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## Pacific Weekly, March 1, 1910

University of the Pacific

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# Pacific Weekly

VOL. II.

UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC, SAN JOSE, CAL., MARCH 1, 1910

No 16

## THE GREAT COMET.

### THE HISTORY OF HALLEY'S COMET.

The new comet that appeared in the heavens and was visible to us a few weeks past, brot forth a great deal of fear and admiration. This comet has come and gone and nothing disasterous has occurred, while, with the coming and going of Halley's comet many disasters have occurred, and now what are we to expect May 18th when Halley's comet will revisit us? The awe-struck inquirer might not feel the earth's doom is so near at hand if he knew that the history of Halley's comet was the history of civilization itself. Waldermar Kaempfert tells us: "It flashed upon the world in 240 B. C., during that Punic War of twenty-three years' duration in which Rome triumphed over Carthage. In 66 A. D. it blazed ominously over the city of Jerusalem, besieged by Titus, and seemed to presage the fall of the Holy City. It was a witness of the Roman Empire's reorganization at the hands of Diocletian in 295 A. D., and its partition in 373 A. D. by Valentinian and Valens. Attila, self-styled "Scourage of God," was startled by it in 451, just before that bloody battle at Chalons in which he was beaten and which was the great victory of Imperial Rome. The Saxon invaders of England saw it like a great bow of light in the nightly sky when, in 530, they founded their kingdoms in Middlesex and Essex and made London a capital.

When William the Conqueror fought the famous battle of Hastings in 1066 and reduced England to Norman subjection it is reported, perhaps mistakenly, to have been equal to the full moon in size, with a tail of alarming length. It reappeared once more in 1301 when Boniface VIII changed the papal biretta for the double tiara, to symbolize the temporal as well as the spiritual supremacy of the church. In 1453 the Turks beheld it like a great fiery simitar held in the invisible hand of Allah, and, accordingly,

The University is in great need of a new gymnasium as the present accomodations are entirely too small. The new gym will be modern in every way and if the suggested swimming pool becomes a reality, this new building will be as completely equipped as any gym on the Coast. The basement, first and second floors, give ample room for all requirements. The first floor will have a large vestibule at the main entrance with the room for the Physical Direct-

regarded it as an omen of that Mohammedan triumph which began with the fall of Constantinople and which at one time threatened to destroy all Christendom. When it returned, in 1531, the momentous English Reformation was consummated. It hovered in the sky when Jamestown was settled in 1607 and thus marked the birth of a great republic. Both Shakespeare and Galileo must have seen it at that time. On its next return, in 1682, Louis XIV was king of France, engaged, as usual, in war with his enemies. In the year 1759, the "wonderful year of the Seven Years' War" of English history, it gleamed like a harbinger of victory when Hawke came sailing out of the west. Whenever it has flared up the world has been

or on the left and a gymnasium annex on the right. On the other end of the first floor will be a large stage with dressing rooms on either side. The dest of the space will be used for the gymnasium proper.

Upon the second floor there will be a gallery which will encircle the gymnasium proper, also various rooms which will be given up to the demands of the greatest necessities in the University. The trophy-room will also be upon this floor.

