatory had its literary supporters in Ireland it also had its literary opponents, as was only to be expected in a country where religious differences have always been too bitter, and these were ever ready to attack it with their keen quills whenever an opportunity presented itself. One of the earliest of these attacks seems to have emanated from a Roman Catholic writer mentioned by Hewson as "a Latin author, whose Book, printed at Waterford, 1647, complains of the Irreligion, great Abuses, and Disorders of the Pilgrims going to St. Patrick's Purgatory." There may have been a good deal of justification for this, for it is quite conceivable that many abuses and disorders did exist during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, while they certainly were to be found at the commencement of the nineteenth century.⁶

From the Protestant side it naturally became the object of invective. James Spottiswood, who became Bishop of Clogher in 1621, wrote a treatise on the Purgatory, which is not now extant, and may never have come into print.

His successor, Henry Jones, who became Bishop in 1645, published in London two years later a book on the subject (in which he may possibly have incorporated his predecessor's treatise), and this, though bitter in tone, is, it must be admitted, most valuable for its recondite allusions, as well as for the original documents it incorporates. In 1701 the Rev. Mr. Hewson, rector of St. Andrew's, Dublin, published his *Description of St. Patrick's Purgatory in Lough Derg*; this is bound up with *The Great Folly, Superstition; and Idolatry of Pilgrimages in Ireland*, published by the Rev. John Richardson, rector of Belturbet, in 1727. These contain a helpful map, and much useful contemporary information. Allusions, generally of a disparaging nature, are made to the place in those Tours through Ireland which were published so frequently during the end of the eighteenth and the commencement of the nineteenth centuries. A modern folk-lore variant of the older tale may be found in Dr. Douglas Hyde's *Saints and Sinners*, p. 247ff.

ENGLAND.

In England the legend at once sprang into literary life. Not to speak of the use made of it by chroniclers, such as Roger of Wendover, Higden, and others, the story of the Knight Owen was versified about the end of the thirteenth century, and included in that great collection of saints' lives, with other matter suitable for various festivals, which is known as the *Early South English Legendary*, of which many manuscripts exist. Three versions, with the variant readings of a fourth, have been published by Dr. Carl Horstmann in *Altenglische Legenden* (Paderborn, 1875), and in the publications of the Early English Text Society (No. 87, London, 1887). Besides this two other metrical forms of the legend have been printed; the first of these is in octosyllabic couplets, and is contained in two manuscripts; the second, in stanzaic form, is only to be found in the Auchinlech MS. at Edinburgh.⁷

England has given one original contribution to the vision-literature in the account of William of Stranton's descent there-into. This has already been dealt with at full length, and so need merely be alluded to here.

Not to speak of one or two incidental allusions a very bitter reference is made to the Purgatory in a London-printed poem of 1647, entitled *Grand Pluto's Progress through Great Britain and*

Ireland. In the course of his travels Pluto visits Ireland, and thus addresses the natives :—

“ O my dear sons, you still maintain the story,
 You will not lose St. Patrick's Purgatory :
 You have again erected that same grot
 Which of late years did Clogher's Bishop blot.
 Which Florentinianus, Bishop of that See,
 Divulged to his fond posterity,
 Who did believe St. Patrick made relation
 Of that same cell by divine inspiration :
 And by my sly deceit I did persuade them
 He there on earth a Purgatory made them,
 Which easily upon their fancies wrought.”⁸

The above refers to a restoration made after the demolition of 1632. In an old seventeenth-century chap-book, printed in London, *The Delightful History of the Life and Death of the Renowned and Famous St. Patrick, Champion of Ireland*, a work full of marvels and adventures, a most meagre and disappointing allusion is made to the place. The Irish desire to see visible signs of the happiness and torments of the other-world, and the saint prays that their request may be granted. “ The Almighty was not Deaf to his Prayers, by whose inspiration he went towards the South parts of Ireland, there in a desolate place he found a cave, into which, if any did enter, there seemed to appear to them most horrible apparitions in divers and fearful shapes.” Then follows a citation from Cambrensis' account of the Purgatory, after which the book breaks free from Patrician tradition, and romances wildly. In another chap-book, probably of English origin, the *History of the Seven Champions of Christendom*, interesting if for no other reason than that it may be purchased at the present day in Dublin for the modest sum of threepence, there occurs a passage which presents the legend in a distorted form, and seems to give as well some account of the rebuilt purgatorial cave. “ The first who left this earthly stage was St. Patrick, who going up and down a pilgrim in Ireland, and betaking himself to prayers in woods and deserts, at length he caused a house of square stones in the form of a tomb to be built, out of which he never after went, though he lived seven years, but had all his victuals given him thro' a little hole, which was all the window he had.” The only version of the story in modern English literature is that in Southey's ballad.

