

## PREFACE TO ST. BROCCAN'S HYMN.

TF] *Locus huius hymni* Slieve Bloom, or Cluain Mór Moedoc ; person, Broccan the Squinting ; *tempus*, of Lugaid mac Loegaire King of Ireland, and Ailell mac Dunlainge King of Leinster ; *causa*, Ultan of Ardbreccan, whose tutor requested of him that he should tell of the miracles of Brigid compendiously in poetic harmony, for it was Ultan who had collected all the miracles of Brigid.

## ST. BROCCAN'S HYMN.

TF] Victorious Brigid loved not the world ;  
       she sat the seat of John on a cliff,  
       she slept the sleep of a captive,—  
       the saint, for the sake of her Son.

5 Not much of evil-speaking was got !  
       with lofty faith (in) the Trinity  
       Brigid, mother of my high King,  
       of the kingdom of heaven best she was born.

She was not absent, she was not malicious,  
 10 she was not a mighty, quarrelsome, champion (?),  
       she was not an adder striking, speckled ;  
       she sold not the Son of God for gain !

She was not greedy of treasures,  
       she gave, without poison, without abatement ;  
 15 she was not hard, penurious,  
       she loved not the world's spending.

To guests she was not acrimonious,  
       to miserable weaklings she was gentle ;  
       on a plain she was built (as) a city ;  
 20 may she protect us (in) hosts to the Kingdom.

TF] She was no plunderer (?) of a mountain-slope ;  
she worked in the midst of a plain,  
a wonderful ladder for pagan-folk  
to climb to the Kingdom of Mary's Son !

25 Wonderful was St. Brigid's congregation,  
wonderful, Plea to which it went ;  
but alone with Christ was maintained  
her frequent mission to the poor !

Good was the hour that Mac-Caille held  
30 a veil over St. Brigid's head ;  
she was clear in all her proceedings ;  
in heaven was heard her prayer ;

" God, I pray to Him against every battle,  
in whatever way my lips can reach,  
35 deeper than seas, vaster than count,  
Three Persons, One Person, a wonder of a story ! "

A challenge to the battle, renowned Kevin !  
through a storm of snow that wind drives,  
in Glendalough was suffered a cross,  
40 till peace visited him after labour.

St. Brigid was not given to sleep,  
nor was she intermittent about God's love ;  
not merely that she did not buy, she did not strive for  
the world's wealth here below, the Saint !

45 That which the King wrought  
of miracles for St. Brigid,  
if they have been wrought for (any other) person,  
in what place hath ear of any living being heard of it ?

The first dairying on which she was sent  
50 with first butter in a cart,  
she took nought from the gift to her guests,  
nor did she lessen her following.

Her portion of bacon, after that,  
one evening—the victory was high,—  
55 not merely was the dog satisfied with it,  
the company was not grieved.

- TF] A day of reaping for her,—it was well reaped,  
 no fault was found there with my pious one ;  
 it was dry-weather ever in her field,  
 60 through the world it poured heavy rain.

Bishops visited her,  
 not slight was the danger to her,  
 if there had not been,—the King helped,—  
 milking of the cows thrice.

- 65 On a day of heavy rain she herded (?)  
 sheep in the midst of a plain ;  
 she spread her upper garment afterwards  
 in-doors across a sunbeam.

- The cunning youth asked alms of her,  
 70 Brigid, for the love of her King :  
 she gave away seven wethers,  
 but it did not lessen her flock's number.

- It is of my poetic gift if I were to recount  
 what she did of good :  
 75 wonderful for her was the bath  
 that was blest about her,—it became red ale !

- She blessed the pregnant nun,  
 who thereon became whole, without poison, without disease ;  
 greater than others was the marvel, how  
 80 of the stone she made salt.

I record not, I enumerate not  
 all that the holy creature did :  
 she blessed the flat-faced one,  
 and his two eyes became quite apparent.

- 85 Some one brought a dumb girl  
 to Brigid,—the miracle of it was unique,—  
 whose hand went not out of her hand  
 till her utterances were clear.

- (Another) wonder was bacon that she blessed ;  
 90 and God's power kept it safely ;  
 (though) it was a full month with the dog,  
 the dog did not injure it.

TF] It was a miracle greater than others :  
 a morsel she requested of the (kitchen-)folk  
 95 did not spoil the colour of her scapular  
 (though) it was flung, boiling, into her bosom

The leper begged a boon of her ;  
 it was a good boon that befel him :  
 she blessed the choicest of the calves,  
 100 and the choicest of the cows loved it.

