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CHAPTER XIX.

SCHOOLS OF THE SEVENTH CENTURY.

I.—The School of Lismore, St. Carthach.

"I found in each great church, moreo'er,
Whether in island or on shore,
Pity, learning, fond affection,
Holy welcome and kind protection."

—*King Aldfrid's Poem on Ireland.*

The Munster Schools were of somewhat later origin than the monastic schools of the North; but during the seventh century some of them became very celebrated, especially the great School of Lismore, which was second only to that of Clonmacnoise. It was founded by St. Carthach about the year A.D. 636, and soon became the chief seminary in the South of Ireland.

St. Carthach, its founder, was born about the middle of the sixth century in that remote district of West Kerry, which also gave birth to St. Brendan of Clonfert. He was sprung, too, from the same race as Brendan, for his father Firaull, son of Fingin, derived his descent from the renowned Fergus Mac Roy, the northern hero, so celebrated in romantic legend and bardic song. His mother, Findmaith—the noble-fair one—is said to have been the daughter of another Fingin, who was chieftain of Corcoduibhne, in the same County Kerry. This lady was twice married, and by the second marriage became the mother of St. Cuanna of Kilcoony, and probably of other saints also.

The infant was baptized by a priest called Aidan,[1] who gave him Carthach as his baptismal name; but the future saint was more commonly called Mochuda, which seems to have been a pet name given to the boy by his teacher St. Carthach the Elder.[2] The Elder Carthach at this time, about A.D. 570, lived at his monastery at the foot of Slemish (Slieve Mis) on the right bank of the river Mang, not far

[1] See Life in the *Salamanca MS.*

[2] It is likely that his first name was Cuda, and that he got the name of Carthach Junior in honour of his master.—*Martyrology of Donegal.*

from Castlemaine. His younger namesake had just attained the age of twelve, and was according to the writer of his Life, a handsome youth, whose bright face and winning ways made him a great favourite with all who knew him. As yet, however, he had received little or no training either in virtue or learning. Like St. Patrick at the same age, he was employed in herding his father's swine on the banks of the river, when it chanced that he came near the monastery of St. Carthach. Just then he happened to hear the monks pouring forth the solemn strains of sacred psalmody, and was filled with such rapture that he remained all night near the holy place without food or shelter. When asked by his parents where he had spent the night, he told them; and added that he was ready to leave all and join that sacred choir of white-robed monks. His parents gladly consented, and sending for the Bishop Carthach, they handed over the boy for the service of the Lord.

The bishop trained the youth in sacred learning, and saw him daily, to his great joy, make even greater progress in virtue, so that after some years he ordained him priest. The holy prelate then after a short term of trial gave him permission to found a monastery of his own at a place called Killtulach, which is described as between Slemish mountain and the river Mang—not far it would seem from Castlemaine, on the right bank of the river. This was about the year A.D. 590; so that we may assign the date of his birth to about the year A.D. 560.

It was very usual at this period for young monks to travel to different monasteries, and spend a period in each in order to perfect themselves in sanctity and learning. Bangor had acquired great fame under the rule of St. Comgall, and so Carthach went to visit his kinsmen in the far north, and make himself still further acquainted with monastic discipline under so great a master. After staying some time at Bangor he returned home to Kerry; but once more went northward to the extreme limit of Munster to pay a visit to St. Molua of Clonfert Molua, whose monastery was situated at the roots of Slieve Bloom at the place now called Kyle. It still forms a part of the diocese of Killaloe, though quite close to the frontier of the ancient Meath.

Shortly afterwards we find him at the great monastery founded by Colman-elo, and called from him Land-elo, now Lynally, quite near to Tullamore, and only three miles from Rahan, where the saint was soon to found an establishment of his own.

It is evident that it was St. Colman-Elo who advised St. Carthach to found a monastery near his own in the territory, not of Munster, but of Meath—in fact it was near the site of some of our most famous battles, which the sons of Heber and Heremon fought for supremacy on this border land. The name *Raithain* signifies *filicetum*, or the Ferney Land; and it was not more than three miles from Lynally, the ancient Land-elo, which is derived by some from *ealla*, meaning an ancient grove or wood.

St. Carthach lived at Rahan for nearly forty years,[1] and at Lismore, certainly not more than two years; yet his name is generally connected with the latter, and hardly ever with the former monastery. Perhaps it was because the men of Meath treated the saint so badly after his long and laborious career at Rahan. Indeed, it is quite evident, that it was jealousy—jealousy which the Hy-Niall monks, probably of Durrow, near Rahan, felt at the success of St. Carthach—that prompted them to expel the saint and his scholars from the dear old convent, where he had lived so long. There are few things less creditable to the Southern Hy-Niall, both princes and priests, than their conduct on this occasion. It is manifest that Carthach by his piety and learning had gathered around him a great monastic school at Rahan. For not to speak of boys and servants, the Life in the *Salamanca MS.*, tells us that he had gathered round him some 847 monks, who supported themselves and succoured the poor by the labour of their own hands, and with their holy founder served God together—unanimiter—with one mind and in one spirit. "Their toil," says the Life, "was severe, but the fire of charity lightened the burden of this labour, so that to none of them did it seem heavy" (Vita I., sect. 15). It is said, too, that Carthach himself was raised to the episcopal dignity in Rahan.

Now, the 'native clerics,' says the Life, of the Hy-Niall race, were jealous of this success, and instigated by Satan, they resolved to drive the southern monk from their territories. The Kerryman, of course, though a saint, was, no doubt, annoyed by these proceedings of the men of Meath. It was indeed hard to be borne, for his was a holy, a useful, and an inoffensive life. He had spent forty years amongst them. His soul clung to the place, because he fondly believed, as it was the scene of his labours, so also it would be the place of his resurrection. He had built for himself and his monks a very beautiful church, the ruins of which are still to be seen. He had established a famous school, and

[1] Constantine, a British king, was vice-abbot of Rahan, some time between 588 when he was converted, and 596, when he was martyred in Kintyre. See Forbes' *Calendars*, page 311.

crowds of young men had placed themselves under his direction, and were, doubtless, tenderly attached to their master. He was near the monasteries, too, of some of his dearest friends, who dwelt around Slieve Bloom. And now they were going to drive him from his home, and his monks, and his friends, at an age too when the strength of his arm was weakened, and the vigour of his mind diminished.

It was a wanton and a cruel eviction, for which Prince Blathmac, son of Aedh Slaine, seems to have been primarily responsible. The Annalists denounce this expulsion; but they seem afraid to mention openly the authors of the crime. The *Ulster Annals* (A.D. 635), call it the 'effugatio' of Carthach from Rahan, which is not merely a flight but an expulsion. The Four Masters say that he was 'banished' from Rahan, and date it as taking place in A.D. 631; but both the *Chronicon Scotorum* and the *Annals of Ulster* give A.D. 635, at Easter, which is in all probability the true date.

