

## IRISH APOCRYPHA.

## I

THE transmission of apocryphal writings, otherwise unknown, in the Irish vernacular would be a proper subject for a small monograph. That I cannot attempt; but I should like to put on record a contribution to it.

Two Irish writings are concerned. (1) The book called the *Evernew Tongue*. (2) The *Vision of Adamnan*.

The first exists in three texts: (L) the oldest and longest in the fifteenth-century Book of Lismore; (R) a second in MSS at Rennes and elsewhere, appreciably shorter and more modern; (M) a third in a MS transcribed as late as 1817.

L is edited and translated by Whitley Stokes in *Eriu* vol. ii, 1905; R and M by G. Dottin in vols. 24 and 28 respectively of the *Revue Celtique*.

Stated as briefly as possible, the content of the *Evernew Tongue* is this.

The works of God and wonders of creation were unknown to mankind until they were declared by the Evernew Tongue to the wise men of the Hebrews on Mount Sion.

A multitude of kings and bishops was assembled there. On Easter Eve a great light shone on them from heaven and a marvellous voice was heard.

The speaker was the Evernew Tongue; the tongue of the Apostle Philip, which had been cut out of his head nine (or seven or three) times by the heathen, and restored each time.

In a series of answers to questions asked by the wise men of the Hebrews, it described the works of the six days of creation, Hell, the day of Judgement, the beauty of God and of Heaven.

The assembly dispersed and wrote down the revelation.

Under each of the six days (after the first) a good deal of detail is given,

viz. The seven heavens, and the zones: wonderful seas, wells, and rivers; wonderful stones and trees: the stars: the course of the sun at night: marvellous birds and tribes of men.

The only incident in the course of the book is that about the middle of it a certain descendant of Judas Iscariot rises and says he does not believe what the Tongue has said. He is smitten with instant death.

The text is extremely obscure and involved: many passages yield no clear sense even to Stokes or Dottin. Stokes says that the text L may safely be assigned to the tenth or eleventh century.

Is it merely an Irish extravaganza, or is there cause for regarding it as a version of an older document? There is: in L passages in Latin occur with some frequency. They are absent from R and M. L also gives a number of sentences in a jargon said to be the language of angels.

It is no doubt a habit with Irish church-writers to intercalate Latin phrases into the midst of Irish texts. The *scholia* on the *Liber Hymnorum* or on the Lives of Saints in the Book of Lismore show this again and again. But the case of the *Evernew Tongue* is not quite the same. The Latin in it appears (a) as rendering of the 'angelic language' in several cases; (b) the questions of the wise men are six times given in Latin; (c) commonly the questions when in Irish are prefaced by 'Dixerunt sapientes Ebreorum' (or 'plebs Ebreica' or the like); (d) a long paragraph at the end descriptive of the joys of heaven is wholly in Latin. Thus the Latin is in the form of connected sentences, not isolated words. Stokes had no hesitation in regarding it as taken from an original in Latin (which he guessed might have been an Apocalypse of Philip), and no better opinion than his could be asked for.

There was, then, a Latin apocryph of St Philip, which we have in this Irish dress, and, it seems, in no other. To trace its relationships and assign to it a place in literature will be worth while, if it can be done.

I may say at once that its right place is not among apocalypses, but among dialogues. There is a fairly large class of old writings in the form of question and answer, of which the prototypes have not been finally investigated.

The Greek (and Slavonic) group will be found very important, but texts are hard to procure. Those printed by Krasnoselcev in Addenda to Vassiliev's *Anecdota Graeco-Byzantina* (Odessa, 1898) I have not seen. Nachtigall's article in *Archiv für Slavische Philologie*, 1901, gives almost all the quotations in Slavonic. The best accessible source at present is C. F. Georg Heinrici's tract *Griechisch-Byzantinische Gesprächsbücher* in *Abh. d. Kön. Sächs. Ges. f. Wiss., Phil.-Hist. Kl.*, 28 (1910-1911). Most of the tracts are anonymous, but the leading one in Slavonic is a dialogue of the three doctors Basil, Gregory, and John Chrysostom. The questions of John, the late dialogue of the Panagiote

and the Azymite, and other texts printed by Vassiliev belong to this class. Kemble's edition of *Salomon and Saturn* gives a good quantity of material in Latin, Anglo-Saxon, and other vernaculars.

These texts are for the most part thoroughly vulgar and popular in character, full of folk-lore and descending to elementary jokes. *Salomon and Saturn* and the *Evernew Tongue* are the only ones which can claim to be thought of as literature, and these are sufficiently bizarre.

It is true that the category of apocalypse runs into that of dialogue, for question and answer are an important element in even the most classical of apocalypses, e. g. 4 Esdras. But in the dialogue class they are paramount. These writings may have been developed out of apocalypse, but they constitute a distinct group.