The student should be warned against a pamphlet bearing the delusive title, *Patrick's Purgatory, or a Fragment shall be saved. Being the History of Patrick, restor'd and clear'd from the Scandalous Aspersions of a Spurious Biographer* (Dublin, 1753). This is merely a political pamphlet of the usual scurrilous type, and is written in answer to one entitled *A Fragment of the History of Patrick* (London, 1753). These were followed by a similar production, *The Second Chapter of Patrick's Purgatory*, and there appear to have been others in the same series.

FRANCE.

At an early period the legend was taken into French literature. In the opening years of the thirteenth century the celebrated poetess, Marie de France, translated the story of Owen into French under the title *Espurgatoire Seint Patriz*; this was merely a verse-translation and nothing more, the only original contribution on Marie's part being eight introductory and six concluding lines.⁹

The country furnished two original contributions to the literature of the Purgatory, viz., the descent of Godalh in 1248, which appears to be lost, and the descent of the Sire de Beaujou in the first half of the fourteenth century, which seems to have contained some original features, though unfortunately only a brief *resumé* is at present known. Probably to these should be added the vision of Louis de France, though it is only extant in the Italian language.

Rabelais twice alludes incidentally to the Purgatory. "In this descent there appeared no more light than if we were in the hole of St. Patrick in Ireland"; and elsewhere, "St. Patrick's hole employed their wise discourse." Amongst the French writers of the sixteenth century the place became the subject of "plaisanteries aussi faciles que grossières," to use Dottin's words. In the *Farce joyeuse, à deux personnages, du Gaudisseur qui se vante de ses faictz, et ung Sot qui luy respond au contraire*, the former character gives an imaginary account of his adventures in the Purgatory. Though the humour may not be very obvious, yet it is clear that his words form a distorted version of the well-known story. "I embarked upon the great red sea [Lough Derg] and went to the hole of St. Patrick. I entered the monastery, where I met a confessor, who said no word to me. Think how taken aback I was when I had descended into the pit. I went down step by step, without seeing sun or moon. I found myself in a plain, where I suffered many pains at the hands of Master Grimouart. Presently an honest man came to me, who spoke to me and asked me how I had entered this place. I answered him haughtily, and said 'Avaunt, miscreant!' In the long run I escaped, and came out of the monastery. Without further delay I went away as quick as my legs could carry me to St. James [of Compostella]." From this and other extracts given by Dottin it is clear that the "pit" or "hole" of St. Patrick was far from being an object of reverence in France at this period.¹⁰

An extraordinary and apparently unique form of the legend was given by a writer of the sixteenth century, Étienne Forcatel (Stephanus Forcatulus) in his *De Gallorum Imperio et Philosophia* (Paris, 1589; Lyons, 1595). According to this author the celebrated King Arthur, of Round Table fame, was busily engaged in

abolishing the heathen customs of his subjects, and as paganism was still rife in Ireland the king came over there, and travelled through the whole of the island. Finally he arrived at the north part of the country, and saw the cavern which led to the abode of the dead, and out of which the purified souls winged their way to heaven. The king entered the Purgatory, but his squire Gawain, filled with terror, dissuaded him from exploring the cave any further, for in its depths they heard the sound of a waterfall from which came an odour of sulphur, while the mournful cries of disembodied spirits were wafted to their ears. The enchanter Merlin was then consulted as to the origin of the cave. Having swallowed the heart of a freshly killed mole, and uttered some mysterious words, he became filled with a spirit of divination, by which he was enabled to tell them that the hole had originally been excavated by Ulysses in his wanderings, and had gradually become larger and larger. According to an unnamed later author quoted by Wright the name "Ulster" is a corruption of *Ulyssis terra!*¹¹