The *Life of St. Carthach*, however, assigns the real motive for thus evicting the saint. The clergy of the district moved by jealousy at the success of Carthach, resolved to expel the 'stranger' from their province; and Blathmac, then ruler of that territory, was persuaded to carry out this wicked purpose. Can it be that the Columbian monks of Durrow were envious at seeing the fame of their own establishment eclipsed by the greater renown of Rahan? It is not at all unlikely, although it is not expressly stated; for the Life attributes it simply "to some of the native clergy of that province." Elsewhere it is said that the expulsion of Carthach is one of the three evil things for which certain 'saints' of Erin were responsible—the other two being the shortening of St. Ciaran's life, and the banishment of Columcille to Iona. We entirely sympathise with this traditional sentiment. If any of the 'saints' were responsible for driving away the venerable old man from his monastery at Rahan, they must have done penance for the deed before they could deserve the name. It was a cruel and an evil deed; and although Providence brought much good from the evil by the foundation of Lismore, there is some reason to fear that it broke the old man's heart, and brought down his grey hairs in sorrow to the grave.

When the edict went forth that Carthach and his monks were to be driven from Rahan, we are told that he departed reluctantly. "Leave this city with your monks," said the chiefs of Meath, "and seek a settlement in some other

country."[1] "I wish to end my days here," said Carthach, "for I have served God many years in this place, and now my end is nigh. Therefore, I will not depart, except I am compelled, lest men think me inconstant of purpose. I am ashamed to become a wanderer in my old age." After some hesitation the men of Meath plucked up an ignoble courage; and it is said that Blathmac himself took the hand of the saint, and led him forth from his monastery.

The poor old man was not equal to long journeys; and so slowly and regretfully he travelled southward, having turned his back for ever on the jealous and ungrateful men of Meath.

The first night he stopped with St. Barrind (or Barrindeus) of Drumcullen, in the barony of Eglish. The name is still retained as that of an old parish church, about four miles north-east of Parsonstown. Drumcullen is about three miles east of Eglish old church at the foot of the mountain. It cannot be more than ten miles from Rahan, and thus marks the extent of the first day's journey.

But the saint was now in his native Munster, and could proceed with greater leisure and more security. The second night he rested in the famous old monastery of St. Ciaran of Saigher. This was one of the cradles of Christianity in Ireland. If we may accept the statement in the *Life of St. Ciaran*, he was directed by God's Angel to go to a well in the middle of Ireland, and found his church at the place where his bell would ring of itself. The saint obeyed, and travelled onward until he came to the place now called Bell Hill, near the fountain Huaran. There his bell tolled, and close at hand he founded his church, at Saigher, now called Seir Ciaran, which is not more than two miles south of Drumcullen, under the western shadow of the mountain. There was every reason why St. Carthach the Younger should rest at Seir Ciaran. His old master, St. Carthach the Elder, to whom he owed so much, had been once bishop of that ancient See, in succession to Ciaran himself. It was about the year A.D. 540, before Carthach the Younger was born, for it appears that it was after leaving Seir Ciaran, about A.D. 560, that Carthach the Elder came to his native Kerry, and there met with his younger disciple of the same name.

There was reason why Carthach should love that old monastery, under the shadow of the morning sun when rising over Slieve Bloom, where his beloved master had spent so

[1] O'Hanlon's *Lives*, page 263, Vol. v.

many years, and where the first-born of the Celtic Saints of Erin had gone to his rest.

It was a short stage from Seir Ciaran to Roscrea—some seven or eight miles; but Roscrea had become even then, in A.D. 635, so famous a retreat for saintly men, that it could not be passed by without a visit. There was no town of Roscrea there at the time; all the low-lying lands were constantly flooded, and formed the *Stagnum Cre* frequently mentioned in the Lives of the Saints of that district. The *Ros*, or wooded promontory, on which St. Cronan founded his monastery, rose up from these flooded lowlands At first he established himself at Scanros, a wooded hill in Corville Demesne, where his church is still to be seen; but afterwards, about the year A.D. 606, he founded a second monastery on the Ros of Lough Cre, the site of which is now occupied by the Catholic Church of the town of Roscrea. It is probable that he was dead before the visit of St. Carthach; but all the same, his monastery and his spirit were there on the great Munster highway.

Leaving Roscrea the saint seems to have made his way to the royal rath of Failbhe Flann, King of Magh Femhin, as he is called in the *Annals of Ulster*. Magh Femhin was the fertile and picturesque plain stretching from Cashel to Slievenamon on the east, and on the south to the Knockmealdown Mountains, which separated it from the territory of the Desii. It was a rich and fertile land, watered by swelling rivers, and bounded towards the south and east by bold and savage mountains.

Failbhe Flann, the ancestor of the MacCarthys, was then king at Cashel, and kindly received Carthach, who showed his gratitude by curing the king's son of a sore eye. The king offered Carthach a site for a monastery in his own territory of Magh Femhin; but Carthach knowing that this was not God's will in his regard, declined the prince's generous offer, and resolved to go further southward. It is likely that the saint met at the court of Failbhe that prince's son-in-law, Maeloctraigh, Chief of the Desii of Waterford, who offered to Carthach a large territory beyond the mountain (of Knockmealdown), where he might establish himself and his brother monks in peace beside the Great River, and without any fear of further disturbance during the brief span of his remaining life.

The saint gladly accepted this offer, and stopping for a brief rest at Ardfinnan, which was destined for another saint later on, he crossed the rugged hills that rose up before him,

probably by the pass leading southward from Clogheen, and coming down the southern slopes of the hill he saw stretched before him that beautiful valley through which the Blackwater forces its way from Lismore to Cappoquin. "Here shall be my rest, for I have chosen it," exclaimed the saint, and crossing, not without miraculous aid, it is said, the swelling waves of the Avonmore, he crept up the wooded heights that overhung the southern bank of the stream, and sat down on Magh Sciath—the Plain of the Shields—close to what Keating calls Dunsginne—the great rath surmounting the height to the east of the present town of Lismore.

Many writers have asserted that there was a monastery at Lismore before St. Carthach's arrival there. Mention is certainly made of the death of Lugaid of Lismore in the *Ulster Annals*, A.D. 591; and the Four Masters record the death of Neman, Abbot of Lismore, in A.D. 610. In A.D. 634 the *Annals of Ulster* tell us that Eochaidh of Lismore died. O'Donovan thinks these entries refer to Lismore on the Blackwater; it is more probable, however, that the reference is to Lismore—an island near Oban in Scotland—where an Irish saint called Molua or Moluag had founded a famous monastery much celebrated in later times.

