St. Patrick's Day

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Most American Christians are unaware of the true story of St. Patrick. He was one of the greatest missionaries of all time, evangelizing all of Ireland, and then training up leaders who went to a Europe that had fallen into the Dark Ages after the collapse of the Roman Empire. Patrick's disciples re-evangelized all of Europe. This certainly gives us a REAL reason to celebrate this Saturday.

Born in 389 in England, Magonus Sucatus Patricius expressed little interest in God as a child. God, however, had big plans for this son of a deacon and grandson of a priest. In 405 Irish raiders attacked Wales, searching for plunder and captives. Sixteen-year-old Patrick and hundreds of others were dragged aboard ships. Once in port in Ireland, the marauders herded the captives off the boats to the slave market. A man named Milchu bought Patrick. While other boys his age learned Latin, he tended sheep.

During his captivity, Patrick embraced a personal faith. "And there the Lord opened the sense of my unbelief," he said, "that I might at last remember my sins and be converted with all my heart to the Lord my God." After six years of slavery, Patrick dreamt that a ship lay waiting in port to take him home. Now 22, he ran away from Milchu, made his way to the ship and eventually returned to Britain.

Soon after his reunion with his family, Patrick had his most famous vision. He saw a man walking toward him over a sea. The man held out a letter, the first words of which were, "The voice of the Irish." Then, as if from all around, Patrick heard the cries of those he had come to know during his Irish captivity. "We beseech thee holy youth," they pleaded, "to come and walk once more amongst us." Taking this as a call from God to bring the gospel to his former captors, Patrick left Britain-this time of his own volition-to start the process that ultimately resulted in appointment as Bishop to Ireland.
Around 432 Patrick again set foot on Irish soil. "He gathered people around him in the open fields and preached Christ to them," writes biographer Elgin Moyer. "His burning zeal, deep sincerity and gentleness of manner won peasants and nobility alike." Patrick knew from his years of slavery that if he could win tribal chieftains to Christ, the rest of the tribe would follow. Through there is no proof of this, legend says that Patrick used a shamrock to explain the Trinity to one of these local lords. Not surprisingly, he met with substantial opposition from the druid magician-priests of Celtic Ireland. Legend says that Patrick battled them using what we would now call "power encounters." There are stories of him raising the dead and causing the earth to swallow up his enemies.

Although he was painfully aware of his poor Latin and rusticity, tradition has it that Patrick founded hundreds of churches, monasteries, and schools, and baptized 100,000 converts. After nearly 30 years of ministry, he retired to the Irish village of Saul where he wrote his Confession and, on March 17th, 461, died.

When the dust settled from the collapse of the Roman Empire, one of the few Christian communities in the world with any vitality was the Irish church, founded by Patrick. The task of re-evangelizing England and parts of continental Europe fell to the Christians of Ireland. David Burnett, author of *Dawning of the Pagan Moon* writes that "while Europe was entering its Dark Ages the Celtic church began to send out its most adventurous as missionaries." The most famous of these, Columba, settled on the small island of Iona with twelve companions. The monastery they founded became the center of missions to Scotland. These missions eventually moved south to the rest of England.

Patrick is no leprechaun. He stands in history as the apostle to Ireland, just as Paul was an apostle. This March 17th, let's not forget the real Patrick. Kidnapped from his home and sold as a slave. He was called by God to take the name of Jesus and a hearty dose of forgiveness to his former captors. Used of God to start hundreds of churches and lead thousands of people to Christ. "Is it my own doing that I have holy mercy on the people who once took me captive?" said Patrick. "What I am I have received from God. And so I live among barbarians a stranger and exile for the love of God."
It was a dark night of storm and wind, but the people in the little farm on the western coast of Scotland were accustomed to stormy winds and the sound of breakers dashing upon the rocky shore, and they paid little heed to the wintry weather. They were all tired out with their day’s work, and thankful, when the darkness closed in, to bar the doors and shut out the wild night as they gathered round the fire within. A rough set of people they looked in the light of the great peat fire that burned on the hearth. Only one, a boy of sixteen, seemed different to the rest, and had a gentler, more civilised look, while he held himself as if accustomed to command.