Two very interesting translations into French prose of the legend, which Krapp terms respectively the *Au tempz*-version, and the *Il fut*-version, are extant. What appears to be a unique copy of the first, printed *circa* 1480, is in the British Museum. The second was printed more than once, and was twice reprinted in the nineteenth century.¹² The translations made by "F. A. S. Chartreux," and F. Bouillon of the Spanish writer Montalvan's romance of Louis Enius will be more appropriately treated of under the section devoted to Spain.

An anonymous pamphlet, entitled *Le Trou de S. Patrice*, was published in the French language in Dublin in the year 1774, in which the writer discourses the question of St. Patrick's Purgatory, and heaps all manner of ridicule on it. Finally the student may be warned against the following work, *Le Purgatoire de S. Patrice*, by D. B. de Malpière (2 vols., Paris, 1836). It purports to give an account of the adventures of a Dutch sailor named Tromp, who came to Dublin about the year 1819. On John's Bridge in that city he met "the beggar of St. Patrick," who advised him to visit the Purgatory. He does so, and relates at length his wonderful experiences, which in reality only form a philosophical romance. This occupies portion of the first volume; the remainder of the book does not deal with the subject at all. The only point of interest connected with it is the literary use of the legend at such a late date.

SPAIN.

The literature of this country furnished an original contribution to the Purgatory-cycle in the account of Raymond de Perelhos' visit to the cave. A Catalan manuscript in the library of the Escorial, and a Latin one in the National Library of Madrid

appear to be only versions of Henry of Saltrey's narrative. In 1394 King John I of Arragon sent to the Countess de Foix, his daughter, a book on St. Patrick's Purgatory. This was certainly not that of Perelhos, since his account was written at least three years later, though it may well have suggested to him the compilation of his own narrative; whether it was merely a copy of Henry of Saltrey, or contained original matter, we cannot tell.¹³

But the legend of St. Patrick's Purgatory was given a most original turn in the seventeenth century by a Spanish writer, and with this new development we must now deal at some length.

Juan Perez de Montalvan, who has been termed "the first born of Lope de Vega's genius," was born in the year 1602. Early in 1627 he published at Madrid a small book entitled *Vida y Purgatorio de S. Patricio*. The first few chapters deal with the life and miracles of the Saint, give the origin of the Purgatory, and so on, but in chapter six the new development commences. From this on the events of the book centre round a character whom Montalvan names Luis Enius, and in the account of his hero's adventures the author has blended the old legend of the Knight Owen with matter which seems to be largely the fruits of his own fertile imagination, the result being a wild religious romance.

The following is a brief outline of its contents: Luis Enius was born in Ireland: his mother died at his birth, and his father subsequently left the country, and emigrated to Toulouse. There he died when his son was only fifteen, and he, left to his own devices, entered on a career of unparalleled debauchery and crime, which the authorities seem to have overlooked out of regard for his family.

One day when gambling with an alguazil, or sergeant, a dispute arose about payment, upon which Luis extinguished the light, flung himself upon the officer, and took all his money. The latter complained to the governor of the town, and Luis, understanding that the officers of justice were on his track, fled to a monastery, and there lay concealed for some time. In this monastery was a cousin of his, Theodosia by name, whom Luis persuaded to fly with him, having previously entered the monastery by night with her assistance, and robbed it of all its treasures.

The lovers fled to Valencia where Luis speedily squandered his ill-gotten gain in riotous living, and when all was spent compelled Theodosia to support him by a life of shame. At length the latter succeeded in escaping, and entered a monastery in the capacity of servant, where she remained until her death, which occurred six years later, despite the efforts which Luis made to induce her to return to him.