Assuming with the *Ulster Annals* that Carthach came to Lismore after Easter of the year A.D. 635, he cannot have lived there more than two years—and probably died on the 14th of May, A.D. 637. The *Ulster Annals* fix his death in A.D. 636; but from the statements in his Life we gather that he must have spent at least two years at Lismore. We are told that on his arrival there he at once proceeded to mark out the site of his monastery, surrounding it as usual with a strong fence and ditch. Thereupon the holy virgin Coemell, whose cell was not far off, came to see the saint, and finding him at work she inquired what the saint and his monks were doing. They replied that they were building for themselves a small habitation—*Lios-beg*, it would be in Irish. "Not so," replied the virgin saint; "this place will be called Lios-mor," "which," says the writer of the Life, "means in Latin atrium magnum," or Great Hall; "and her prophecy," adds the author, "was verified by the event. For Lismore is now a large city, half of which is an asylum where no female is allowed to enter, for it is full of cells and other monastic buildings, and a great number of holy men always dwell there. For they come there in great numbers, these saintly persons, not only from every part of Ireland, but also from England (Anglia), and from (Britannia) Britain." This distinction

between Anglia, or Saxon land, and Britannia, or the country from the Clyde to the Severn inhabitated by the native Britons, shows that this Life was written at a very early date —probably in the seventh or eighth century.

Having founded his monastery, the saint wished to retire from community life for some time to prepare himself for death by undivided communion with God. The great fame of Carthach was attracting numbers of monks and students to this new foundation, so that he was frequently disturbed by this great influx of pious visitors. Labour and old age too were telling on his emaciated frame, and he knew that the end was not far off. Then he retired to a lonely cave, which was under the monastery, and there for one year and six months gave himself up to the service of God in solitude. The monks, however, especially the older ones, were still allowed to visit their beloved father; and he seeing the difficulty they had in reaching the high ground on which the monastery was built, resolved to return to the community once more. So the brethren came to carry him up the steep ascent, and now they had reached the middle of the ravine, when the old man seeing a ladder reaching up to the open heavens told the brethren to lay him on the ground and administer to him the last sacraments. Tenderly and piously they did so, "and having partaken of the sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood and given his last injunctions to the brethren, he bade them all a tender farewell, and giving to each of them the kiss of peace he died in their arms on the day before the Ides of May," in the year A.D. 637, which seems to be the true date.

Like St. Ciaran of Clonmacnoise, Carthach spent only a very short time with his monks in this monastery that was afterwards to become so famous. He laid, however, the foundations of the spiritual edifice as well as of the material building. During his long residence at Rahan, he wrote a Rule for the guidance of his monks, which no doubt was the same that was adopted at Lismore. Many of the monks of Rahan, too, when expelled by the Ily-Niall, accompanied their beloved father to Lismore. These were no doubt the holy 'Seniors,' who used to visit him in his cell in the lonely valley; and who ruled the community after his death in the same spirit and in obedience to the same Rule.

Many striking miracles are recorded in the *First Life of St. Carthach*, to only one of which we shall make reference here.

When Carthach and his companions were coming to Lismore—the place given by the prince of the Desii. "where

they might live on the fruits of their own labour, and serve God in peace, without becoming a burden to anyone"—they saw from the high lands a great impetuous river, swollen by the tide of the neighbouring estuary, barring the way, so that there was no means of crossing to the southern bank. Then, whilst the others were in doubt what to do, Carthach, with his friends, Colman-elo and Molua (of Kyle), bent their knees in earnest prayer to God, and lo! the waves were divided on the right hand and on the left, opening a passage for the saints to cross over on dry ground. And so these true Israelites, with hymns of praise to God, crossed the bed of the Avonmore, and came to Lismore, as it was afterwards called—the place which God himself had prepared for them. The word *lis*, anciently *les*, properly signifies the mound surrounding the buildings, and also by a secondary signification, the space enclosed within. Here it includes both—the defending mound and the enclosed space which contained all the ecclesiastical buildings—the church, the cells, the refectory, the stores and other necessary adjuncts to a great monastery. In those early days these buildings were of rude materials and simplest structure; but all the same they were the choice abodes of learning and holiness.

The most interesting literary monument connected with Lismore is the Rule of St. Carthach. It is one of the eight Monastic Rules of our early Church still extant in Dublin manuscripts, and, in the opinion of O'Curry, is certainly authentic. The language, the style, the matter, are all such as might be expected from the person to whom they are attributed at the time it is supposed to have been composed. We know, too, from other sources that these saints really did compose what are called Monastic Rules, and hence, when we find these Rules in ancient MSS. bearing their names, we are not justified in rejecting their authenticity without some tangible reason.

It is to be regretted, although it is an additional proof of their authenticity, that almost all these ancient rules have been written in verse. The construction of these verses is very intricate and artificial, and as a consequence, the matter was, to some extent, sacrificed to the form—we lose in precision what we gain in harmony.

The Rule of Carthach, or Mochuda, is much more than a Monastic Rule in the ordinary sense. It gives precepts for the spiritual guidance of almost all classes of persons. The entire poem, as translated by O'Curry, consists of 135 four-lined stanzas. The first eight of these stanzas contain a general

exhortation addressed to all Christians, urging on them the observance of the great law of charity, as well as of all the other commandments of God.

The next nine stanzas are addressed to 'Bishops,' and contain some judicious and wholesome admonitions. The Bishop is responsible to Christ, and must be a vigilant shepherd and an orthodox teacher, checking the pride of kings, resisting evil-doers, and conciliating the lay multitude. He is to be skilled in Holy Scripture, for if he is not a learned man he is only a step-son of the Church. He is bound to condemn all heresy and crime, for it is certain that on the Day of Judgment he will have to answer not only for his own faults, but for the sins of those under his government.

Then the Rule for an abbot is prescribed. It is a noble office to be 'Chief of a Church,' but the holder must be worthy of it, and set his subjects a good example by his own deeds. He is to exhort the aged, and to instruct the young; to reprove the silly, and censure the disorderly—but in all patience, modesty, and charity. He must be constant in preaching the Gospel, and "in offering the Sacrifice of the Body of the great Lord upon the altar." Otherwise he will be the enemy of God, and cannot become the Heir of the Church of God.

The "priest," as distinct from the abbot, is enjoined to lead a truthful, laborious life, and to offer up worthily the BODY OF THE KING. His learning should be correct, and he should be accurate in the observance of the rule and of the law. When he goes to give Communion, at the awful point of death, he must receive the confession without shame and without reserve.

The 'soul's-friend' is admonished not to be a blind leader of the blind, but to teach the ignorant, to receive their confessions, not their alms, candidly and devoutly; and not lead them into sin in imitation of himself. If he has not Mass on every day, he will, at least, on Sunday and Thursday, to banish every wickedness far from him.

Still more minute prescriptions are given to regulate the conduct of a "monk." All the faults he is to avoid, and all the virtues he is to practise are described in great detail; but as they really contain nothing new, we need not further refer to them here.

The special duties of the *Cele De*, or Culdee, are also defined, and, if we may judge from this Rule, they were not 'recluses' living alone, nor yet monks, supporting themselves by the labour of their hands in the fields; but regular clergy,

living in community, engaged in the celebration of Mass, the recitation of the Divine Office, the instruction of the ignorant in the church, and the teaching of the novices and students in their schools. The statements, however, are so vague that, to some extent at least, they would apply to all the clergy, whether secular, regular, or monastic.

"The order of the Refectory" is prescribed with great minuteness, but as we have already referred to this subject, we shall not deal further with it here. Taken in all its parts this Rule of St. Carthach is a highly interesting, and most important monument of the early Irish Church.