This boy was Patrick, son of the master Calponius, who belonged to the Roman colony at Dumbarton, and he had been brought up with care and taught all that a young Roman citizen should know. His gentle mother, niece of the holy Saint Martin of Tours, had brought with her many a cherished memory of courtly manners from the sunny land of her birth, and she had taught the boy to be courteous and knightly in his bearing. So it was that Patrick learned many things which were as yet unknown in the savage northern land where he dwelt, but chiefest among all was the faith of Christ, taught to him by his father and mother, who were both Christians.

But all these lessons seemed very dull and uninteresting to the restless boy. It was such a waste of the golden hours to sit indoors and learn those endless psalms. Prayers, too, took such a weary time, when he might be out on the hillside, as free as the happy birds and all the wild creatures that lived under the open sky. Sometimes in his heart he almost wondered whether it might not be pleasanter to be a heathen rather than a Christian. The heathen had no psalms to learn and could do just as they pleased.

"Some day thou wilt grow wiser," said his mother, "and what is but a dull lesson to thee now will be like apples of gold in pictures of silver."
But Patrick could not understand what she meant, and he was only too glad when lesson-time was over and he was allowed to go off to the little farm close to the sea, where he could work with his hands and not with his head. How he loved the rough free life there; the days spent in the fields and woods, the evenings when the peat was heaped high on the glowing hearth, and he listened to the stories of brave deeds and wild adventures which were told or sung in the flickering firelight! What cared he for shrieking winds and the roar of the breakers outside? It was fitting music to echo around the splendid tales that made his heart beat like a drum and his eyes glow like the fire.

"It is a wild night," said one of the men, "and black as the pit. We must needs have a wild song to match the night and chase away the blackness."

So the rude chant of savage deeds and wild adventures was taken up one by one, until the roar of the storm was drowned in their ears and the wail of the wind became part of the mournful music.

But outside in the blackness the wind had sterner work to do than to act as chorus to idle tales. What were those mysterious long black boats that fought their way so stubbornly through the angry waves? They seemed like phantoms of the night, so silently they moved, showing never a glimmer of light from stem to stern. In vain the icy wind swept down upon them and strove to beat them back. Slowly but surely they crept on until they reached a sheltered bay where sand was smooth and it was safe to land.

Black and silent as their boats the pirate crew landed one by one, and, like the ghosts of sea-monsters, crawled stealthily over the rocks and up the hill towards the farm that nestled in a hollow there. The light from the peat fire shone through the little window; a burst of wild song came floating out into the dark night: there was no thought of lurking danger or surprise.

Closer and closer crept the black figures until they too could listen to the story that was chanted by the fireside, and they laughed aloud to hear such brave words coming from the lips of men who sat safe and warm within, little dreaming of the real danger that beset them without.

"Hark!" cried one of the singers suddenly, "surely the wind hath a strange voice to-night. To me it soundeth like the laughter of demons."

With one accord the company started to their feet, for the sound they heard was no voice of the storm. The door was burst inwards with a tremendous crash, and well might the little company think for a moment that demons were abroad. Fearlessly and bravely they fought, but one by one they were overpowered, and either killed outright or bound hand and foot. The captain stood and looked at the row of sullen captives.
"Away with them to the boats," he cried. Then, pointing to Patrick, he added, "See that ye handle that one carefully, for he is a strong lad and will fetch a good price when we land on the other side."

There was nothing to be done, no rescue to hope for, and resistance only made matters worse. Patrick lay stunned and despairing in the bottom of the boat which was to carry him away from his home and his friends. It was all like a bad dream, the tossing of that stormy sea, the long dark night, the landing in a strange country, and the knowledge that he was now a slave to be sold to the highest bidder.

So Patrick came to Ireland, and was sold to a man whom they called Michu, and sent out into the fields to feed his master's swine.

Strong and hardy as the boy was, the life which he had now to lead taxed his endurance to the uttermost. There was little rest or leisure, for a slave's work is never finished, and he was often so hungry and so bitterly cold that he felt half stunned with misery. Even when the snow was on the ground he had to drive out his herd of pigs to find food for them, and often he was out all night upon the hillside, sheltering in some rocky corner as best he could from the biting wind that swept over the mountains.

