



King James II of England and the Archbishop of Paris visit the Irish students in the care of St. La Salle.

St. La Salle Goes Irish — and Scotch

by Brother Urban Boniface, M. A.

One of Father La Salle's first foundations in Paris was a school for Irish lads. We wonder how a French priest could be involved in a school for the wearers of the green. We wonder whether he had to learn Gaelic to speak to them.

In 1688 King James II of England with a great number of his soldiers fled to France where he

These two episodes are taken from "A Short Life of St. La Salle for Juniors and Novices" by Brother Urban Boniface, M.A.

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was offered hospitality by his relative the Sun King Louis XIV. Sixty sons of Irish soldiers were of school age and Father La Salle was requested by the Archbishop of Paris to take charge of their education. It was a big order but

How St. La Salle's work in favor of these Irish boys fitted into his pattern of education is explained by Brother August Raymond on page 39, first column.

Father La Salle was equal to the job; the boys had a language problem and they needed special teachers and a specialized program of study. While a boarding-school was being prepared for them near the Church of Our Lady of Virtues, the Irish lads picked up a working knowledge of the French language from their new surroundings and friends. One of the most capable Brothers was placed in charge of the boys under the guidance of Father La Salle. Of great use was the manuscript on Christian Politeness, a book that he was writing for use in the schools.

When James II visited the school he was greatly impressed by the rapid change that had come over his subjects and expressed his gratitude to Father La Salle for the fine education he was giving these boys in exile.

A SCOTSMAN CONVERTED

On one of his trips to Paris, Father La Salle once met a young Scot who was hiking the same road. He had been touring the country as part of his education on the continent, but at the moment he was out of money and actually begging for food. Father La Salle paid for all his meals along the way, gave his young friend a place to stay when they arrived in Paris, and for three months helped him in every way he could. Of course the young man had to pay the price of meeting a saint. Father La Salle who lost no chance of bringing happiness to souls, soon had the Scotsman telling him about his family, his religion, and his soul. Their conversation must have been a combination of Latin, French and English mixed with Scotch. It would have sent any linguist into a fit of laughter to listen to them but they got on very well.

Finally toward the end of the three months, the Scotsman asked to enter the Church. They had a fine celebration after the ceremony. The young Scotsman's decision for Christ must have stuck, because he went back to Scotland and converted his whole family and a number of friends. The kindness and interest, prayers and mortification of Father La Salle paid off.