

all the pupils. At Clonard a rule existed that the scholars should by turns grind the corn with a gueran.

There were, of course, no large buildings or class rooms in those ancient institutions. A tiny stone church was the centre of many groups of other little stone buildings or cells. Often the students built these themselves, and where wood was plentiful they used it instead of stone.

Comfort was not valued by the students, and many went through great hardships journeying from afar to come to these seats of learning. Extraordinary generosity and hospitality were characteristics of these early schools. No student was asked for money for his schooling, and if he were needy even food and clothes were given him. He could stay as long as he liked, the only return asked of him was that he took his share of the daily work.

At the present day no trace of the great University of Clonard remains, but Clonmacnoise ruins can still be seen. It had a group of seven churches like Glendalough, and in later times beautiful crosses and a round tower were added. It is a melancholy fact that only one book is in existence belonging to famous Clonmacnoise, 'The Book of the Dun Cow.' The English did their work well when banishing all signs of Irish learning.

Armagh was another great centre of learning, and as late as 1153 had 3000 scholars. It was celebrated for its teachers, who were under a high professor, and could truly be called a national university. Greek, Irish, and Latin were the languages of all those Irish universities. Latin was the second language of the educated classes, and traders, women, chiefs, and students spoke it fluently.

After those golden ages came centuries of the most ruthless persecution of learning by the English. Native culture was feared and hated by them, and they even grudged the Irish the learning they got abroad when deprived of it at home. The Irish endeavored to keep learning alive by the 'town schools,' and there were many famous colleges in towns in Ireland in the bad times.

In 1566 Dominick Lynch founded a college in Galway, St. Nicholas'. There Lynch gathered 1200 students, and by the beginning of the seventeenth century it really occupied a position of a national university. Irish and Latin were the languages of this college, and so great was its fame that men begged their way to learn in Galway.

The learning that the town schools were trying to keep alive in Ireland was much distrusted by the English, and they bethought themselves that it would be useful to their cause to have an 'orthodox university' founded in Dublin, and so negotiations were begun which ended in the founding of Trinity College in 1593. A great many difficulties attended the launching of the scheme, but it was not allowed to fail, so in 1593 Dublin University was founded on the site of the Monastery of All Hallows,' given by the Dublin Corporation.

Everyone knows the history of Trinity College—how it has stood apart from the national life of Ireland, and how its patriotic students have been the exception and not the rule.

## COMETS AND THEIR TAILS

Halley's Comet was seen for the first time in Gore on Saturday morning a few minutes before break of day. In view of the presence of this long-expected visitor, the following particulars regarding comets, taken from a Home publication, will be of interest:—

Although scientists have not yet discovered exactly what a comet consists of, their observations have led to some remarkable revelations. A comet may be described as a definite point of nucleus, surrounded by light, with a luminous train preceding or following. The general opinion of astronomers seems to be that the point is possibly solid, or at any rate condensed, the tail consisting of minute particles floating in a gaseous envelope, and the whole being whirled round the sun at a rate which in some cases reaches as much as 370 miles a second. Halley's comet is a small one as compared with others which have been observed in previous years. The tail is said to be close on 26,000 miles in length, but in 1882—the last occasion on which a bright, naked-eye comet was seen in England—it was estimated that that comet had a tail which extended in space to the vast distance of 200,000,000 miles from the head, though, owing to foreshortening, it did not appear to be that extraordinary length. The tail was strongly forked, and a singular and puzzling feature of the comet was that a small cone, or envelope, computed to be 4,000,000 miles in length, also extended towards the sun.

Sir W. H. M. Christie, the Astronomer-Royal, has collected some striking facts with regard to comets' tails. He says that the tail of the comet of 1861 was 40,000,000 miles long; that of 1680 had a tail of 60,000,000; that of 1811, which was visible for 17 months, over 100,000,000; while the visitor of 1843 showed a tail in the evening twilight of 65deg, or about 200,000,000 miles in length, which exceeds the diameter of the earth's orbit. Not the least amazing feature of these bodies is their wonderful velocity when near the sun. The comet which Newton saw in 1680 was travelling at the rate of 250 miles a second, and that of 1843 at 370 miles a second. The earth in its orbit moves at 18½ miles per second.