In those long dark nights there was plenty of time for thinking, and the boy's thoughts were always of the far-off home and all that he had lost. Strangely enough it was not of the happy careless hours that he dreamed, but rather of the times that had once seemed so tiresome and so long. He loved to think of his mother, and those dull lessons which had once made him so impatient. Little by little all that he had learned came back to him, but instead of being only tiresome lessons, the psalms and prayers held a curious comforting message, as if a friend were speaking to him. Then their meaning became clearer and clearer until he realised that they were indeed a message from a real Friend. Though he was alone, homeless and utterly friendless, God was still there.

"Our Father," said the boy to himself, and the very words seemed to change everything around. God was here in this terrible unknown country, and God was his Father. To be a slave lost half its bitterness when he could stand upright and know himself to be God's servant as well.

For six long years Patrick served his master, Michu, diligently and well, for all this time he was learning also to serve God. With that love in his heart, he learned to care for all helpless things, and to see what was beautiful in common things around. Years afterwards, when he was a great teacher and the heathen priests scoffed at his teaching, and asked how he could explain the Trinity "Three Persons in One God," Patrick stooped down and plucked a leaf of the little green shamrock, which had taught him one of his lessons on the lonely hillside, and, showing its three leaves in one, gave a simple illustration of the great Mystery.
It was at the end of his sixth year of slavery, that one night Patrick drove his pigs to a distant hill overlooking his master's farm, and there, under the stars, in the shelter of a rock, he lay down to rest. It was not long before he fell asleep; but in his sleep he heard a voice close at hand speaking to him.

"Thy fasting is well," said the voice; "thou shalt soon return to thy country. Behold a ship is ready for thee, but thou must journey many miles."

Patrick started up, never doubting for a moment but that this was the message of an angel. He had lived so close to God that he was ever ready to receive His commands. In the story of his life, which he has written himself, he says, "I went in the power of the Lord, who directed my way for good, and I feared nothing until I arrived at that ship."

Weary, footsore, and worn after the long journey on foot, Patrick presented himself before the ship's captain, and prayed that he might be taken aboard and carried over to Britain. It was perhaps small wonder that the captain looked with suspicion at the wild figure of the runaway slave, and bade him angrily begone.

It was a bitter ending to Patrick's hopes, and he turned very sorrowfully away. The journey had been so long, and he had felt so sure that all would be well at the end. Then, as ever, his first thought was to turn to his One Friend, and so he knelt down on the shore and prayed for help and guidance. The answer came even as he prayed, and he heard a shout from one of the sailors, who had followed him.

"Come along," he cried, "they are asking for thee."

Back went Patrick in all haste, and found that meanwhile the captain had changed his mind.

"Come, we will take thee on trust," he said, meaning that Patrick should work out his own passage, or repay him when they landed. "We are about to sail, and hope to reach land in three days."

Those were three days of great happiness to Patrick, as he saw Ireland growing fainter and fainter in the distance, and knew that before him lay freedom and home, and all that he had lost.

But although the ship reached land in three days, it was not the land he knew, and he was still far off from home. The crew of the ship landed somewhere on the coast of Brittany, and tried to find their way to some town, having to travel across a strange, desolate country where there were no inhabitants and nothing to guide them. Day by day their store of food grew less, until they had nothing left to eat, and it seemed as if they must die of starvation.
Now the captain had found that Patrick was to be trusted, and had watched him often at his prayers, and came to think there must be some truth in a religion that made a man so honest and ready to do his duty. So now he called Patrick to him to ask his advice.

"Christian," he said, "thy God is powerful; pray for us, for we are starving."

"I will pray," answered Patrick, "but thou too must have faith in the Lord."

So just as a hungry child turns to his father and asks for bread, Patrick knelt and prayed to God, and suddenly there was a sound of rushing and tearing through the wood, and a herd of wild boars came sweeping along. The men gave chase, and soon captured and killed enough to provide food for many days.

After many adventures Patrick at last reached home, and for a while forgot all the hardships he had endured in the joy and happiness of that wonderful home-coming.

But the careless happy days of boyhood were over now, and a man's work was waiting for him.

"Only let the work be here," prayed his mother. "O my son, promise that thou wilt never leave us again, now that we have so wonderfully found thee."