II.—St. Cathaldus of Tarentum.

The great glory of the School of Lismore was St. Cathaldus. Like many other Irishmen, who left home and died abroad, he has been almost forgotten by our native writers. But the country of his love and of his adoption has not been ungrateful to Ireland. With one accord all foreign writers, following the testimony of Tarentum itself, proclaim that Cathaldus, its second apostle and patron saint, was an Irishman and a scholar of the great School of Lismore.

Lismore is far away from Taranto, as it is now called. It was a city of ancient Magna Graecia, frequently hostile to Rome, and at the best of times yielding only a reluctant obedience to the Queen of the Seven Hills. She preferred Pyrrhus and Hannibal to the Curii and Scipios. Seated on the southern sea that looks towards Greece, its cultured and pleasure-loving inhabitants had more affection for their ancient motherland than for their stern mistress by the Tiber. Even in the days of the Empire they were more loyal to Byzantium than to Rome. Strange that this Greek-Italian city, situated in the very heel of Italy, should get its apostle from a Munster monastery. Yet such is the fact, to which its own writers bear unanimous and grateful testimony.

The *Life of St. Cathaldus* has been written by two Tarentines—the brothers Bartholomew and Bonaventure Morini—of whom the former wrote his account of the saint in prose, and the latter in poetry. Both being citizens of Taranto, were acquainted with all the traditions of the place in reference to their patron saint, and, moreover, formally appeal to the testimony of the ancient public records of the Church and of the city in all those things to which these ancient records could bear witness, and also to the Office for the Feast of St. Cathaldus, which was published at Rome in the year A.D. 1607, by the Cardinal Archbishop of Taranto,

with the sanction of the Holy See. The brothers Morini shortly afterwards wrote the Life of the Saint. The poetic Life by Bonaventure Morini was first written in eight books; and is greatly and justly praised for the elegance of its Latin style. Bartholomew Morini gives a briefer, but more authentic narrative in prose, which he hoped would help to make known beyond the bounds of their own city the labours, and virtues, and miracles of the saint, whom his brother had already celebrated in verse, and whom Providence had sent from the remotest shores of Ireland (Hibernia) to be the patron and protector of their native city. Unfortunately we have, as I observed before, no account of St. Cathaldus in our domestic Annals; and we must, therefore, follow the guidance of those foreign writers, who, whilst unanimous as to the place of birth and education of our saint, so render the uncouth Irish names in the Latin tongue, that it is very difficult to identify the persons and places to whom they refer. The substance of their account is as follows:—

Cataldus, or Cathaldus, which is the Latin form of Cathal, a very common Irish name, "came from Hibernia, which is an island beyond Britain, in the western sea, smaller in area, but fully equal to it in fertility of soil and productiveness of cattle; whilst in the warmth of the land, in the temperature of the climate, and the salubrity of the air, it is even superior to Britain."

Some say, continues Morini, that Rachau was the Irish city in which he was born, because in many books he is called Cathaldus of Rachau; but the writer rather thinks his native town was Cathandum, which by a change of letter would be Cathaldum, the town of Cathal. He was, he thinks, called Cathaldus of Rachau, because he was bishop of that place in Ireland; but the name Cathaldus he got from his native town, so that the saint's name would be a patronymic.

It is very difficult to ascertain where these two places were. Colgan, a very high authority, seems to think that Cathaldum or Cathandum was Baile-Cathail (*i.e.*, Ballycahill) in Ormond, which was the birthplace of the saint, and that Rachau was the foreign way of expressing Rahan, the original monastery and See of St. Carthagh, and of which Cathaldus might have become bishop on the expulsion of its holy founder by the Hy-Niall. On the whole, we think this is a probable explanation, and not inconsistent with the facts narrated in the Lives both of St. Carthagh and of St. Cathaldus.

For all the accounts agree that the native place of Cathaldus was in Momonia, or as some call it, Mumenia, which in the Office of the saint is changed by mistake of a letter into Numenia. But the reference is clearly to Munster, in Irish Mumhan, which is usually latinized Momonia, or more accurately, perhaps, Mumonia. There are three townlands in North Tipperary called Ballycahill, one of which gives its name to the parish of Ballycahill, west of Thurles, in the barony of Eliogarty. Seeing that this church took its name from Bally-Cahill, it is highly probable that the village itself got its name from a saint who was a native of the place, and under whose protection, too, the church of his native village would naturally be placed. There is every reason to assume that Cathaldus was of the royal blood of the Munster kings, and that he lived not very far from Lismore; both of which circumstances would very well apply to Ballycahill. Cashel, the royal residence of the Munster kings, is about twelve miles further south; and Ballycahill itself was on the highway from north to south Munster, the very road that Carthagh and his monks would follow in their flight from the North to the court of Failbe Flann at Cashel, on their way to Lismore.

His father's name was Euchus, and his mother's name is rendered Achlena or Athnea. Euchus is an attempt at latinizing the Irish Eochaidh. Achlena was a not unfrequent Irish female name, which was borne by the mothers of St. Fintan and St. Columbanus. More likely, however, the original name was the Irish form Ethnea—a very common name—which the Tarentines, with their Greek tastes, would very naturally render Athnea in Latin.

As to the date of the saint's birth there is more difference of opinion. The Morini, who speak, however, doubtingly, seem to think the saint was born in the reign of the Emperor Adrian, and came to Tarentum during the reign of Aurelius, or Antoninus Pius. In this, however, they appear to have merely made a conjecture, having no ancient authority to follow. They were anxious to make this second foundation of the Tarentine Church after St. Peter and St. Mark, who were said to have first preached the Gospel there, as ancient as possible. It is evident, however, even from their own narrative that a much later date must be assigned to the advent of Cathaldus to Tarentum. For he came there on his return from Jerusalem, where with his companions he had been to visit the Holy Sepulchre of our Lord. But the Holy Sepulchre was not discovered until the time of St. Helen, in

A.D. 336, after which this pilgrimage became common in Christendom, so that we cannot assign by any possibility this early date to the mission of Cathaldus at Tarentum.

Of course, too, the history of the Irish Church is entirely inconsistent with so early a date for the apostolate of this Irish saint. For we are told that he studied and taught at Lismore; that he was Bishop of Rachau; that he preached the Gospel successfully in Ireland before he left for the Holy Land—facts which more clearly mark the seventh than the second century as the period during which he lived and flourished.

The young Cathal, who seems to have been born about the year A.D. 615, grew up in holiness and grace before God and men; and, according to the author, was whilst yet a youth sent to study in the great monastic school of Lismore (Lesmoria). It was, as we have seen, founded by St. Carthach in the year A.D. 635. Indeed, Morini's account of our saint at Lismore would seem to imply that he was a professor there as well as student, for he tells us that the fame of his learning and virtues attracted many disciples to the new college,[1] and what is more, raised up against himself some powerful enemies. He not only taught in the schools, but he preached the Gospel most successfully in all the country of the Desii, working many miracles too, and building churches—one of which dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, is specially mentioned in his Life as the glory of Lismore. The author even exaggerates his labours, for he adds, that no one was left throughout all Ireland whom Cathaldus did not instruct in the saving truths of the Gospel.