Apropos of the assertion frequently made that should one of these comets touch the earth it would mean the end of the world, it appears that already we have passed through a comet's tail. Sir W. Christie thinks that in 1861 we passed through the outer part of a comet, particles of which appeared as a shower of falling stars; while other scientists also affirm that we have come into contact with comets, and that there is not the slightest need to worry or insure against them in view of damage.

## The Church in Sweden

Sweden, which Protestant authors cannot name without evoking the memory of Gustavus Adolphus and of the Thirty Years' War (says a writer in *America*), has long remained hostile and closed to Catholicism. Although Queen Josephine, wife of King Oscar I. and grandmother of the King now reigning, was an ardent Catholic, and had at her court an official chaplain, the intolerance of the laws then in force was such, that in 1838 several ladies, known as having been guilty of becoming converts to Catholicism, were condemned to the confiscation of their goods and to exile. This sentence aroused, we must admit, strong protests from all sides, and during the years that followed, Swedish legislation was remodelled in the direction of a greater freedom of conscience.

To-day the Catholic mission has churches at Stockholm, Gothenburg, Manö, Gefle, and Norrköping. All these churches are of recent construction, for the splendid, the magnificent cathedrals, which bore such striking testimony to the Catholic Faith of our ancestors, fell, at the time of the Reformation, into the hands of Protestants.

The largest Catholic parish is that of Stockholm. It is Catholic, that is to say, universal in more than one respect, for not only is our Holy Apostolic and Roman Faith professed there, but also it constitutes the most variegated assemblage of all nationalities. Thus, besides the Swedes, it comprises Germans, Italians, French, English, Poles, Spaniards, etc. Even not long ago there were to be found in the Catholic Church of Stockholm Catholic Japanese and Catholic Negroes.

In Stockholm resides the Vicar-Apostolic, head of the Swedish mission, Monsignor Dr. Albertus Bitter, titular Bishop of Dobiche, a prelate who has succeeded in winning general esteem and sympathy, not only among Catholics, but also among Protestants. He is seen often enough at the royal court of Sweden. As the sphere of Monsignor Bitter's activity is very wide, the Bishop and the zealous priests who help him are obliged to undertake many and long apostolic journeys.

Southern Sweden presents a peculiar character: thousands of Polish workmen labor there during a great part of the year in cultivating beets, and here as elsewhere these Polish workmen, by their fervent piety and their spirit of sacrifice, deserve to be held up as examples to all Catholics. In order to reach the nearest church they do not hesitate to spend in railway tickets a notable part of their wages. They have a warm and devout friend in the person of a noble and pious old man, the Rev. Count Bernard Stolberg, a descendant of the celebrated convert, Count Frederic Leopold Stolberg, distinguished author, poet, and diplomatist.

As religious liberty is of relatively recent date in Sweden, and as the Catholics are few, it is easy to understand that we cannot yet have a very rich Swedish Catholic literature. However, we may say of that which exists: it is limited, but good. Besides some excellent catechetical works, we possess, in Swedish, an edition of the 'Manual' of L. Goffine; one of 'Philothea, or the Devout Life of St. Francis de Sales'; a prayer book called 'Missale Romanum'; several small pious books; the excellent work of Cardinal Gibbons, 'The Faith of Our Fathers'; 'Edgar,' by Father L. von Hammerstein, S.J.; a controversial catechism, 'Catholicism and Protestantism'; and, finally, several small books of Mgr. de Ségur.

We hope that the Swedish mission will find the funds to provide the Swedish people with other works, as for instance, the 'Imitation of Christ.' At any rate, we cannot help paying tribute to the enlightened and indefatigable zeal of those who, in the midst of the greatest difficulties, have succeeded in endowing the Catholic Church of Sweden with inestimable spiritual riches.

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