For a while that too was Patrick's only wish, never to leave the dear home and those he loved so well.

But, as he lay asleep one night, the heavenly messenger came once more to him and pointed out the path which God would have him tread. It seemed to Patrick that the angel held in his hand a bundle of letters, and on one was written "the voice of the Irish." This he gave to Patrick, who, as he read, seemed to hear the call of many voices echoing from the land where he had been a slave. Even the voices of little children rang in his ears, and all of them were calling to him and saying, "We entreat thee, come and walk still in the midst of us."

The thought of those poor untaught people who had never heard of God had often made him long to help them, and this call decided him. He would enter God's service as a priest, and then go back to the country of his captivity to carry the torch of God's love in his hand, and spread abroad the glorious light in every corner of the dark land.

After a long time of preparation and study, Patrick was at last consecrated bishop, and then set out at once to return to the country where he had suffered so much.

It was a very different coming this time to the arrival of the boy-slave many years before. With his train of clergy and helpers, the bishop, pastoral staff in hand, landed on the
sandy shore of Strangford Lough, and he bore himself as a conqueror marching to victory.

Strangely enough, the first person to greet the band of strangers was a swineherd guarding his pigs, just as Patrick had done in those long years of slavery. The lad was terrified when he saw these strange men, and although Patrick spoke kindly to him in his own tongue, the swineherd fled away to the woods. With all haste he returned to his master, Dichu, and told his news.

"There are pirates landing at the bay," he cried, "strange men who come to rob and kill."

Dichu in alarm immediately armed himself and his followers and set out to meet the enemy. But instead of the savage pirates he expected, he found a band of peaceful unarmed men, with one at their head whom it was easy to see was no robber.

Patrick came forward then to meet the chief, and the two men talked a while earnestly together.

"Put up your weapons," cried Dichu, turning to his followers, "these men are friends and not enemies."

As friends, then, Dichu led them to his house and made them welcome. The fearless bravery of Patrick and his strong kind face had won the chieftain's heart, and he prepared to entertain him royally. But Patrick could neither rest nor eat until his message was delivered, and as Dichu listened to his burning words, they seemed to seize him with a strange power and made him long to hear more. Gladly would he have kept Patrick with him, but there was much work to be done, and the bishop wished first of all to seek out his old master Michu, and pay the money due to him as the price of the runaway slave.

How well he knew every step of the way to the old farm! It seemed as if he must be walking in a dream, that he must be still the barefooted, hungry, ill-clad boy of long ago. There were the woods through which he had so often driven his pigs, the banks where he had found the first spring flowers, the rocks which had so often sheltered him, the little green friendly shamrock which he had loved so dearly. Up the steep hillside he climbed, and at the top he paused and knelt in prayer, remembering the vision he had seen there and the message of the angel. Then, rising up, he looked eagerly towards the spot where his master's farm nestled in the hollow beneath.

Alas! he had come too late; nothing but a thin grey curl of smoke marked the place where the smouldering ashes of the farm lay, and, saddest of all, his master too had perished in the fire.
So there was naught to do but turn back and carry the message to others. But Patrick's heart was sad for his old master.

The glad season of Easter was close at hand, but it held no meaning for the people of this dark land. True, they had their own religion, a strange worship of the sun, and their priests, who were called Druids, were said to possess magical powers and great wisdom. They had great festivals too in which all the people joined, and one of these was just about to be held at Tara. Here the Druids were all assembled to do honour to the sun, which was becoming powerful enough to put winter to flight and warm the spring buds into summer blossoms. For some days before the feast, every fire was put out, and not a light was allowed to be kindled, on pain of death, until the great festal light should be lighted on the Hill of Tara.

Now Patrick was brave as a lion, and his heart was set on delivering his message and spreading the True Light in this heathen darkness, so there was no room for fear. The gathering of the priests and the presence of the powerful King Laoghaire seemed to him a splendid opportunity of fighting the powers of evil.

Across hill and dale he travelled swiftly with his little band of followers until he reached the Hill of Slane, close to Tara. There, on Easter Eve, when the land was wrapt in darkness, when not the faintest glimmer of a light could be seen in the solemn blackness that brooded over Tara's Hill, he lit his Easter fire and watched the tongues of flame as they shot up and lighted the whole country round.