Points of contact—apart from general form—between the *Evernew Tongue* and some of the older dialogues are discoverable. The *E. T.* (§§ 65–81 Stokes) tells of the twelve places where the sun shines at night: in all the texts a good deal is said about his visit to Hell during these hours. The prose *Salomon and Saturn* of Vitellius A. xv and the *Adrian and Ritheus* (both in Kemble) have something corresponding to this: *S. and S.* no. 55 Why is the sun red at evening? because it looketh down on hell. *A. and R.* no. 6 Where the sun shineth by night? in three places, first in the belly of the whale that is called Leviathan, second in hell, third on the island that is called Glið, and there rest the souls of holy men till doomsday. . . . Why is it so red at evening? because it looketh down on hell. This last answer is also in the late *Master of Oxford's* Catechism. Compare *E. T.* (L) 74 He shines on the ribs of the great beast that distributes the many seas round the flanks of the earth: (R) he grows red after the fiery dwellings of the sea on the west . . . he shines on the gates of hell to the north: (M) he shines on the Land of the Young (Tir n'an Oge?) full of the fairest and most melodious birds of the world.

Another image which is common to several of the texts is that of a monstrous bird. *E. T.* 58 describes the huge bird Hiruath or Joruait in India: *S. and S.* (verse: ll. 517–562) the great bird called *Vasa Mortis*: the *Collectanea Bedae* has an allegory on the subject of the Indian bird Goballus.

There is not, I think, here a question of borrowing by one set of documents from another, but rather of employment of a common source, or adoption of current folk-lore.

The *Evernew Tongue*, however, is not wholly dependent on current folk-lore: it could not well be so, if it is indeed a rendering of a Latin original. It is, to a certain extent, learned. The descriptions of marvellous fountains, stones, trees, races of men, are such as we meet with in Solinus, Isidore, and other borrowers of ancient lore. I do not

think that any of these descriptions in their present form can be recognized as quotations; but a couple of specimens will serve to shew how near they are to the old sources.

*E. T.* 44. The stone adamant in India is not cooled by ice nor heated by fire, nor broken by axes or hammers. Save the blood of the Lamb at Mass, nothing breaks it. (This last touch, as Stokes has seen, is a Christianizing of Pliny's statement that only the blood of the he-goat can break the diamond.) Every king who takes it in his right hand before a battle, routs his foes.

45. The stone Hibien in the lands of Hab flames like fire at night: it spills every poison out of the vessel in which it is put, and kills all snakes that approach or cross it.

Such matter as this is common in the Lapidaries, and it is to that class of book, and to the *libri de monstis* and the 'paradoxographers' generally, that one must look to find illustrations of these parts of the *Evernew Tongue*. In this respect it stands alone, I think, among *apocrypha*.

The relation between this and other legends of St Philip is obscure. The Eastern Acts, Greek and Syriac, are a most extravagant romance, with stories of a talking ox, a converted leopard and kid, and so forth. The Greek Acts represent the Apostle as having been crucified at Hierapolis. The Latin Acts, on the other hand, which form the last (tenth) book of the *Historia Apostolica* of Abdias, are short and tame: St Philip performs one miracle, in the eviction of a serpent-god from the temple of Mars, and dies a peaceful death at Hierapolis at the age of 86.

One episode in the Greek Acts—that called the *Acta Philippi in Hellade*—resembles, superficially at least, the *E. T.* In it the Apostle converts an assembly of 300 philosophers, and causes an unbelieving Jewish high-priest to be swallowed up in the earth by instalments. Here also, and in the Martyrdom, are sentences of so-called Hebrew, which recall the 'angelic language' of the *E. T.* A peculiar feature, by the way, of all such passages, is that the interpretation of them is wont to exceed vastly in length the possible content of the original.

The Irish Passion of St Philip (Atkinson *Passions and Homilies* p. 356) in the *Leabhar Breac* blends the Eastern and Western Acts in a curious way. It is in the main a version of Abdias. Just before Abd. cap. 3 it inserts a sentence 'Hierapolis was the name of the city in which Philip was afterwards crucified'. It somewhat expands the address made by Philip to his clergy 'on the 12th day before his passion'. Then, in place of the notice of his peaceful death, it proceeds to say that 'the unbelieving crowds and the Jewish priests rose against him and ordered his tongue to be cut out. This was done, but none the

less did he go on teaching the people. They cut it out again, but that did him no hurt. Seven times was this done, yet he stopped not his teaching all that time. So they ordered him to be stoned. He was beaten and otherwise maltreated, and finally crucified.' There was seen a great glory with a concourse of angels round the cross, when Philip gave up the ghost. Then the concluding sentences of Abdias, about the age of the Apostle, and his virgin-daughters, are inserted, with some slight expansions.