Now the king (of Munster no doubt), was jealous of the great popularity of the saint, and fearing that Cathal, relying on the good will of the people, might aspire to the throne, he

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[1] In the Office of St. Cathaldus it is stated that:—

Adolescens liberalibus disciplinis eruditus ad eam brevi doctrinæ excellentiam pervenit ut ad ipsum audiendum Galli, Angli, Scoti, Theutones aliique finitimarum aliarum regionum quam plurimi Lesmoriam convenirent.

Morini tells in elegant verse of the same influx of students to Lismore from most of the countries of Europe.

Celeres, vastissima Rheni
Jam vada Teutonici, jam descruere Sicambri;
Mittit ab extremo gelidos Aquilone Boemos;
Albis et Arverni coeunt, Batavique frequentes
Et quique colunt alta sub rupe Gebennas . . .
Certatim hi properant diverso tramite ad urbem
Lesmoriam, juvenis primos ubi transigit annos.

sailed to Lismore, intending to seize and imprison the saint. But God protects His own. This evil-minded prince was warned by two Angels in a vision not to touch Cathaldus at his peril; but rather to make him successor to Meltrides, the regulus of the Desii, who had inflamed by evil counsel the king's mind against Cathaldus; and lo! whilst the king was narrating this vision in the morning to his counsellors a messenger came to announce the sudden death of this Meltrides, the king's evil counsellor. The king, now filled with terror, asked pardon of Cathaldus, who was then a deacon, and was going to make him ruler over the Desii; but Cathaldus modestly refused the honour, preferring to serve God in religion. Thereupon he was made bishop, and the king assigned him mensal lands around Lismore, in the territory of Meltrides, and he became not only bishop, but even an archbishop, with twelve suffragan sees subject to him as metropolitan! The facts here seem much exaggerated, but were probably quite true in substance.

Meltrides seems to have been that prince of the Desii, who gave Lismore to St. Carthach in A.D. 635. His death is recorded under date A.D. 670. If Cathaldus were a deacon, in A.D. 670, he can hardly have been a disciple of St. Carthach, who died thirty-three years before. Colga, son of Failbe Flann, was King of Munster at this period, for his death is noticed, in A.D. 674 by the accurate *Chronicon Scotorum*. It is not unlikely then that Cathaldus, the professor of Lismore, who was supposed to be aiming at the crown of Munster, was a member of the rival line sprung from Fingin, the elder brother of Failbe Flann. Fingin died in A.D. 619, leaving the crown to Failbe; but of course his sons would have a better claim than Failbe's, when they grew up to man's estate. These two princes, Fingin and Failbe Flann, were respectively the heads of the great rival families of Munster, the O'Sullivans and M'Carthys; and although the latter rose to greater power, the former was, it is said, the senior branch of that royal stock, and retained their lands in the Golden Vale down to the advent of the Anglo-Normans, when they were driven to the mountains of Kerry. It was Colga, therefore, King of Munster, in A.D. 670, who caused Cathaldus the deacon to be elected Bishop, and not only endowed his See of Rachau with the lands of the Desii, but also subjected to his authority all the Bishops of the South, whose sees were within the kingdom of Cashel. In this way we can explain the statement in the Life that Cathaldus was made an archbishop with twelve suffragan prelates subject

to his authority. Colga would lend himself all the more readily to this project, because there would be now less danger of Cathaldus, after he became a bishop, aiming at the crown of Munster.

But where was the See of Rachau? We cannot agree with Colgan that it was Rahan. Rahan was in Meath in the territory of the Southern Hy-Niall, and we may assume it as certain that the spirit of jealousy, which in A.D. 635, drove St. Carthach from Rahan would never tolerate the appointment of this Munster prince as bishop in any part of Meath. It is, of course, still more improbable that the same jealous rivals would consent to give him metropolitan jurisdiction over the princes and prelates of their own race.

From the narrative in the saint's Life, if it can be relied upon, it is quite evident that Rachau was not far from Lismore, that it was in the territory of the Desii, and like the see of Sletty, it may, for a while, have attained to a certain pre-eminence in Munster in consequence of the learning and virtue of Cathaldus. Still it is very difficult to ascertain the exact locality of this 'city of Rachau.' There was, as we know from the Four Masters, a mountain in this district, about six miles north of Dungarvan, which was called Slieve Cua, now Slieve Gua. There must have been an old church in the district also, for there is a parish called Slievegue; and if there was a rath named from the territory, it would be Rath-cua, or Rachau, as any Irish scholar will readily admit. There was a pass through the valley beneath Slieve Cua, which, as it led from Magh Femhin into Decies without the Drum, was in ancient times the scene of many a bloody battle. We are inclined to think that Rachau of the saint's Life is simply another form of Rath-cua, which was doubtless the ancient name of the residence of the family of Cathaldus, who were probably the rulers of the district. The old church might have once had the same appellation, although so far as we know it is now lost. After the departure of Cathaldus, this church would lose its pre-eminence like many another church in Ireland which was once the seat of a bishop, and at present does not rank even as a parochial church. Clonenagh is an example, as we have seen when treating of its history. However, we merely offer this as a conjecture, for we can find no reference to the church or district of Rachau in our domestic Annals.

After Cathaldus had ruled the See of Rachau for some years, with his brother Donatus and several companions, he went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem—a journey that it was by

no means unusual for the fervent saints of Erin to accomplish even at that early period. On their return from Palestine, their vessel was wrecked in the Gulf of Taranto, not far from the city of the same name.

Taranto, the classical Tarentum, was an ancient and famous city, beautifully situated on the northern shore of the bay. It was founded by a Spartan colony of young men, who left their native country because they were branded with the stigma of illegitimacy. But they selected a beautiful site for their city, under the shadow of the Iapygian hills, and surrounded by the sun-lit waters of that spacious bay. The climate was delightful, the air bracing and salubrious; for the summer's heats were tempered by the sea breezes, and the mountains sheltered them from the biting winds of winter. The hills were clothed with olive trees and vineyards, which were specially prized; the wool of their sheep was of the finest quality; the inner harbour was filled with shell-fish; and their honey was equal to that produced by the bees of Hymettus. Horace, in a well-known Ode, extols its mild winter and lingering spring; and declares that its rare products and smiling bowers woo him to make his sojourn in that happy land.[1]

But its inhabitants, even in the days of Pyrrhus, were said to be an effeminate and licentious people, more devoted to the pleasures of peace than to the arts of war. They had heard the Gospel from the lips of the Apostles St. Peter and St. Mark; but during the disturbances succeeding the fall of the Western Empire, they became once more practically pagans. Such was the state of things when Cathaldus and his companions were wrecked on the shore of the Tarentine Gulf.