The King and his counsellors the Druids came hastily together in anger and astonishment when they saw the glowing light.

"Who has dared to do this thing?" asked the King in a fury.

"It is none of our people," said the priest: "it is the challenge of an enemy."

The wise men were troubled and talked together in half-fearful tones. There was an ancient prophecy which rung in their ears, and made them wonder if the man they had seen wending his way at the head of his little company that day to the Hill of Slane was possessed of some magic power.

Slowly one of the Druids chanted the verse, while the others listened sullenly.

"He comes, he comes with shaven crown,
from off the storm-tossed sea,
His garment piercèd at the neck,
with crook-like staff comes he.
Far in his house, at its east end,
his cups and patins lie.
His people answer to his voice:
Amen, Amen, they cry. Amen, Amen."

"Whoe'er he be, he shall not come to challenge our power," quoth the King. "We will go forth and punish this bold stranger."

Down the dark silent hillside the King and his councillors rode furiously, and never stopped until they reached the Hill of Slane. But there the Druids called a halt.

"Let a messenger be sent to fetch forth the man," they said; "we will not venture within the line of his magic fire."

"We will receive him here," said the King, "and let no man rise when he approaches lest he should think that in any way we seek to honour him."

So the men sat down silently to wait until the messenger should return, and ere long Patrick was seen to come swiftly down the hill towards them. That was the man, there was no doubt of it. As he came nearer they could see the shaven crown, the robe pierced at the neck, and in his hand the crook-like staff, while from the hill-top could be heard the music of the Easter hymn and the chanting of the loud "Amen."

The company sat silent and unmoved as Patrick approached. Only one little lad, watching with intent eyes the face of the stranger, rose to his feet in reverent greeting, forgetting the King's command.

A gentle look came into Patrick's eyes as he noticed the eager greeting and, raising his hand, he blessed the little lad.

"Who art thou, and what is thy errand here?" thundered the King.

"I am a torchbearer," answered Patrick. "I bring the True Light to lighten this dark land, to spread around peace and goodwill. All I ask is that thou wilt hear my message."

Alone and unarmed but quite fearless, Patrick stood up before the angry men next day, and spoke such words as they had never heard before. It was a new and wonderful teaching, and many of the wise men and nobles listened eagerly; and when he was done they came and asked to be baptized and enrolled under the banner of Patrick's God.

That was a glad Eastertide for the bishop, and as time went on the light spread far and wide. Many there were who shut their eyes and loved the darkness rather than the light, but Patrick was wise in his dealings with them all. He was never harsh or scornful of their beliefs, but always tried to lead them through what was good and beautiful in their own
religion, using old customs and feasts to do honour to Christ, giving them a new meaning that linked them to His service.

Then, too, he wisely tried to win over the chief men of the land to become Christians, knowing that their followers would the more readily follow their masters. Young boys were also his special care, remembering as he always did his bitter years of lonely slavery, and these lads were to him as sons. The boy he had blessed on that Easter Eve on the hillside of Slane was now one of his followers, and years afterwards we hear of him as Bishop of Slane. It was one of these lads whom Patrick loved so well, whose bravery and loyal devotion once saved the good bishop's life.

Coming one day to the spot where a great stone marked the place of the Druids' worship, Patrick overthrew the stone that he might set up an altar instead. This was considered a terrible insult, and one of the heathen chiefs vowed that, come what might, he would kill Patrick wherever he found him.

Now the lad who drove Patrick's chariot heard this threat, and accordingly guarded his master with increased watchfulness. At last, however, his enemy's opportunity came, for Patrick's journeying took him past the chief's abode. The boy Oran knew that his master had no fear and would never turn aside to escape danger, so, as they neared the place, he thought of a plan to save him.

"I grow so weary with this long day of driving, my master," he said. "My hands can scarce hold the reins. If thou wouldst but drive for a space and let me rest, all would be well."

"Thou shouldst have asked sooner, my son," said the bishop kindly. "I am but a hard master to overtask thy strength."

So saying, Patrick changed seats, and gathering up the reins, drove on, while the boy sat behind in his master's seat, and prayed that the gathering darkness might close in swiftly, so that no one could mark the change.