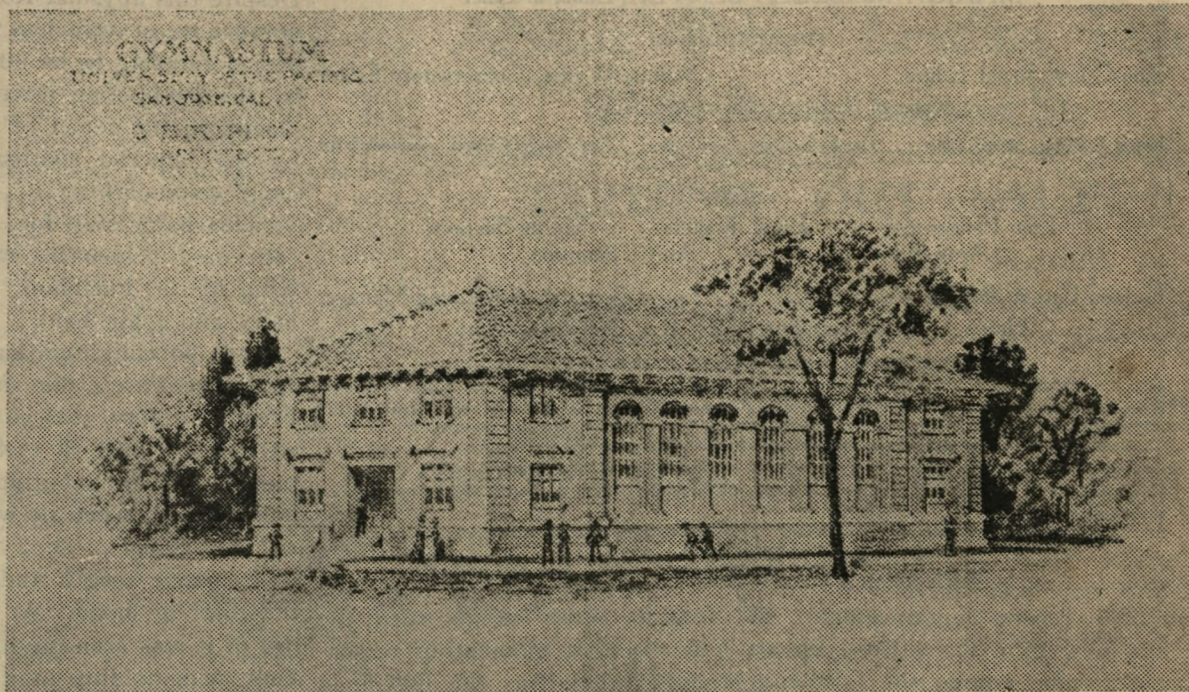
in a turmoil.

#### The Oldest Wanderer of the Skies

Not because it is the biggest or most brilliant comet which astronomers have ever seen, but because it is the most historical, is Halley's wanderer so famous. Two Greenwich astronomers, Messrs. Cowell and Crommelin, have carefully calculated when it appeared in past centuries and have identified it with comets mentioned with awe in ancient Roman, Greek, and, above all, Chinese records. Their work has been particularly difficult because comets, especially those of long period, move in very elongated ovals and can be observed only when relatively near the sun, for at great distances they are too faint to be detected. Allowance

The basement will have baths, lockers, and possibly the swimming pool, and general eating plant of the University. The exterior of this building, both in style and finish, will be similar to the new Ladies' Dormitory. The site for the gym has not been definitely stated, tho its probable that the Eucalyptus grove will have to make way for this new and imposing building, which will be erected and ready for use by next August.

had to be made for perturbations which the comet suffered on each of its returns by planets in our solar system. One body would retard it, another would accelerate it, so that its motion was hardly ever absolutely uniform. The mere statement in an ancient chronicle that a comet was seen in a certain year is not enough for its identification, for sometimes two or three comets may appear in a single year. Its position in the heavens must be known, and to determine that position, and thus to identify it with the positions recorded in history was the chief work of Cowell and Crommelin. Thanks to their labors the history of Halley's comet has been traced back to 240 B. C. and has been partially identified with apparations still more remote.



## NEW GYM FOR THE UNIVERSITY

BUILDING WILL BE COMPLETELY EQUIPPED.

MAY HAVE SWIMMING POOL



# PACIFIC WEEKLY.

Published every Tuesday during the school year by the Associated Students of the University of the Pacific, San Jose, California.

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## EDITORIAL

The recent announcement of the new gym has stirred up an enthusiasm among the students that predicts an athletic season next year which will eclipse anything known in our history. While our athletic records show splendid work, we fully realize there is ample room for improvement. Thus with the promise of a spacious, finely equipped gym, by next August, we are going to have every advantage of improving in athletics and before another year is over we will be numbered among the great athletic rivals on the Coast.

A few more new buildings and the University of the Pacific will be able to afford all the advantages that the University man and woman are seeking. President Guth's efforts to make this institution a University in the fullest sense of that term, shall be realized in the near future. And those of us who will call this institution our "Alma Mater" shall be as proud to hurl the "Pacific Banner" as a Stanfordite is to hurl a "Stanford Banner."