It may very well be the case (though it is not certain) that the passage about St Philip's tongue is here borrowed from the *E. T.*: but upon the whole it seems clear that the Irish legend-writer was conscious of a story of Philip's martyrdom which is characteristic of the Eastern as opposed to the Western Acts.

The Hymn to St Philip in the Irish *Liber Hymnorum* (Atkinson and Bernard, ii 83) is no more than a paraphrase of §§ 92-96 of the *E. T.*, a fact naturally not noticed by the editors, to whom the text of the *E. T.* was not accessible.

I find it impossible to discern a reasonable setting for the *E. T.* The instruction given by St Philip was, it is said, the beginning of the faith; and yet there are thousands of bishops in his audience, Jerusalem is a Christian city, Easter is kept, and the events of Christ's life are assumed as known. The prologue, again, says that until this teaching was given, mankind were in complete ignorance about the works of God. All one can safely say is that in these particulars the Irish embellisher has been taking great liberties with his original. That there was an original, and that it was comparatively brief and simple, I do not doubt. A parallel instance is afforded, I think, by the poetical *Salomon and Saturn*, which I regard as an elaboration of a much shorter ancient document: not improbably the *Contradictio Salomonis* condemned in the Gelasian decree.

## II

The two later texts of the *Evernew Tongue*, viz. that of the Rennes MS (R) and the modern recension (M), both have passages not found in L which recur in the *Vision of Adamnan* (Ad.). Some of these seem to be quotations from Ad., others may be from a source of Ad.

The *Vision of Adamnan* is said to be at least as old as the tenth century. Two texts of it exist: both are printed in Irish by Windisch (*Irische Texte*), and the older of the two has been edited in English with an interesting commentary by A. Boswell (*An Irish Precursor of Dante*). The text which he does *not* follow has a prologue of a homiletic character and one or two expansions which undoubtedly seem to mark it as later and less good than the other.

This consists of a preface (on which see a note by me in *J. T. S.* 1910, p. 290), a description of heaven, a description of hell, and an epilogue. The passages which concern us are all in the description of heaven.

*E. T.* 23 (R) The heaven and 7,000 angels with the form of horse and of bird. = Ad. 3 Six thousand thousand in guise of horses and of birds surround the fiery chair.

*E. T.* 86 (R) Though there be no glory there save of the 7,000 angels that are there as candles, yet every human being would be satiated with the perfume of one single one = Ad. 13 7,000 angels, as it were great candles, illumine the city. The men of all the world would derive sustenance from the sweet savour of a single one.

These two passages, I think, may safely be regarded as quotations made from Ad. by R. The borrowings (if such they be) of M are more important: and, be it noted, M does not contain those which have just been cited.

*E. T.* 64 (15 M) The Hebrews ask about the seven heavens, their names, and what is the punishment and penance in each. They are answered thus: The seven heavens are Air, Ether, Olympus, Ignitum, Caelum, Hesperium, Caelum Trinitatis. Each has a gate and a guard. Of the first heaven the citadel is Abistum. Michael is the guard. By him are two young men with rods of iron to smite sinners. This is their first torment.

The gate of the second heaven is Illisiom, the guardian Uriel. There are two attendants who wash souls, and three fountains which purify the good and burn the bad.

The gate of the third is Jarian, the guardian Raphael. There is something in it (disguised by a lacuna) 12,000 in height. Just souls cross the river at once, wicked ones stay in it twelve years. It is seven times as cold as snow.

The gate of the fourth is Lazarus, the guardian Sariel. There is a river of fire, unlike other rivers. Souls of sinners remain in it. When the time comes for their release, an angel draws near with a thorn-rod of iron: each thorn of it has 100 points and makes 100 wounds on the face of each sinner.

Michael carries the souls to the seventh heaven, that of the Trinity, and presents them to God, who receives each according to his desert. [Christ says to the angels: Shew the glory of the heavenly city to the sinners, that their sorrow at leaving me may be the greater. The Hebrews said: How many rewards are there in heaven? *Ans.*: Six hundred and two, and as many in hell.] The Almighty says to the angels: Take the unbelieving soul out of the sight of the heavenly city: and He separates it from the protection of the angels who have guarded

it hitherto. It utters a sigh heavier than any sigh. Twelve poisonous serpents swallow it one after the other, and pass it on into the mouth of the devil [and Lucifer plunges it into the mansions of hell, which are Aesiro (Acheron), Ceticriso, Sasertus (Tartarus?), Costas (Cocytus), and Flexeton (Phlegethon)].