Very soon they reached the outskirts of a dense wood, and from the sheltering trees a dark figure sprang out. The frightened horse reared for a moment, there was a singing sound of some weapon whizzing through the air, and when Patrick turned to see what it meant, the boy lay dead with a javelin in his heart—the murderer's weapon, which had been meant for the master. Well might Patrick, as he knelt there in his bitter grief, bear in his heart the echo of his Master's words, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Journeying on from place to place teaching the people, Patrick came at one time to Cruachan, and there, by the well of Clebach, he stopped to rest in the early morning with his little band of followers. Very earnestly they talked together in the dim morning light,
and they had no eyes to notice the glorious golden banners flung out in the east to herald the rising sun, nor did they notice two white-clad figures that came stealing up towards the well where they sat.

When the day is just awakening, and the stillness and mystery of the night still lies hid in sleepy hollows and shadowy woods, there is a magic spell upon the earth. It is the same old world, and yet all is fresh, all is good and beautiful. Fear is not yet awake. Wild creatures are tame and friendly. Who would hurt them in this magic hour? Every flower holds its drop of dew close at its heart; there will be time enough to open later on when the sunbeams steal in and drink the crystal drops. Some there are who call this time "God's hour," and say the strange hush and peacefulness are there because the good God walks through His world at dawn.

It was at this hour that King Laoghaire's two daughters, Ethne and Fedelin, stole up the hillside to bathe in the clear waters of the Clebach spring. Hand in hand they climbed, glancing half fearfully at the hollows where the shadows still lingered, and speaking in whispers lest they should frighten the fairies that had been dancing all night on the hillside.

Suddenly, when they came in sight of the well, they stopped in amazement and half in fear. Had they caught the fairies at last, or were these spirits, these quiet solemn men seated there like a circle of grey ghosts?

Slowly Ethne the Fair went forward and spoke to the spirit who seemed to be king among the rest.

"Whence do you come?" she asked, "and what is your name?"

Fedelin the Ruddy then drew near to hear the answer. She was no longer afraid when she saw how kindly was the look in the stranger's eyes.

"Nay," answered Patrick, "it matters little who I am and whence I came, for I must soon pass away. Better it were to seek to know the God whom I serve, for He liveth for ever."

"Who is your God?" asked Ethne, "and where is He? Is He in heaven or in earth, in the sea or in mountains?"

"How can we know Him?" asked Fedelin. "Where is He to be found?"

"My God is the God of all men, and He is everywhere," answered Patrick. Then, pointing to the rosy east, the mist-wrapt mountains and homely meadowland, he told them how God had made the world and all that is in it, how He loved it, and had sent His son, born of a pure virgin, to redeem it.
"He is the King of Heaven and Earth," said Patrick, "and it is meet that ye, the daughters of an earthly king, should also be the children of the heavenly King."

It was a wonderful story, and the two maidens listened with breathless attention. "Teach us most diligently how we may believe in the heavenly King," they said. "Show us how we may see Him face to face, and whatsoever thou shalt say unto us, we will do."

The clear water of the fountain was close at hand, and Patrick led the two fair princesses to the brink and there baptized them in the name of Christ.

"Yet can ye not see the King face to face," he said, "until ye sleep in death and your souls shall wing their way up to His starry chamber."

The maidens earnestly prayed that they might not have long to wait, and the old story tells us that then they "received the Eucharist of God, and they slept in death." Like two fair flowers just opening their petals in the dawning light, the Master's hand gathered them before the heat and dust of the working day had time to wither their freshness or soil their spotless purity.

Many there were besides these gentle maidens who learned to believe in Patrick's God. His teaching came like a trumpet-call to the strong men and lawless chieftains who ruled the land. They were brave and fearless warriors these heathen chiefs, men who met pain and suffering with unflinching courage and scorned to show their hurt; men after Patrick's own heart, fit soldiers to serve his King. There was one, Aengus by name, King of Munster, who gladly obeyed the call and welcomed Patrick to his palace, asking that he might be baptized and received as God's servant. The water was brought and Patrick, leaning on his crozier, did not notice that the sharp point was resting on the foot of Aengus. Deeper and deeper the point pierced the bare foot as Patrick went through the service, but not a sign did the brave man make. This, he thought, must be part of his baptism, and he was ready, nay, eager to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

Not until Patrick tried to lift his staff did he perceive what he had done, and then, in spite of his sorrow, the sight of that pierced foot made him thank God in his heart for a brave man's endurance.

