

striking illustration than among the graduates of these schools. Columbkil, in his new home among the Hebrides, invokes blessings on the "angels" with whom it was once his happiness to walk in Aran; and Columbanus, beyond the Alps, remembers with pride the school of Bangor, the very name of which inspires him with poetic rapture." They were exemplary students in those days. "The evening star gave the signal for retiring and the morning sun for awakening. When, at the sound of the early bell, two or three thousand of them poured into the silent streets and made their way toward the lighted church to join in the service of matins, mingling as they went or returned the tongues of the Gael, the Cimbri, the Pict, the Saxon and the Frank, or hailing and answering each other in the universal language of the Roman church, the angels in heaven must have loved to contemplate the union of so much perseverance with so much piety."

The course in the Irish schools makes a modern student stare and gasp. "The language of the country and the language of the Roman Church; the languages of Scripture—Greek and Hebrew; the logic of Aristotle; the writings of the Fathers; the defective Physics of the period; Mathematics, Music and Poetical composition." The most famous of those schools were at Armagh, Belfast, Clonard, Wexford, Mungset and Mayo, and they were attended by an average of four thousand students each. In these schools the glorious scholastic philosophy had its origin and recorded its first triumphs. This is made clear by Mosheim, the great German historian and chancellor of the University of Gottingen, in his *Institutiones Historiæ Ecclesiasticæ*—described in Chamber's Encyclopedia as a work of "great learning, fulness and accuracy." Science owes much also to the Irish Monk Virgilius, called "Feargal, the Geometer," who maintained the sphericity of the earth and the existence of antipodes against a no less personage than St. Boniface, of Germany. Virgilius was accused of heresy; Rome's answer was to elevate him to the bishopric of Salzburg; Gregory IX. canonized him. Dicuil and Dungal were known throughout Europe as geographer and astronomer respectively. Their work has been praised by such competent judges as Muratori, Latronne and Alex. Von

Humboldt. Much praise has also been bestowed on the extant documents relating to the famous Easter and Tonsure controversies. These were two discussions, not on a matter of faith or morals, but of liturgy and discipline. Differences arose as to the time of celebrating Easter and as to the size of the tonsure. Deputies were sent to Rome, "as children to their mother," to learn her decision and it was at once adopted. Never before nor since was christian Ireland found at variance with Rome on any question relating to religion.

But all this praise of science and its votaries is but honoring the incidental at the expense of the essential. From our standpoint the most comprehensive learning joined with error is infinitely inferior to the possession and love of truth unadorned by a single grace of human science. "A little philosophy inclineth men's minds to atheism," said the sage of Verulam, "but depth in philosophy bringeth them round to religion." Verily, then, the Irish must have drunk deep of the Pierian springs, for first among all Erin's titles is the "Isle of Saints;" in the second place only is she named, "Land of Sages." Volumes would be required to show adequately the marvellous advances made in the three centuries following the introduction of Christianity. To name the monasteries for men and women that arose all over the island, would show how weak is our monastic spirit of to-day. In some of these houses there were as many as 3,000 monks, and some of the convents held almost as many women. The great patriarchs were, for the men, St. Patrick and St. Columbkil, and for the women, St. Bridget. Of the monks of St. Columbkil, the Ven. Bede testifies that they spent their time between manual labor and the study and transcribing of the sacred scriptures, and "neither thought of nor loved anything in this world."

This was therefore an age of saints. Let me quote from a page of names as given by McGee: Saints Ibar, Benignus and Kiernan, of Ossory, in the 5th century; in the 6th, Saints Bendan, Finnan, Jarlath, Maccartin, Finbar, and a host of others; in the 7th, the age of apostles, St. Gall, apostle of Switzerland; St. Columbanus, apostle of Burgundy and Lombardy; St. Killian, apostle of Franconia; St. Columbkil, apostle of the Picts; St.