With this compare §§ 15 sqq. of Ad. In these there is no enumeration of the heavens, but there is part of the account of the gates and guardians. The gate of the first heaven is not named, but the rest agrees with M. For the second heaven the gate is not named; Ariel is the guardian. Two youths with fiery scourges smite the wicked on the face and eyes. There is a river of fire before the gate, watched by Abersetus, who purges just souls till they shine. A pleasant spring is near, to cleanse them and to scald the bad. Third heaven: no names are given: there are flames of a furnace 12,000 cubits high: the rest as in M. Fourth heaven: no names: a fiery stream at the door: a wall of fire 12,000 cubits broad. The just pass it, the bad cannot for twelve years, till their guardian angel brings them to the Fifth heaven. There is a fiery river unlike other rivers, with whirlpools. Sinners stay there sixteen years, righteous pass it at once. When the time of release comes, an angel smites them with a rod, hard as though of stone, and lifts up the souls with the end of it. Michael brings them to the door of the Sixth heaven: there is no torment there, but lustre as of precious stones. Then Michael comes to the Angel of the Trinity, and, one on each side, they present the soul to God. The remainder of the passage corresponds closely with M, omitting the bracketed passages.

One thing is evident: M is not using our present text of Adamnan, but one partly better, partly worse: better in that it gives names which Ad. has not, worse in that it telescopes the fourth and fifth heaven into one, and omits the sixth.

A third document of earlier date now comes in to complicate matters. We have a Latin text of part of this description of the heavens. It is one of a series of passages (mostly of a homiletic kind) published by Dom D. de Bruyne from a Reichenau MS (254 at Carlsruhe) of cent. viii-ix (*Revue Bénédictine*, 1907, p. 311). It must be quoted almost in full. I italicize the words which correspond to anything either in Ad. or M.

'Omnis roris qui descendit de austro super faciem terræ sursum ascendit in celum cum ipsum. *Abottem (= Abistum of M) tertium celum in medio eius fornacem ardentem. Ita constitutum est altitudo flamme xii milia cupitis. anima sanctorum et peccatorum per illum ueheuntur. anima sanctorum in momento pertransit, anima uero peccatorum xii annis habitant in medio fornacem ardentem. Tunc uenit angelus baiulat illius usque ad quartum celum qui uocatur iothiam*

(cf. *Jarian* of M) ubi habitat *flumini igneo et muro flumini. altitudo flumini xii milia cubitis* et fluctus eius exal(t)atur usque ad quintum celum et ubi (ibi) peccatoris morantur xii annis in medio fluminis. Tunc angelus adfert illum usque ad sextum celum qui appellatur Seloth. In medio eius rotam et angelo tartarucho cum uirgis ferreis percutientis rotam et inde uoluitur in gyru et flumine tres. ponitur (?transponitur) homo peccatur (-or) super rotam. xii annis tormentatur. Centum scintille procedit de rotam et centum pondus in uno scindule et centum anime percremant. Deinde tradatur homo peccator ad celum septimum qui uocatur Theruch ubi dominus habitat super lapidem preciosum unde uenit lux et ignis de lapide. Dominus iudicat de illo homo peccator et tradatur hunc ad angelum tartarucho. Et angelus dimergit eum in infernum. ciuitas ferreas et muros ferreos igneos et xii turres et xii dracones in uno turres et xii penis et xii flagellis ardentis. Uae impii et peccatoris etc., etc. Uae his habitantis in inferno . . . ubi draco antiquos ubi leones et dracones interficient impiis et peccatoris usque in diem resurrectionis in secula seculorum.

If the date assigned to Ad. (tenth century) is correct, we must regard the apocalypse, of which this is a corrupt fragment or quotation, as a source of Ad. and, possibly, of M. It must be fairly ancient: it represents most of the heavens as the scenes of purgation and punishment, and in this it agrees with the Greek Apocalypse of Baruch, and, to a certain extent, with the Slavonic Enoch. But it shews no obligation to either of these books, nor to any other that I know. It has a single mark of date in its use of the word *tartaruchus*, a word invented, as I believe, by the author of the *Apoc. Petri* (and used in the *Apoc. Pauli* and others of that class). To that book it may also owe the conception of a river of fire which spares the good and burns the wicked. If so, it is a Christian book.

That it was current in Ireland is seen from its use in Ad. and M; and this leads me to the remark that all the fragments printed by De Bruyne from the Reichenau MS (Reichenau was an Irish foundation) appear to be from a Celtic workshop. They are linked together by many catchwords and phrases, and the same peculiar Latinity runs through them all. In no. 3 there is a distinct quotation from the Apocalypse of Thomas, another indication of the fondness of the Irish for obscure apocrypha.

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