It was the custom of many of these chieftains when they became Christians, to give Patrick a piece of land on which to build a church, so ere long churches and monasteries were built wherever Patrick journeyed, and there he left teachers to carry on his work. All who loved learning found their way to these monasteries, and among them were many of the Druids, who were the poets and musicians of that time. They tuned their harps now in God's service, and so beautiful was the music they made that it is said "the
angels of heaven stooped down to listen," and the harp became the badge of Christian Ireland.

As a rule Patrick was allowed to choose which piece of land he wanted, but when he came to Armagh, the chieftain, whose name was Daire, would only allow him to have a piece of low-lying meadowland, and refused to give him the good place on the hillside which Patrick had wanted. Then, perhaps feeling a little ashamed of himself, he thought that he would make it up to the good bishop by presenting him with a splendid present. This was a wonderful brass cauldron which had been brought from over the sea, and there was no other like it in the land. So Daire came to where Patrick was and presented the cauldron.

"This cauldron is thine," said Daire. "Gratzacham" (I thank thee), answered the saint. That was all, and Daire went home, becoming more and more angry as he went.

"The man is a fool," he said; "he can say nothing for a wonderful cauldron of three firkins except Gratzacham."

Then, turning to his slaves, he added: "Go and bring us back our cauldron."

So back they went and said to Patrick, "We must take away the cauldron." And all that Patrick said was, "Gratzacham, take it."

Now, when they returned to Daire, carrying the cauldron, he asked them, "What said the Christian when ye took away the cauldron?"

"He said Gratzacham again," answered the slaves.

"He saith the same when I give as when I take away," said Daire. "He is a man not easily moved, and he shall have his cauldron back."

And not only was the cauldron returned, but the chieftain himself came to Patrick and told him he should have the piece of land which he desired. Together they went to climb the hill, and when they came to the place they found there a roe lying with her fawn. The men ran forward and would have killed the fawn, but Patrick was quicker than they, and he lifted the little creature gently in his arms and carried it to another place of safety. The roe seemed to know he was a friend, and trotted happily by his side until he stooped down and gave her back her fawn once more. Some say that the altar of the great cathedral of Armagh covers the spot where once on the grassy hillside the fawn found a shelter in the arms of Saint Patrick.

The years went by, and each day was filled by Patrick with service for his Master, until the useful life drew to a close. Then, in the spring of the Year, when the March winds were blowing, when the shamrocks he loved were decking the land in dainty green,
came the King's command, "Come up higher." It was but a gentle call, for he had dwelt so close to the Master that it was only a step from the Seen to the Unseen, and he needed no loud summons, for his feet were on the threshold of home.

"Christ with me, Christ before me,
Christ behind me, Christ within me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ at my right, Christ at my left,
Christ in the fort,
Christ in the chariot-seat,
Christ in the ship."

So runs part of the beautiful old hymn of Saint Patrick, and we do not wonder that he who was so truly a follower of Christ came to be called a saint.

A helpless captive, a hard-worked slave, a lonely swineherd! Who would have dreamed that to him would have belonged the honour of leading into freedom and light the land of his captivity? Who would have thought that the lowly slave would be the torchbearer of the King, the patron saint of the green isle of Erin?

From *Our Island Saints*, Amy Steedman (originally published in 1912 and available in reprint from Yesterday's Classics, [www.yesterdaysclassics.com](http://www.yesterdaysclassics.com))
Picture Study

Three in One

"THREE IN ONE"
St. Patrick explaining the Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity.
Picture Study
St. Patrick Expels the Snakes
Mapwork

Ireland

Use the map to find the place names mentioned in the stories
Recipe

Irish Soda Bread

All recipes for traditional soda bread contain flour, baking soda, sour milk (buttermilk) and salt. That's it!!!

This was a daily bread that didn't keep long and had to be baked every few days. It was not a festive "cake" and did not contain whisky, candied fruit, caraway seeds, raisins (add raisins and it becomes "spotted dog" not to be confused with the pudding made with suet of the same name), or any other ingredient.