He directed her chariot afterwards  
 northward to Bri Cobthaig Coil,  
 the calf being with the leper in the car,  
 and the cow (following) behind the calf.

105 The oxen, (when thieves) visited them,  
 would have been pleased that anyone should hear them :  
 against them rose up the river,  
 at morn they returned home.

Her horse parted head from head-stall  
 110 when they ran down the slope ;  
 the yoke was not flung out of balance,  
 God's Son directed the royal hand.

A wild boar frequented her herd,  
 to the north he hunted the wild pig ;  
 115 Brigid blessed him with her staff,  
 and he took up his stay with her swine.

Mug-art, a fat pig for her was given  
 beyond Mag Fea ; it was wonderful how  
 wild dogs hunted it for her,  
 120 till it was (close to her) in Uachtar Gabra.

She gave the wild fox  
 on behalf of her peasant, the wretched ;  
 to a wood it escaped  
 though the hosts hunted it.

125 She was open in her proceedings,  
 she was One-Mother of the Great King's Son :  
 she blessed the fluttering bird  
 so that she played with it in her hand.

TF] Nine outlaws (whose weapons) she blessed  
 130 reddened those weapons in a pool of blood ;  
 the man whom they had ill-treated  
 was wounded, but hurt to him was not found there !

What she wrought of miracles  
 there is no one who could enumerate aright :  
 135 wonderful how she took away Lugaid's appetite ;  
 but the champion's strength she did not lessen.

An oak the multitude lifted not,  
 on another occasion,—excellent and famous (deed) !  
 her Son brought it to her (on the prayer) of Brigid,  
 140 to the place where she wished it to be (?).

The trinket of silver, which should not have been hidden  
 for mischief to the champion's hand-maid,  
 was flung into the sea the length of a mighty cast,—  
 but even it was found, in the inner part of a salmon.

145 Another wonder of hers was the widow  
 who refreshed her in Mag Coil,  
 for she made fire-wood of the new (weaving)-beam,  
 and that for cooking the calf ;

A miracle greater than any other  
 150 which the saint effected,—  
 in the morning the beam was whole,  
 with its mother was the missing calf.

The trinket of silver, which the smith  
 broke not,—this was one of her miracles,—  
 155 Brigid struck it against her hand  
 afterwards, so that it broke into three (parts)

It was flung into a scale at the smith's ;  
 thereupon was found a wonder :  
 it was not discovered that by one scruple  
 160 any third was greater than another.

What she wrought of miracles,  
 there is no man who can come at them ;  
 she blessed raiment for Condlaed,  
 when he was taken to Letha.

TF] When she,—it was a danger for her,—  
 her Son before her failed her not (?):  
 he put raiment in the basket  
 of Roncend in a chariot of two wheels

The mead-vat that was brought to her ;  
 170 whoever brought it was not unrewarded (?);  
 for there was found (honey) in a wall of the house :  
 it had not been found there up to that !

She gave for behoof of her servant  
 when he stood in need ;  
 175 not merely was no surplus found there,  
 but not a drop was wanting.

Upon us may Brigid's prayers rest !  
 and she against danger be our aid !  
 may they be on the side of her weaklings  
 180 before going into the presence of the Holy Spirit !

May she aid us with a sword of fire  
 in the fight against black swarms !  
 may her holy prayers protect us  
 past pains, into the kingdom of Heaven !

185 Before going with angels to the battle  
 let us reach the church with a run !  
 commemoration of the Lord is better than any poem :  
 Victorious Brigid loved not the world.  
 Brigid loved not.

I beseech the patronage of St. Brigid  
 190 with the saints of Kildare ;  
 may they be between me and pain !  
 may my soul not be lost !

The nun that drove over the Curragh,  
 may she be a shield against edges of sharpness !  
 195 I have not found her like, save Mary :  
 we honour my Brigid.

TF] We honour my Brigid ;  
       may she be a protection to our company !  
       may her patronage assist me !  
 200   may we all of us deserve escape !

Praise of Christ, famous (such) speaking !  
 adoration of the Son of God, guarantee of victory !  
 may it be without denial of God's Kingdom,  
 whoever recites it, whoever has heard it !

205 Whoever has heard, whoever recites it,  
       may the benediction of Brigid rest on him !  
       the benediction of Brigid and of God  
       rest upon us, together !

There are two nuns in the Kingdom,—  
 210   I implore their aid (?) with all my effort,—  
       Mary and St. Brigid ;  
       may we be under the protection of these two

*Sancta Brigita uirgo sacratissima*  
*in Christo domino fuit fidelissima. Amen.*