

**THE LIFE AND WITINGS
OF SAINT COLUMBAN,
542?-615**

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The Life and Writings of Saint Columban, 542?-615 by George Metlake

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GEORGE METLAKE

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LIFE AND WRITINGS
OF
ST. COLUMBANUS

THE LIFE
AND WRITINGS OF
"SAINT COLUMBAN,"

542 P-615

BY
GEORGE METLAKE
AUTHOR OF "KEITELER AND THE CHRISTIAN SOCIAL
REFORM MOVEMENT"

J. J. Jones



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PREFACE.



On the 23 November, 1915, the Catholic world will commemorate the thirteenth centenary of the death of St. Columban, the monk and missionary to whom Christianity and civilization owe such an inestimable debt of gratitude. He was a son of that wonderful island of the West which, at the time of the Wandering of the Nations, was the providential haven of refuge of the Britanno-Roman civilization, and in the sixth and the seventh century sent forth heroic bands of missionaries to the north and south of Europe, to Scandinavia and Italy, to Gaul and Germany, to Spain and Africa. And when the sons of St. Benedict succeeded to the inheritance of the sons of St. Columban, such crowds of learned Irishmen continued to travel to the Continent, that Eric of Auxerre could write to Charles the Bald: "What shall I say of Ireland, which is migrating with almost her whole train of philosophers to our coasts?" and Hermanrich of Ellwangen was but paying a just tribute of admiration to Erin, when he wrote to Abbot Grimold of St. Gall: "*Sed neque de Hibernia insula silendum censeo, unde nobis tanti luminis jubar processit.*"—"I must not pass over in silence the island of Hibernia, whence such a flood of light went out to us."

The distinctive characteristics of the Irish monks of old, the passion for pilgrimage and preaching, the imperious necessity, as Montalembert calls it, of spreading themselves without, of seeking or carrying knowledge and faith afar, never died out: like the grand old faith itself, it is the characteristic of the Irish race. In our own day hundreds of thousands of the sons and daughters of Erin leave their country to earn their bread in honest toil abroad; and in every land under heaven, in Asia, Africa and America, in Australia and New Zealand and in the South Sea Islands, we find the Irish priest and monk and bishop converting the heathen or keeping bright the lamp of faith where it has already been lighted.

This attempt to portray the life and labors of one of the greatest Irishmen of all times is, therefore, properly and respectfully dedicated

TO
THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF
THE ISLAND OF SAINTS AND SCHOLARS
AND THEIR DESCENDANTS IN EVERY LAND.

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