White Soda Bread

4 cups (16 oz) of all purpose flour.
1 Teaspoon baking soda
1 Teaspoon salt
14 oz of buttermilk

Method:

- Preheat the oven to 425 F. degrees. Lightly crease and flour a cake pan.
- In a large bowl sieve and combine all the dry ingredients.
- Add the buttermilk to form a sticky dough. Place on floured surface and lightly knead (too much allows the gas to escape)
- Shape into a round flat shape in a round cake pan and cut a cross in the top of the dough.
- Cover the pan with another pan and bake for 30 minutes (this simulates the bastible pot the Irish used). Remove cover and bake for an additional 15 minutes.
- The bottom of the bread will have a hollow sound when tapped so show it is done.
- Cover the bread in a tea towel and lightly sprinkle water on the cloth to keep the bread moist.

From Society for the Preservation of Irish Soda Bread, [www.sodabread.info](http://www.sodabread.info)
This is an excerpt of a prayer is often called "St. Patrick's Breastplate" because of those parts of it which seek God's protection. It is also sometimes called "The Deer's Cry" or "The Lorica". Choose a portion for copywork.

I arise today
Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity,
Through the belief in the threeness,
Through the confession of the oneness
Of the Creator of Creation.

I arise today
Through the strength of Christ's birth with his baptism,
Through the strength of his crucifixion with his burial,
Through the strength of his resurrection with his ascension,
Through the strength of his descent for the Judgment Day.

I arise today
Through the strength of the love of Cherubim,
In obedience of angels,
In the service of archangels,
In hope of resurrection to meet with reward,
In prayers of patriarchs,
In predictions of prophets,
In preaching of apostles,
In faith of confessors,
In innocence of holy virgins,
In deeds of righteous men.

I arise today
Through the strength of heaven:
Light of sun,
Radiance of moon,
Splendor of fire,
Speed of lightning,
Swiftness of wind,
Depth of sea,
Stability of earth,
Firmness of rock.
ATTENTION PARENTS:
Let LBC Help you Teach Your Children Grammar the Easy Way

**Primary Language Lessons** is a beginning guide to grammar and usage for the early elementary student. Living Books Curriculum has faithfully reproduced the 1914 edition, while making it easy to use in a lay-flat, write-in format. No need to have to rewrite the questions and assignments. It is all done for you.

Within these pages you will find stories, poems, and pictures of fine art. Each lesson introduces principles of grammar and word use through question and answer, composition, memorization, oral presentation, and dictation. Serl recommended that *Primary Language Lessons* be used for the second half of grade 2 and grade 3, or ages 6 through 8.

*Primary Language Lessons* uses high-quality literature and art to teach language and grammar. Serl’s method parallels the work of Charlotte Mason (1842-1923) who advocated high-quality literature for learning.

**Intermediate Language Lessons** is designed for teaching 9-12 year-olds grammar and language use. The author, Emma Serl creates a structured exploration often using the writings of well-known authors such as Louisa May Alcott, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Alfred Tennyson, Helen Hunt Jackson, Percy Bysshe Shelley, George MacDonald, Edward Everett Hale, and William Shakespeare. Living Books Curriculum has faithfully reproduced the 1914 edition, while making it easy to use in a lay-flat, write-in format. No need to have to rewrite the questions and assignments. It is all done for you.

To make the lessons easier to use by age and grade, we divided the text into three parts. Part 1 covers Lessons 1-100, Part 2, Lessons 101-195 and Part 3, Lessons 196-301. Each can be used on its own or as part of the series. Serl recommended that *Intermediate Language Lessons* be used for Grades 4, 5, and 6.
A MAN AND HIS WIFE HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE TO POSSESS A GOOSE which lay a Golden Egg every day. Lucky though they were, they soon began to think they were not getting rich fast enough, and imagining the bird must be made of gold inside, they decided to kill it in order to secure the whole store of precious metal at once. But when they cut it open they found it was just like any other goose. Thus, they neither got rich all at once, as they had hoped, nor enjoyed any longer the daily addition to their wealth.

Moral: Much wants more and loses all.

~

Proverbs 28: 22

A man with an evil eye hastens after riches,
And does not consider that poverty will come upon him.
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