When the Irish bishop saw this beautiful city thus given over to pleasure and to vice, like St. Paul at Athens, his spirit was moved within him, and in burning language he implored the inhabitants to return to the service of the God whom they had forgotten. He performed also many striking miracles in the sight of all the people, healing the sick, and even it is said, raising the dead to life. It happened at this

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[1] Ille terrarum mihi praeter omnes
Angulus ridet, ubi non Hymetto
Mella decedunt, viridique certat
Baccа Venafro.

Ver ubi longum, tepidasque praebet
Jupiter brumas, et amicus Aulon
Fertili Baccho minimum Falernis
Invidet uvis.

time that there was no bishop in the city; so the Tarentines besought the Irish saint to become their bishop, and promised to obey his commands, and follow all his counsels. Reluctantly he consented, in the hope that he might thus be able to win them back to the service of God. His efforts were crowned with complete success. Once more Tarentum became a christian city in reality as well as in name; and Cathaldus was venerated as the second apostle and patron saint of the city.

Cathaldus spent some years in his new see; then feeling his end approaching, the saint once more exhorted the people and the clergy, in language of the most tender affection, to be true to the profession and practice of the Christian faith. He died, shortly after, in his city of Tarentum, towards the close of the seventh century, on the eighth day of March, which is his festival day. The holy remains, by which many miracles were wrought, were buried in a marble tomb, which up to this day is preserved in the sacristy of the Cathedral of Tarentum. For a long period the identity and position of the tomb were unknown, until the time of the Archbishop Drogonus, by whose orders the old cathedral was restored. The workmen in excavating the old walls came upon the marble tomb; and the Archbishop having been sent for, caused the tomb to be opened, when the sacred relics were discovered, with a golden cross on which the name of Cathaldus was inscribed. So Archbishop Drogonus, full of joy, caused the holy relics to be translated, and the tomb itself to be rebuilt close to the high altar of the new Cathedral Church, where they are preserved with great honour down to the present day. In the year A.D. 1150, Archbishop Giraldus caused the holy relics to be enclosed in a silver shrine, richly adorned with gold and jewels. A large silver statue of the saint was also erected in the church, and a portion of the skull was placed within the figure. The feast of the Invention of the saint's Relics is celebrated on the eighth day of May, and the Translation is kept on the tenth of the same month. Both these festivals, as well as the Natalis of the saint on the eighth of March, are celebrated with much pomp by the Tarentines even to the present day. The silver-gilt cross found within the tomb is hung around the neck of the silver statue of the saint, and on the cross may still be seen, engraved in characters quite legible and distinct—CATHALDUS RACHAU, which identify so conclusively the prelate of Lismore and Tarentum with the sacred relics that were discovered by Archbishop Drogonus.

Certain writings have been attributed to Cathaldus by Colgan, and others; but it is difficult to regard them as genuine.

There is a short treatise, given by Colgan, containing an account alleged to be taken from the Records of the Church and City of Tarentum, of the principal miracles of the saint. It is a very striking enumeration of most wonderful cures effected through the intercession of the saint, and bears intrinsic evidence of authenticity—at least such is Colgan's opinion.

There is also extant a prophecy attributed to the saint, which he uttered shortly before his death, and which was by his order, if not by his own hand, inscribed in certain leaden tablets, and hidden within a column in the Church of St. Peter without the eastern walls of the city. It is said that in the year A.D. 1492, the saint appeared to a certain deacon of Tarentum, by name Raphael Crurera, and commanded him to tell the Archbishop that he would find in the said church the figure of a boy painted on the column with the hand pointing out the spot where the leaves of the leaden record containing the prophecy would be found. The Archbishop sought the place indicated, and found the two sheets of lead inscribed with the prophecy. But the whole thing looks very like a forgery concocted for political purposes.

III.—Other Scholars of Lismore—St. Cuanna.

It does not appear that St. Cathaldus was ever Abbot or Bishop of Lismore, although he was certainly a student of that great seminary. St. Carthach appears to have been succeeded in the government of Lismore by St. Cuanna, who is said to have been his uterine brother. As Cuanna, or at least one who bore that name, was also the author of an ancient book of Annals, he is worthy of special mention in this place. Colgan is of opinion that St. Cuanna, the Abbot of Lismore, is the same as that Cuanna, who has given his name to Kilcooney, near Headfort, on the shores of Lough Corrib; and he thinks it highly probable that he was also the original author of the *Book of Cuanach*, cited in the *Annals of Ulster*. It is not quoted after A.D. 628; and we know that St. Cuanna of Lismore died about A.D. 650, so that this fact of itself lends some probability to Colgan's view. The facts of his history, however, will clearly show that Cuanna of Lismore was the founder of Kilcooney, near Lough Corrib.

St. Cuanna of Kilcooney was born near the eastern

shore of that lake, for he is described as founding a church in his native district.[1] His mother, Findmaith, was a near relation of St. Brendan, and appears to have been also the mother of St. Fursey, and of St. Eany, who also founded churches on the Corrib shore. In that case Findmaith was the second wife of Fintan of Ard-fintan, near Headfort, who is said to have been a nephew of St. Brendan. We know that both St. Brendan and St. Carthach belonged originally to the same district in the west of Kerry, and that both were sprung from Fergus Mac Roy. We know also that many of the tribesmen both of Carthach and Brendan migrated to West Connaught about this period, and that the father of Fursey was amongst them. It may be that his wife afterwards got married to another Kerry chieftain, and this would explain how Carthach and Cuanna were uterine brothers, although one was born at Tralee and the other near Lough Corrib.

About A.D. 590 Cuanna went to the school of St. Carthach, at Rahan, where he remained many years. Then he was sent about A.D. 620 to found a monastery "in the delightful land of the Ui-Eachach, in the south of the woody Inisfail." Afterwards, however, he returned home to Lough Corrib and founded Kilcooney. The "Fragment of his Life," in the *Salamanca MS.* then tells how he was carried off into Connemara, but God's angels took charge of him, and brought him over the lake in safety, floating on a flat stone, to his own side of the lake. Then it was he resolved to found his Church of Kilcooney, or Kilcoonagh, of which the remains are still to be seen in the old churchyard not far from Headfort. There is also the stump of a round tower close at hand, which shows the ancient importance of the place.

Great numbers of saints and monks from all parts of Ireland were soon attracted to Kilcooney by the fame of its learned and holy founder. In fact we are told that on one occasion no less than 1,746 of these holy men assembled in conference in a beautiful meadow near the church, and there entered into a league of holy friendship with each other—surely a beautiful spectacle before angels and men in that rude and barbarous age.

It seems that it was after the death of his brother, St. Carthach, in A.D. 636 or 637, that Cuanna was called to preside at Lismore. The kin of the founders always got a preference when rulers were elected for these ancient

[1] See *Salamanca MS.*, page 931.

monasteries, and his near kinship with Carthach was, together with his virtues and merits, the main reason of this election. It is certain, however, that he was Abbot of Lismore, for two of our ancient calendars describe him as such, and in the notes to the *Feltire* of Ængus he is similarly described. He died about the year A.D. 650.

The School of Lismore continued to flourish under him and his successors, attaining, it seems, the zenith of its celebrity towards the opening years of the eighth century under St. Colman O'Leathain.