The Great Comet--Continued from page 1

It is this very eperiodicity which distinguishes Halley's comet from most of our bodies of the same kind and which, when it was discovered, forever dispelled the superstitious terror that had marked its various appearances in ancient times. To Edmund Halley, the intimate friend of

Newton, must be accorded the honor of that momentous revelation. Halley was the first man who realized the vast importance of Newton's famous "Principia" in which that law is enunciated, although he was then a comparatively poor man. More than that he tellingly proved the universal validity of Newton's law by plotting the orbit of the comet which had startled the world in 1531, 1607, and 1682, and by prophesying its return in 1758. He was a man of forty-nine when he boldly launched his forecast, too old to see its verification. When he died in 1742, at the age of eighty-five, he was so certain of his contention that he left behind him a pathetically patriotic appeal that reads:

"Wherefore, if according to what we have already said, it should return again about the year 1758, candid posterity will not refuse to acknowledge that this was first discovered by an Englishman."

With poetic fitness the comet blazed forth on Christmas Day, 1758, and thus fulfilled one of the greatest astronomical prophesies of all time.

Mathematics and Newton's law of gravitation have so completely stripped comets of their old-time attributes that it seems hard to realize how fear inspiring they were in past ages. It almost provokes a smile to learn that the comet of 45 B. C. was regarded as the soul of Caesar on its way

to heaven. Even so learned a man as Pliny asserted that "a comet is ordinarily a very fearful star; it announces no small effusion of blood, an example of which we have seen during the civil commotion of Octavius." Despite this abysmal Roman ignorance we nevertheless find Vespasian refusing to be intimidated by the frightening interpretation placed on the comet of 79 A. D. by the imperial soothsayer and dryly commenting:

"This hairy star does not concern me; it menaces rather the King of the Parthians, for he is hairy and I am bald."

Even so enlightened a man as Ambroise Pare, the father of French surgery, was so frightened by the comet of 1528 that he must have been laboring under a hallucination when he wrote:

"This comet . . . appeared of excessive length and was of the color of blood. At the summit of it was seen the figure of a bent arm, holding in its hand a great sword, as if about to strike. At the end of the point there were three stars. On both sides of the rays of this comet were seen a great number of axes, knives, blood-colored swords,

Continued on page 3.

Did you ever  
Have an idea?

**Billy Hobson**

Has a bunch of them in his

**Latest Spring Arrivals.**

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Glasses, if needed, otherwise, is my plan. drugs, no danger, no loss time.

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**We Manufacture Class Pins**

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First and San Fernando streets, San Jose

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among which were a great number of hideous human faces, with beards and bristling hair."

Nowadays only a possible collision with some fiery wanderer gives us any cause for uneasiness. Jules Verne and the modern newspaper are largely responsible for that uneasiness. It has been calculated by a French mathematician, Babinet, that a collision is not likely to occur more than once in fifteen million years. Prof. William H. Pickering, of Harvard University, very recently considered the possibility anew and soothingly concluded that the core of one comet in about one hundred million would strike the earth. Such a collision, in his opinion, is likely to occur once in about four hundred million years. Since animal life has existed on the earth for about one hundred million years a certain number of collisions must have taken place, evidently without producing very serious results. On the whole, a gambler at Monte Carlo is far more likely to the bank than is our earth to collide with a comet.

#### What Would Happen If—

For all that, the earth has come dangerously near such an encounter. In 1819 and in 1861 it swept through a comet's tail, but in neither case was any one the wiser until, long after, the fact was announced by astronomers. On May 18, 1910, it seems reasonably certain that the earth will plunge into the tail of Halley's comet, while the head will be only sixteen million miles away, a mere hand's breadth in the infinite space of the universe. It is not likely that this whisking of the earth by the comet's tail will result in anything more than a meteoric display or a fine auroral glare unnoticed by most of us.

The remotely possible perils of an immersion in a comet's tail have such a fascination that it is hard to restrain the scientific imagination from indulging in horrible doomsday fantasies. It must be confessed that if the oxygen of the earth's atmosphere were to combine chemically with the hydrogen of a comet's tail we would meet a swift death. On the other hand, if our supply of nitrogen were to be diminished our brains would be so agreeably exhilarated that we would all perish in paroxysms of joy. An excess of carbonic-acid gas would result in complete asphyxiation.

Since astronomers concern themselves so very little with these nightmares it must follow that the stuff of which a comet is made can hardly be all solid, which is probably of granular composition, a comet is constituted chiefly of gas, and, what is more, very much the same kind of gas that is burned in the blue-flame kitchen stove. The long tail which streams behind the head, or core, for fifty million or one hundred million miles, like the

smoke pouring from a steamer's funnel, makes its appearance only with a comparatively close approach to the sun. Every comet, and Halley's is no exception, is first seen as a hazy patch of light, frequently without the trace of any appendage. As it rushes onward toward the sun it throws out jets and streamers and, eventually, that wonderful, luminous tail which Milton regarded as "horrid hair" and which may sometimes span one-third of the nocturnal sky. When Halley's comet swings around the sun on April 20, 1910, at a speed of over one hundred and twenty thousand miles an hour, and dashes back again to those ineffably remote regions from whence it came, something very amazing will happen. Instead of drifting behind the comet, as before, the tail will precede the head, just as if a mighty wind were blowing it away from the sun.