Luis still kept on his evil courses. One night he was waiting to murder a man, when he saw a piece of paper suspended in the

air. He endeavoured to take hold of it, but it evaded his grasp, and while engaged in a fruitless chase after it his intended victim passed by in safety. The same strange incident occurred the second night. On the third night he managed to seize the paper, and as he did so he saw before him a brilliantly illuminated cross, under which appeared the words "Here a man was killed, pray to God for his soul." On opening the paper he saw within it the representation of a corpse, and the words written in large characters "I am Luis Enius." At this warning Louis was struck with remorse for his many evil deeds, and desired to amend his life. He made his way to Rome, and in a church there heard a Dominican preaching. After the sermon was ended he sought out the preacher, and to him made full confession of his sins with many tears. The latter gave him absolution, and inflicted a comparatively light penance upon him, after which Luis lived for some time in Rome in joy and peace, thanking God for His mercies.

One day he was told by some persons about St. Patrick's Purgatory, and filled with a desire to enter it left for Ireland, and finally arrived at the Purgatory, into which he was put with the usual ceremonies. From this on Montalvan follows the typical legend, with some slight variations. After entering Luis falls asleep, but is awakened by a clap of thunder, and feels the path shaking under his feet, the clay subsequently sinking and causing him to fall. A rock blocks his passage, but is miraculously removed by a second clap of thunder. Amongst the torments is one which consists of a house full of baths of ice and snow, in which sinners are plunged to the neck. The place of the false pit of hell is taken by a broad river. Over another river is the now familiar bridge, which, however, is made of ice. In order to show him the risks he runs the demons drive an unfortunate soul up the bridge; it is blown off into the river, and there torn to pieces by monsters. In purgatory he recognises the Dominican who had died the day he had heard his confession, as well as a cousin of his who had indulged in the sin of vanity during her life. In paradise one of the two archbishops is St. Patrick. At the end of his journey another peal of thunder opens the road for him. Finally he enters the monastery for life. However much of this may be due to Montalvan's inventive powers, it seems at least probable that the episodes of the peals of thunder at the beginning and end of his journey, the treacherous path, the friar and the vain cousin in purgatory, are due to O'Sullivan Beare's book which was published at Lisbon six years previously.

Montalvan's book achieved an enormous success, and indeed may be said to have started an independent train of literature dealing with St. Patrick's Purgatory. It became very popular in Spain, and passed through a large number of editions which were

published at various towns ; it was even reprinted at Valladolid as late as 1787.¹⁴

A fresh impetus, did it need such, was given to Montalvan's work by the use made of it by the celebrated Spanish dramatist Calderon in his drama *El Purgatorio de San Patricio*, which was written before 1635, and which is considered to be one of the best religious plays of the Spanish theatre in the seventeenth century. From Krapp's analysis it would appear that Calderon has not only made very free use of the original, but has also considerably improved upon it. He brings St. Patrick and Luis together to Ireland as the sole survivors of a shipwreck, the love-episode is much more tragically worked up, while the incident centering round the floating piece of paper which Luis seizes is most dramatically dealt with.¹⁵

We must now follow briefly the development of Montalvan's book: It was translated into Dutch in 1668, if not earlier, while its popularity in that country is shewn by the fact that another edition was published in 1756, and, as Krapp points out, we may assume there were several editions and reprints in between those two dates.¹⁶

But it was by means of translations made by French writers that the religious novel which Montalvan had published was made known to a far wider circle of readers than would otherwise have happened had it remained in the original Spanish. His work was translated into French, and published at Brussels in 1637, by a Carthusian who concealed his identity under the initials F.A.S. This edition enjoyed some popularity as it was reprinted at least three times, and probably influenced the Dutch version already alluded to. But the translation which enjoyed the greatest and most wide-spread success was that of François Bouillon, a Franciscan Friar. The earliest edition appears to have been that which was printed at Avignon in 1642, but it rapidly became most popular, as it ran through numerous editions, and was reprinted in various towns in France. The latest reprint appears to be that made at Rouen in 1752. On Bouillon's translation Dottin says :—" It is sufficiently exact for a translation made in the seventeenth century : it omits nothing, but adds some details, and is throughout a paraphrase rather than a transcription of the original text." Lastly, the work of Bouillon was the source from which certain Breton writers drew the matter for mystery-plays in that language. A handsome and valuable edition of one of these has been published by Prof. Georges Dottin under the title *Louis Eunius, ou le Purgatoire de Saint Patrice : mystère breton en deux journées* (Paris, 1911). So it can be seen that by Montalvan's book, and the translations of the same, the strange twelfth-century legend of the Knight Owen's descent into the mysterious cave in the north of Ireland was given

new life, and introduced to readers who otherwise might never have heard of it.

