

churches in the district, and left some of his teachers at one of them, viz. Kilfeacte. Thence he went to the territory called Arva-cliach, in the adjacent counties of Tipperary and Limerick, in part of which, Hy-Cuanach (now the Barony of Coonagh) he was at first instantly opposed by the dynast Oldid. But a miracle having been performed by the Saint, Oldid and his family were converted and baptised; while at Ara-chihach, Colgan states that Patrick foretold many occurrences, among others the foundation of a monastery at Kill-ratha, and of a church at Kill-teidhill, in the county of Limerick. We find the Saint next in the tract of country east of Limerick, where he was hospitably entertained by a chieftain named Locan, and met with young Nesson, whom at the same time he placed over the monastery of Mungret, which he had founded. The inhabitants of Thomond, hearing of the advent of St. Patrick, crossed the Shannon, for the purpose of seeing him, and when they were instructed, were baptised by him in the field of Tir Glas (Terry Glass, in Ormond). He was waited on by prince Carthen, son of Blod, who is said to have been converted and baptised at Sanigeal, now Singland, near Limerick. Colgan remarks that this family was the same as that of the O'Briens of Thomond, and that Carthen was the chieftain of North Munster.

St. Patrick, on his way to Connaught, passed the Shannon at Limerick; and it was in the vicinity of the city, in Singland (Sois Angel) the Saint is said to have seen the vision of the angel. The holy well and stony bed and altar of St. Patrick are to this day existing in Singland. Tradition speaks of his having preached here. He appointed first Bishop of Limerick Saint Manchin, "a religious man, having a complete knowledge of the Scriptures, and placed him over the subjects of Amalgaid, King of Connaught, then lately converted to the Christian faith. The mountain of Knock Patrick, in the western barony of Connoloe, county of Limerick, the base of which is washed by the Shannon, whose course for sixty miles may be traced from its summit, is the place from which tradition alleges our Apostle to have blessed Connaught.¹ We thus catch a glimpse, through the dimness and obscurity of distant time, of the halo which encircled the name and character of Limerick. We thus perceive the close acquaintance which its inhabitants made with Christianity, when Europe for the greater part was shrouded in the darkness of Pagan superstition. Were we in search of further evidences of the early Christian devotion of the people of the district, it is supplied by abundant facts. In the fifth century St. Sinan founded the monastery of Canons Regular of St. Augustine at the island of Inniscathy, on the Shannon. In the sixth century St. Ita, an illustrious native of the county, whose festival is celebrated on the 14th of January, founded at Cluain Credhail (Kileedy), a nunnery of Canonesses Regular of St. Augustine. St. Eden founded Clum Claidech in the same century, and St. Mochelloch, Kilmallock, in the seventh century—these two last mentioned were for Canons Regular of St. Augustine.²

¹ A beautiful sonnet from the pen of the late Sir Aubrey de Vere, Bart. of Curragh Chase, embodies the tradition in language of fire and beauty.—*Lamentation of Ireland and other Poems.*

² *Allemande* gives the order of St. Augustine the first place before all others that were in Ireland—first, because it is the most ancient of all the regular orders in general—deriving its origin from the apostles themselves, and allowing St. Augustine, afterwards Bishop of Hippo, in Africa, only to have formed a particular congregation, which was subsequently divided into many others—secondly, it is certain that the particular rules which prevailed in this country in the 5th, 6th, and 7th centuries, consisted of religious men who were regular canons, or something so like them, that at the time in which those rules were obliged to be incorporated into the rule of St. Benedict, or into that of the Regular Canons of St. Augustine, they all made choice of the latter, as being much more agreeable to them than that of St. Benedict. In short, so numerous

Doubt has existed as to the date of the foundation by St. Manchan of the Cathedral of Limerick, and as to the time the Saint lived, but this arises from the similarity of the name with that of Mancheus, whom the Annals of Ulster call Abbot of Menedrochit, and say that he died in 651 or 652. The commemoration of the death of Mancheus is pointed out under the name of Manicheus, the "Wise Irishman," in the books de *Mirabilibus Scripturæ*, by some erroneously ascribed to St. Augustine. The name too, not only is not unlike, but the times occur exactly, the festival of St. Manchin being celebrated in January.¹ St. Manchin lived two centuries at least before the period assigned to St. Mancheus by the martyrologies. The Annals of Innisfallen, A.D. 567, state there was a great battle fought here in that year. It was here that Saint Cumin Fodha, son of Fiachna, Bishop of Clamfearta Breainirn now Clonfert, died on the 12th of November, A.D. 661, and on this occasion Colman-na-Claisagh, the tutor of Cumin, composed these suggestive and touching verses which show that the Shannon then was called by the name of Lumineach:—

"The Lumineach did not hear on its bosom of the race of Leathcluinn,
Corpse in a boat so precious as he, as Cumine son of Fiachna;
If any one went across the sea to sojourn at the seat of Gregory, (Rome,)
If from Ireland, he rejoices in none more than the name of Cumin Fodha,
I sorrow after Cummine from the day his shrine was covered,
My eye-lids have been dropping tears; I have not laughed, but mourned
Since the lamentation of his barque."²

These verses establish the fact of the constant intercourse of Ireland with Rome, the uninterrupted devotion of the Irish Bishops to "the mother and mistress of all Churches."

Records of the barbarous and unrelenting cruelties of the Danes, of sacrilegious attacks made by them on those sacred edifices and holy men which were now becoming numerous, are found in the Annals long before Yorus surrounded the city with a wall, and erected the fortress which enabled his countrymen to hold their position for some ages after against the combined strength and opposition of the native Irish. In 843 Foranan, Primate of Armagh, was taken prisoner at Cluan-Combarda,³ (a place unidentified by the commentators) with his relics and people, and brought by the pirates to their ships at Limerick. The statement is corroborated by the Annals of Clonmacnoise, which designate Forannan Abbot of Armagh, and allege that the crime was perpetrated by the Danes at Cloneowardy, adding that his family, attendants, &c., relics and books, were led from thence to the ships in Limerick.

Our annals, during those dark and dismal ages, present but little, on which to dwell with satisfaction. The Danes, to retain their hold of maritime places, were busy and aggressive. The Irish in turn revenged the injuries and injustices of their cruel oppressors; but in the midst of every difficulty and danger, religion was speeding its bright way. The succession of bishops, in several of the Irish sees, had continued with regularity since the preaching of St. Patrick.⁴ Up to this period "Lumineach" was the original name of the

were the monasteries of the Regular Canons of St. Augustine, not only in the early ages of the Irish Church, but at the suppression of the monastic institutions by Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, that the number of houses then are said to have had, far and away, exceeded the houses of the other orders.—*De Burgo's Historical Collections, &c.*

¹ Ware.

² Annals of the Four Masters.

³ Annals of the Four Masters.

⁴ Ware.