

## CHAPTER XII

### The Breadth and Depth of Irish Education

**T**HE greatest monument left by St. Patrick was the organization of education in Ireland for this Irish people whom he had learned to love as a slave among them and to whom he came back with the mission of Christianization. Apparently Patrick's whole influence as soon as the Irish became converted to Christianity was concentrated on the effort to make them understand just as far as was possible the reasons for the faith that was in them. He himself founded a great school at Armagh which attracted students from all over Ireland. Before long his disciples were also founding schools until Ireland became dotted with institutions of learning many of which afforded opportunities for education for hundreds of students. Scholarship was held in high honor and the Irish reverence for their bards or poets and for their historians which had existed from time immemorial was now extended also to these Christian scholars who devoted themselves to the cultivation of their intellects through scholarly Christian influence.

It is interesting above all to realize as we shall see in a subsequent chapter that the Irish were not exclusive in their provision of educational opportu-