A broadside of eight pages, illustrated with quaint wood-cuts, entitled *La Cueva de San Patricio* was published at Madrid in 1764; this closely follows Calderon. Another pamphlet, entitled *Relacion el Purgatorio de San Patricio* was published at Cordova circa 1850. This only contains a speech of Luis Enius, telling of his life, but the account of the purgatorial visions was probably contained in another chap-book in the same series. Finally Father Feyjoo in his *Theatro Critico* (Madrid, 1755) examined the legend, and declared it to be full of falsehoods.¹⁷

ITALY.

How far Dante, in his *Divina Commedia*, made use of the story of the descent of the Knight Owen, as well as of the vision of Tundal, and of the voyage of S. Brendan, is a question too vast and intricate to be dealt with here in any other than a very general manner. That he read them, and was influenced by them, is tolerably certain from the resemblances that appear; but these should not be pressed too closely, for it should be borne in mind that there were many different metals, some of them of little value, others good, but mixed with much dross, which the Master-chemist refined and transmuted; he must have availed himself of all the previous vision-literature, and in this the Irish ones may be included, though at the same time he drew copiously from every source within his reach, and so, though our vision must have formed part of the raw material out of which the *Divina Commedia* was constructed, the relative position they occupied should not be exaggerated out of proportion by writers jealous for the literary fame of Ireland.

Dante's poem, besides giving a stimulus to vision-literature, seems to have popularised the legend of Lough Derg among his fellow-countrymen, for the literary connection between St. Patrick's Purgatory and the State of Florence is very interesting. We have already given in a previous chapter the account which Antonio Mannini, a Florentine merchant, has left of his descent into the Purgatory in the year 1411. About half a century earlier Fazio degli Uberti, a native of Florence, inserted in his poem the *Dittamondo*, which was commenced in the middle of the fourteenth century, an account of what appears to be a purely imaginary visit paid by him and his guide Solinus to St. Patrick's Purgatory.¹⁸ It runs as follows:—

“ The good monks conducted us to the cave which makes the blessed Patrick so famous. ‘ What shall we do ? ’ said my beloved counsellor to me. ‘ Do you wish to pass within ? You are so anxious to fathom the meaning of everything new or strange.’

'No,' I replied, 'I will not enter without the advice of the monks ; for it is terrible to me to think of penetrating to the very depths of hell.' Thereupon one of the monks answered : ' If you do not feel yourself pure and clean, resolute and full of faith, you cannot be sure of returning should you enter.' And I said : ' If you can, satisfy me on this point ; rumours are afloat through the world concerning many who have come back from these torments.' To which he replied : ' With regard to Patrick and Nicholas there can be no doubt whatever that they went in and returned by this entrance. As for the others, I cannot venture to say that one in a hundred may not have the reputation of having made the descent. But I do not know one for certain.' Solinus broke in ' Put away this idea, and do not tempt your God. It would be a grievous thing if any were to perish here. It is enough for us to carry on our resolves above ground.' ' You are quite right,' said the monk. And then, departing, we bade farewell to the community whom we left behind."

