

so he spent his captive years, too, in accustoming himself to physical hardship.

When, after six years of slavery had passed, he was told by his guardian angel to flee, he left Milchu's domain, and returning to his native Scotland, soon entered the religious life. After a few years confined solely to study, he began a visitation of hermitages and monasteries, absorbing spirituality and a spirit of contemplation. At the same time, these visitations helped him to meet and evaluate many of the religious, and so to determine what type of men he would select to accompany him when the time came for him to set out for his long sought goal. His keen insight in this respect is shown by the fact that not one weakling developed in his little band of missionaries, even after long years of strenuous work.

Coming under the spell of the famous St. Germain, he attached himself to that famous teacher for 18 years, accompanying him to Britain, and later was recommended by St. Germain to Popt St. Celestine I, who previously had commissioned Palladius to spread the word of God throughout Erin. Palladius, however, knowing nothing of the language or customs of the country, when he met the fierce opposition of a Wicklow chieftain, quickly abandoned the enterprise. Patrick, however, was better fortified by his thirty years of preparatory work, and, after a visit to Rome where he met Pope Celestine, he prepared to set out for the mission to which he had long aspired.

Here again we see evidences of Patrick the man, resourceful, purposeful, far-seeing. Ordained Bishop at Turin under the hands of its great bishop, St. Maximus, he selected twenty priests and deacons, drilled them in the rudiments of the Irish language, and taught them the psychological elements of the Druid religion, their superstitious weaknesses as well as their strength. He also gave them an idea of the physical geography of the country. Then finally he analyzed for them the reasons for the failure of his zealous predecessor, Palladius, which he attributed chiefly to lack of knowledge of the Irish psychology and personality. All that accomplished, he set out, and arrived in Erin early in the year 433.

From then on, Patrick's conquest of Erin from the Druids was a fore-ordained success—a success to which Patrick contributed remarkably by his psychological handling of the people, and his untiring labors for organizing and preserving the fruits of his victory. At Tara, his first big conquest was entirely psychological. When all Ireland was commanded not to burn a fire until the sacred fire was lighted at the festivities at Tara, he set a fire on a nearby hill, and, when soldiers came to arrest him he accompanied them dressed in mitre and robes, proclaiming himself to all the assembled chieftains and priests as the emissary of the King of all Kings.

In Connaught, he spent seven years, visiting every district, organizing parishes, forming dioceses, and instructing the chieftains and people. Knowing the feeling of the Irish people to their rulers, he aimed first at them; and at Killala, for instance, he won to his cause not only the King and his six sons, but also 12,000 of their subjects.

It is an inspiring tale, indeed, this triumph of St. Patrick over the superstitions of Druidism, and the, at times, fanatical and demoniacal opposition of the old religious leaders. But reading it and studying it as it deserves to be studied, you must end by realizing that what Patrick did is an inspiration to every one of us who has a job to do.