St. Colman O'Leathain flourished as Abbot and Bishop of Lismore from A.D. 698, or A.D. 699 to 702; and during this brief period he became very celebrated. He was the son of Finbarr, of the race of Hy-Beogna, the hereditary princes of Ibh Liathain—a district extending from Cork to Youghal, and nearly corresponding with the modern barony of Imokelly. He was a pupil of Lismore during the incumbency of St. Hierlog, or Jarnlach, as we find it in the *Ulster Annals*, the same as the Hierologus of Colgan.[1] Lismore had now become so celebrated that the Irish princes, tired of the world, began to seek peace and penance in its sacred shades. The first of these princes, of whom we read, was Theodoric, or Turlogh, King of Thomond, of the celebrated Dalcassian line. His father Cathal died in A.D. 624, so that this prince must have ruled over his native territory for many years. He is celebrated, too, as the father of St. Flannan, the founder of the See of Killaloe. Theodoric came secretly to St. Colman, and flinging off his royal robes, and renouncing his crown, placed himself amongst the humblest disciples of that saint. Though now an old man, he would not consent to be idle, but insisted on earning his bread with the labour of his hands, like the monks around him. The road to the monastery from the low ground was steep and uneven, so Theodoric, whose strong arms so often wielded the sword of Thomond in battle, got his sledge and hammer, and spent his time breaking stones to repair the road. With such zeal did he work that the streams of perspiration poured down from his body to the ground, and it is said a sick man was healed by washing in these waters of holy and penitential toil. With Colman's permission he returned to his kingdom to protect it from its enemies, whom he seems to have crushed as easily as he did the stones, and he then returned again to die in Lismore.

[1] Such is Colgan's opinion; but Skene's opinion is more probable, that Jarnlach was abbot of the Scottish Lismore. Colman was probably abbot for 40 years.

Then he tells how he found 'in Armagh the splendid meekness, wisdom, and prudence blended'; how he found kings and queens and poets in Munster; in Connaught he found riches, hospitality, vigour and fame; in Ulster, 'from hill to glen, he met hardy warriors and resolute men'; and so on throughout all the land.

During his residence in Ireland Aldfrid acquired much knowledge, and a great love of learning and learned men. He was an intimate friend of Adamnan, the celebrated Abbot of Iona, and probably spent some time in that monastery also Another distinguished scholar, Aldhelm, Abbot of Malmesbury, dedicated to Aldfrid a poetical epistle in Latin on Metres and the Rules of Prosody, which shows that the king must have been competent to appreciate such a work. Aldhelm, in this Epistle, congratulates the king on his good fortune in having been educated in Ireland; and he knew well what the Irish scholars were, for his own master, Maildulf, was an Irishman. Aldhelm afterwards studied in Canterbury under Theodore and Adrian; and though trained by an Irishman, in one of his letters he shows himself a little jealous[1] of the greater fame and popularity which the Irish schools at this period enjoyed both at home and abroad. Maildulf[2] taught a school at Malmesbury, and from him it takes its name; but after his death it was placed in the hands of Englishmen.

IV.—Subsequent History of Lismore.

We cannot narrate at length the subsequent history of the monastery and School of Lismore. We find a regular succession of Bishop-abbots down to the advent of the Danes. But the position of Lismore on a great river not far from the sea rendered it especially exposed to their ravages; and hence, like our other great monastic schools, we find that it was repeatedly pillaged and burned during the ninth and tenth centuries. Nor was the plundering and burning altogether the work of the Danes.

As usual the native princes followed their example; and

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[1] See *Opera* Ed., Giles, p. 94. He says that the English swarmed to the Irish Schools like bees, whilst the great School of Canterbury was by no means overcrowded.

[2] He is called Mailduf by Bede; but it is merely another way of rendering the Irish name—*Maeldubh*. Bede calls Malmesbury *Mailduſi urbem*, that is, Mailduf's-bury, contracted afterwards into Malmesbury. William of Malmesbury describes it as founded by *Meildulf*. "Natione Scotus, eruditusque philosophus, professione monachus." See Lanigan, Vol. iii., p. 100.

so we are told that in A.D. 978 the Ossorians plundered and burned both the town and abbey. Yet the school and monastery survived the ravages both of the Danes and natives, and were held in great veneration by the wisest and best men in Erin. Cormac Mac Cullinan, the King-bishop, loved Lismore, although he was not educated there, and in his will left a bequest of a gold and silver chalice, and a suit of silk vestments to the monastery.

We read in Archdall that there was at Lismore, as at Armagh and many other principal churches, a hermitage, where one or more anchorites dwelt enclosed in their cells, after the fashion of the primitive Egyptian saints in the Desert. St. Carthach himself had set the example at Lismore; and it seems it was regularly followed, for a small endowment in land was provided for the maintenance of these anchorites at Lismore. The death of one of the most celebrated is noticed A.D. 1040:—"Corcran Cleireach, anchorite, the head of the West of Europe for piety and wisdom, died at Lis-mor." (F.M.). Another authority tells us that such was his learning and integrity that every dispute throughout the kingdom was confidently referred to his arbitration. It was for this reason also that during the interregnum that succeeded the death of Maelsechlainn II. in A.D. 1022, he, with Cuan O'Lochain, were chosen to guide the provisional government then established, as it would seem, with the consent of both the North and the South.

During the subsequent century—a period of much turmoil and bloodshed, when there was no recognised High King of Tara, who was able to keep the provincial kings in check, many of the southern princes retired to Lismore to end their days in peace and penance. Amongst these was the brave and generous Murtogh (Muircheartach) O'Brien, the grandson of Brian Boru, whom the Four Masters themselves describe "as King of Ireland, and the prop of the glory and magnificence of the West of the world." He died after the victory of penance at Lismore, but was buried at Killaloe. In A.D. 1127 Turlough O'Conor, the bravest and most capable of his name, forced Cormac Mac Carthy, King of Desmond, to go on pilgrimage to Lismore, and put on the habit of a monk. But Cormac soon flung it off again, and once more met Turlough in the field, but unsuccessfully; for we are told that there was a great fight at 'sea' (on Lough Derg) between the fleets of the Connaughtmen and of the men of Munster, and that the former gained the victory and harried the territory of Munster.

Another noteworthy event in connection with Lismore is recorded in A.D. 1129. It is the death and burial at Lismore in this year of the good St. Celsus, after St. Malachy, the greatest man of his age. He laboured with the most constant and self-denying zeal to reform the gross abuses prevalent in the Irish Church, and to stay the fratricidal hands of the native princes, whose whole career was at this time one sad record of violence and slaughter. His life, say the *Annals*, was "a life of fasting, prayer, and mass-celebration; and after unction and good penance he resigned his spirit to heaven at Ard Patrick," in the co. Limerick. He was buried at Lismore, by his own desire, and was waked, as was fitting, with psalms, hymns, and canticles, and buried with all honour in the tomb of the bishops, on Thursday, the 4th of April, having died on the previous Monday.