Another Florentine writer, Andrea Patria, introduced the legend into a wild Italian romance, and this too at a date when the Purgatory was at the zenith of its fame, and pilgrimages were being made to it from every country. This romance, which was entitled *Guerino il Meschino*, was a very popular work ; it is said to have been composed in the fourteenth century. The first edition was published in 1473, and another at Venice in 1477 ; it was translated into French in 1491, and was again printed at Lyons in 1530, while it is said there are numerous editions in both languages. The following is an outline of its contents¹⁹ :—

The scene of the book is laid in the days of the Emperor Charlemagne. The hero, Guerino, was the son of royal but unfortunate parents, and in his infancy had fallen into the hands of the Saracens. As he grew up he became a brave and adventurous warrior. He visited the land of Prester John, and wandered through Asia, attacking and killing many fabulous monsters. Learning from the "trees of the sun" that his parents were Christians he sets out in search of them, and on reaching Italy pays a visit to the Sibyl of Cumae, from whom he learns that his parents are alive. He then goes to the Pope, who recommends him to go to St. Patrick's Purgatory for information with respect to them.

After many adventures he comes at length to the Archbishop (of Armagh), who gives him the keys of the Purgatory. He then goes to the island, and delivers the keys and letters to the prior, who endeavours in the traditional way to dissuade him from entering. Finding Guerino steadfast he gives him good counsel, and, conducting him to the cave, arms him with this prayer :—
Jhesu Christi nazareno nel tuo nome salvum me fac.

Guerino proceeds by a long dark way, until he comes at length

to a fair meadow, with a church in the midst. Here two venerable men come to him, and tell him what he has to suffer. Immediately after the devils arrive, who conduct him to the fire wherein those guilty of sloth are punished; from the flames he is saved by his prayer. Then he is lifted up in the air by demons, who let him drop when he repeats his prayer, and he falls into the place where the sin of envy is expiated. Then follows in order the regions where are punished pride, gluttony (here he found a king whom he had baptised), luxury, avarice (here was another king whom he had known on earth), wrath, vain-glory, traitors and flatterers (herein he saw many former friends, also Judas Iscariot), misers (here he saw a giant whom he had slain in Tartary), defrauders, and many others. It appears that hell, which he was allowed to visit, was divided into circles.

On leaving hell he crosses the foul river by a very narrow bridge, and is received into the land of the blessed. His guides are Enoch and Elijah, who play a very prominent part in Celtic eschatology. These conduct him to the Delectable Mountain, and shew him paradise, wherein is the Divinity, and the nine orders of angels. At length he is led back to the church in the meadow by the two patriarchs; and there learns that his parents were of royal blood. When he comes out of the Purgatory he is joyfully received by the prior, to whom he relates all that had happened, and the prior puts it down in writing. Three days later he leaves the monastery and continues his wanderings. And thus end the adventures in the Purgatory of the *tres preulx et vaillant chevalier* Guerino il Meschino, on which Wright passes the comment that the whole is a palpable and poor imitation of Dante built upon the legend of Henry of Saltrey.

Ariosto, in his celebrated poem *Orlando Furioso*, which was first published in 1510, thus alludes to the Purgatory:—

“ He next for Ireland shaped his course.”

“ And saw the fabulous Hibernia, where
The godly sainted elder made the cave
In which men cleansed of all offences are;
Such mercy there, it seems, is found to save.”²⁰

Haym, in his *Bibliografia Italiana*, t. II, alludes to a book printed at Milan, Naples, and elsewhere, about the year 1530, and entitled *Viaggio del pozzo di S. Patrizio nel quel luogo si vede le pene del Purgatorio ed altresì le gioie del Paradiso*, which is a translation of what Krapp terms the *Il fut*-version of Owen.²¹

A book was printed at Bologna in 1657, bearing the title *Teatro delle Glorie e Purgatorio de' viventi del gran Patriarcha, S. Patricio*. The author of it gives an account of the ceremonies observed at the Purgatory at the time of his writing, the value of which is, according to Krapp, that many of his statements are in

