nearly half of the present Republic.   The christian religion already
existed in these regions ; but there were also many pagan tribes,
as the Salian Franks around Amiens, and the Celetes of Normandy;
and the Christians, owing to the fury of their continual wars and
the negligence of their bishops, were Christians only in name.
St.Columbanus revived Christian virtue and ecclesiastical discipline,
by means of the monasteries that he founded.   The monastery of
Luxeuil, which he built in the primeval forests of Sesquania, now
Franche-Comté, became the monastic and educational metropolis
of all France.   Monasteries chose the abbots among the monks
of Luxeuil.   Dioceses vied with one another in their efforts to
obtain, for bishops, men trained in ecclesiastical sciences, and in
the ways of the spiritual life, by the sons of St. Columbanus.   The
nobles of the south as well as of the north of France, considered
it a distinction, to have their children educated at so famous a
school of wisdom and sanctity.   The principal cities of France,
Autun, Lyons, Strasbourg and Langres, sent their sons in crowds
to be educated at Luxeuil.   The influence that St. Columbanus
exerted through this monastery, and through the numerous
monasteries that were founded all over the country, by colonies
from Luxeuil, was so great that he is said to have civilized and
educated France.

   One of the most prosperous of the colonies that went out from
Luxeuil was that which was established in Sithin, now St. Omer,
in Belgium, by four Alamanni, St. Bertin, St. Omer, Mommolin
and Ebertramnus.   The country was inhabited by the Atrabates
and Morins, who had already received the light of the Gospel, but
who had returned to paganism.   The work of their conversion,
which had never been complete, was begun over again ; and the
monks of Sithin took a glorious part in the accomplishment of
the task.

   From France, St. Columbanus passed into Germany, where
he preached to the Sueves and Alamanni, along the Rhine.   But
these tribes would not receive the Gospel ; and Columbanus
crossed the Alps to combat Arianism, which was predominant in
Lombardy.   He founded the monastery of Bobbio, which became
for the north of Italy what Luxeuil was for France.   He died at
Bobbio in 615.