So Lismore was still held in great honour, and owned large possessions for the education of the clergy and the maintenance of the poor down to the advent of the Anglo-Normans. Then in A.D. 1173 we have the significant entry that Strongbow, after wasting the territory of the Desii, "extorted a large sum from the bishop to prevent the church from being burnt," but in the following year his son completed his father's work, "and plundered Lismore;" and four years later, in A.D. 1178, we are told that the town was again plundered, and set on fire by the English forces. Whatever still remained was wholly destroyed a few years after, in A.D. 1207, when the town and all its churches were entirely consumed. Shortly afterwards, this ancient See was united to the Danish bishopric of Waterford, and the lamp of learning in its schools was extinguished for ever.

Lismore is beautifully situated on the steep southern bank of the Blackwater, overlooking the picturesque valley of this noble river, which here teems with natural beauties. In this respect Innes declares that Lismore cannot be surpassed. "The Blackwater, both above and below the bridge, which leads into the town, flows through one of the most verdant of valleys. The banks bounding this valley are in some places thickly, in other places lightly, shaded with wood. Nothing can surpass in richness and beauty the view from the bridge, when at evening the deep woods, and the grey castle, and the still river are left in the shade, while the sun streaming up the valley gilds all the softer slopes and swells that lie opposite." (*Journey*, 1834.)

Nothing, in truth, is wanting that can lend beauty and interest to this scene, which nature has so richly dowered

with all her charms. And then the grand old castle, towering over the river, recalls to the mind of the beholder all those associations that cling like the ivy to its grey historic walls.

Of the twenty churches once in Lismore not a vestige remains. The existing Protestant cathedral was rebuilt by the Earl of Cork in A.D. 1663; but his workmen destroyed every trace of the ancient church, which is alluded to as the cathedral, or great stone church of Lismore, so early as A.D. 1052. Five inscribed stones are preserved in the present cathedral. They are fragments of ancient tombstones, with the peculiar Celtic crosses, and lettered in very ancient types of the Celtic alphabet.[1] One asks a blessing for the soul of Colgen, who, according to the *Annals of Inisfallen*, was an eminent ecclesiastic, who died in Lismore in A.D. 850. The words are—BENDACHT FOR ANMAIN COLGEN. Another is simply inscribed—SUIBNE M CONHUIDIR—Suibne, son of Conhuidir, an anchorite and abbot of Lismore, who went to his rest in A.D. 854. Another still more interesting inscription asks a prayer for Cormac, a priest—OR DO CORMAC P. The letter P stands apparently for the Latin word *presbyter, i.e., priest.* He seems to have been "Cormac, son of Cuilcanan, Bishop of Lismore, and Lord of the Desii of Mumhan, who was killed by his own family, A.D. 918"—a different person from the King-bishop of Cashel, who was slain in A.D. 907. The other two merely ask a blessing for the soul of MARTAN, and a prayer for DONNCHAD, who seems to have been the person bearing that name who was assassinated within the very walls of the old cathedral in A.D. 1034.

THE CROZIER OF LISMORE was discovered in 1814 in a tower of Lismore Castle, belonging now to the Duke of Devonshire—hence it is sometimes improperly called the Devonshire Crozier. It was made, as the inscription on it records, for Niall Mac Mic Aeducan, who was Bishop of Lismore from A.D. 1090 to 1113. The artist was Neetan—also a Celtic name—and the Crozier itself is one of the most beautiful specimens of Celtic art of this character that have been yet discovered. "It measures three feet four inches in length, and consists of a case of bronze of a pale colour, which enshrines an old oak stick—perhaps the original staff of the founder of Lismore. Most of the ornaments are richly gilt, interspersed with others of silver and niello, and bosses of coloured enamels. The crook of the staff is bordered with

[1] See *Christian Inscriptions.* Vol. ii., p. 31.

a row of grotesque animals like lizards or dragons, one of which has eyes of lapis lazuli."[1] The staff seems to have been divided into compartments, which were filled in with filigree work. It is most likely this beautiful work of art was made at the monastery, and that Nectan, the artificer, was a member of the brotherhood of Lismore. The inscription is as usual in Irish, and runs thus:—OR DO NIAL MAC MEICC AEDUCAN LASAN DERNAD IN GRESSA + OR DO NECTAIN CERD DORIGNE IN GRESSA—Pray for Niall, son of Mac-Aeducan, for whom this work was made; pray for Nectan, who made this work of art.

THE BOOK OF LISMORE was found in 1814, together with the Crozier of Lismore, in a wooden box, which was enclosed within the wall of a built-up doorway in the Castle of Lismore. Both evidently belonged to the bishops of Lismore, for the castle was the ancient episcopal palace, and the box was built into the doorway for security on some occasion when the castle was being besieged by enemies, who might be disposed to appropriate these venerable relics. This castle was originally built by Prince John, in A.D. 1185; and at first was garrisoned for the Crown. It was, however, soon destroyed by the natives; but was rebuilt by the king, and became the residence of the bishops of Lismore down to the time of Miler MacGrath, who added the see of Lismore to his other ecclesiastical preferments. Afterwards, the castle sustained several sieges during the troubles that followed A.D. 1641, when it was held at different times for the Crown or for the Parliament: and it was, doubtless, during one of these sieges that both the Crozier and Book of Lismore were concealed. When discovered it had suffered much from damp, and the edges, O'Curry tells us, seem to have been partially gnawed by rats or mice. It was, however, still tolerably legible, but was, unfortunately, lent by the Duke of Devonshire's agent to a Cork *shanachie*, named O'Flynn, that it might be transcribed; and O'Curry alleges that several folios, and in some places entire sections of the MS., were deliberately cut out by those who had the temporary custody of the book. In 1839 O'Curry made a copy on paper of all that remained for the Royal Irish Academy; but that institution vainly sought to obtain the missing portions.

It is said that these excised parts were purchased, no doubt, in good faith, by a Mr. Hewitt, who lived near Cork,

[1] *Christian Inscriptions.* Vol. ii., p. 118.

and they may, perhaps, be still secured and re-bound with the original MS.

This original was a vellum MS. said to be 900 years old. It consists principally of copies of the lives of certain Irish saints—of Patrick, Brigid, Columcille, Senan, Finnian of Clonard, and Finnchu of Brigobhan, near Cork—"all," says O'Curry, "written in Gaelic of great purity and antiquity."[1] There are also several historical and romantic tracts, and bardic accounts of several ancient battles. One treatise—a dialogue between St. Patrick and the Fenian warriors, Caoilte MacRonan and Oisin—is, says the same learned authority, especially valuable for the topographical information it contains.[2]

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[1] See *Lectures on MS. Materials.*

[2] "The Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore" have been lately (1890) edited and translated into English by Dr Whitley Stokes, and issued from the Clarendon Press at Oxford. The "Lives" are preceded by an elaborate critical Preface on the language and matter of the text. There is also a very complete Glossary of all the Irish words in the volume. The Dialogue has also been recently published in the *Silva Gadelica* by Mr. S. H. O'Grady.