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to a certain degree, yet it never gave official sanction to it or to the legendary tales of the visions of misery and bliss that might be beheld in the cave. Nevertheless some attempts were made to insert an allusion to the place and its legends in the offices of the Church. According to Dottin the story had actually penetrated into the breviaries of certain churches. An attempt was made to introduce it into the *Breviarium Romanum*, and it appeared in an edition of that work which was printed at Venice towards the end of the fifteenth century ; but it was removed from the next edition.²⁴ The Breviary of 1522 relates that St. Patrick having fasted on top of a mountain asked two things of God ; first, that at the Day of Judgment there should not remain a single Irishman on the earth ; the other, that God would shew him the state of souls after death. Then the Lord led him to a desert place and shewed him a certain dark and deep pit, and said " Whosoever shall remain in this cave



delivered from all his sins." This passage
 a night shall be afterwards suppressed, then restored,
 or the Roman Breviary. It presents a curious conflation of the
 and finally suppressed Wick and Lough Derg.²⁵ The *lectio* of the
 legends of Croagh-Padraig is found in the office of St. Patrick printed
 church of Paris, which is in the archiepiscopate of Monseigneur de Gondy, con-
 in 1622, under the authority of the Archbishop of Paris:—"The penitential cave, which is termed
 includes with these words the Purgatory of St. Patrick, is still visited." Wright
 quotes the following verse from an old office of the Saint printed
 by Colgan:—

" Hic est doctor benevolus,
 Hibernicorum apostolus,
 Cui loca purgatoria
 Ostendit Dei gratia."

David Rothe cites a similar stanza:—

" Magni Patris sunt miranda merita Patricii :
 Cui Dominus ostendit locum purgatorii,
 Quo viventes se expurgent delinquentes filii."²⁶

In the pages of this book we have endeavoured to trace the history of St. Patrick's Purgatory, and the literature that consequently arose, from the commencement of the twelfth century to the close of the nineteenth. These marks of time are purely for our convenience, for it is impossible to say how much further back the floating traditions might be traced had we but the means of doing so, while it is also possible that its history will extend indefinitely in the other direction, as the place is still frequented annually by thousands of pilgrims who desire to do penance, not to behold visions. With respect to the value of what has been set forth in these ten chapters there will be differences of opinion; some readers may regard it as a sad example of religious credulity, others may see much of what is good in it, while the student of church history, of manners and customs, of eschatology, will find much to interest him. Whatever our individual opinions may be, we cannot but be astonished at the growth and existence of the tradition, and we must admire the tenacity with which the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland has clung to the pilgrimage, despite the fierce storms that have assailed it time after time.

NOTES.

1. See the commencement of Chapter II.
2. Dictionary of National Biography; Harris's Ware II, p. 88; Proc. R.I.A., Vol. XXXIII, Section c, No. 7.

3. t. CLXXX.
4. O'Connor, pp. 119, 120, 168; *Ulster J*
5. O'Connor, p. 169; Krapp, p. 50.
6. Hewson, p. 135; O'Connor, p. 192.
7. See references in Krapp, p. 6.
8. Quoted in *Ulster Journal*, Vol. V (1857), p.
9. P. de Félice, *L'autre Monde*, p. 31 (Paris, 19
10. G. Dottin, *Luis Enius, ou le Purgatoire de Sa*
p. 33; *Ancien Théâtre Français*, t. II, pp. 246).
11. P. de Félice, p. 52; Wright, p. 62; Dottin, p. *aint Patrice* (Paris, 1911),
12. For a description of these see Krapp, pp. 27-8, 95-7.
13. Bibliothèque Méridionale, 1 série, t. VIII, pp. X⁸.
14. Krapp, pp. 11ff, 18ff; Dottin, p. 28. For an analysis of Montalvan's
work see Dottin, pp. 19-27.
15. See Krapp, p. 19-23.
16. Krapp, p. 18.
17. Dottin, p. 35; Krapp, p. 23.
18. *Irish Monthly* (1884).
19. Wright, p. 137; Krapp, p. 44; Dottin, p. 17.
20. Canto X, Stanzas 91-92 (trans. by W. S. Rose).
21. *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. XXX. (1873), p. 275ff.
22. Krapp, p. 50.
23. Published in *Arch. per lo studio delle trad. pop.* IV, 6, p. 227.
24. Dottin, p. 32.
25. Louvet, *Le Purgatoire d'après les révélations des Saints* (Paris, 1880),
quoted by Salmon, *Infallibility of the Church*, Chap. XIII.
26. Wright, p. 153; Rothe, in Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, t. CLXXX; Dottin, p. 32.