

## Mother Catherine McAuley (1787-1841) —An Appreciation.

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**I**RISH tradition from the earliest times lays great emphasis upon ancestry. The "good drop," or blood of noble quality, is more prized than broad acres, comfortable bank accounts, intellectual or artistic accomplishments. Where excellence appears there is a constant tendency to look for its explanation in a line of high-minded forbears. It is natural to assume, then, that Catherine McAuley came of distinguished stock, though on this point our curiosity remains unsatisfied, for her biographers lacked interest in genealogical trees. They speak of her father and mother only, and dismiss these as quickly as they may, with a few lines of necessary characterization.

We are not certain, therefore, though we may take it as probable, that her father belonged to the best-known McAuley family in Ireland, the old chiefs of Calraighe-an-Chalaidh in Westmeath. (The parish of Ballyloughloe was their patrimony, the hill of Tullymagawly (some six miles east of Athlone) the commanding eminence in their territory, the castles of Carn, Creeve, Clogmarshal and Moydrum their stately homes in the days of their prosperity. In lineage they ranked with the illustrious of the land, for their descent derived from Maine, son of Niall of the Nine Hostages. Like so many other Gaelic families they espoused the national cause in 1641 and shared in the catastrophe of the Cromwellian settlement.