Because the tail increases in splendor as the sun is approached, and because it invariably points away from the sun no matter where the comet may be in its orbit, it follows that some solar force, more powerful than gravitation must drive matter from the head to form the tail. It is only recently that a satisfactory explanation has been found for this anomaly. An undreamed of force has been discovered to which we may attribute some of the vagaries of a comet's tail. That force is nothing less than the pressure of light.

It is rather startling to learn at this day that the sunbeams which play upon green grass and blue water are actually pressing the earth. Yet that pressure has been so accurately measured that we know now that the earth sustains a light load of no less than one hundred and fifty thousand tons. Why is it that we do not see objects pushed into space by the solar effulgence? Simply because light pressure acts not so much on masses as on surfaces. The less the mass and the greater the surface the more pronounced will be the effect of light pressure. Divide a ball of lead weighing one pound into one thousand little balls. The total weight remains the same but the surface has been increased. Divide each little ball again into a thousand smaller balls. The resulting one million balls still weigh one pound, but the surface has been enormously augmented. Carry this subdivision so far that leaden particles are obtained measuring one twenty-thousandths of an in. in diameter. Each one of these particles if placed into interstellar space will remain stationary because its weight (gravitation) will exactly counterbalance the light pressure of the sun. If subdivision be carried beyond that critical diameter light pressure will wrench each particle from the grip of solar gravitation and hurl it into space.

Concluded next week

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procure for you one dozen \$5 photos and one beautiful  
Russian painting, worth 3.50, from same negative, all for  
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The regular joint program  
meeting of Sopholechia and  
Adelphia was held on the even-  
ing of Friday, Feb. 25th, in Soph-  
olechia Hall. The room was ap-  
propriately decorated with flags  
and violets and the program also  
carried out the patriotic scheme  
in honor of Washington. At half  
past eight the meeting was called  
to order by Miss Beard, the pres-  
ident of Sopholechia, and the fol-  
lowing program rendered:

Piano Solo ..... Mr. Teller  
Reading ..... Mr. Talbot  
Mandolin Duet, Miss Schaffer  
and Mr. Sturgis.

Impromptu Debate, Miss Kelly  
and Mr. Fickes.

Vocal Solo ..... Miss Lovejoy  
Impromptu ..... Mr. Sturgis  
Campus Notes, Miss Eva Brown  
and Mr. Roy Needham.

Recitation ..... Miss Beaver  
Piano Solo ..... Miss Dinsdale

After the program a social hour  
was enjoyed, games were played  
and delicious refreshments were  
served.

## LOCALS.

Mrs. Walker of Reno, Nevada,  
visited her daughter, Ethel, dur-  
ing the past two weeks. Mrs.  
Walker stopped over in San  
Francisco for a few days on her  
way home.

Miss Edith Coy '08 will return  
to her home in Santa Barbara on  
Wednesday, after a month's stay  
in this vicinity.

Miss Bel Ebey '09 and Miss  
Hazel Dixon '09, of Stanford,  
spent the week end visiting  
friends in College Park.

Miss Lena Hillard spent last  
week in Visalia.

Miss Burdella Cluff, of Fruit-  
vale, makes a party of four young  
ladies that is to make a tour of  
Ireland, Scotland, England and  
France. Miss Cluff is a former  
student of U. P.

Miss Evelyn Atkinson '09 vis-  
ited friends here last week. Miss  
Atkinson is now attending the  
Normal.

Miss Harriet Wythe, who was  
a student here last semester,  
spent a few days of last week  
with her sister and friends here.  
Miss Wythe is now attending  
Miss Chandler's school for young  
ladies at Los Altos.

Miss Mildred Pierce, Conserva-  
tory '12, spent the week at one  
of the prominent sorority houses  
in Berkeley.

Miss Elsie Edson, Conserva-  
tory '10, visited relatives and  
friends in Morgan Hill last week.

Mr. S. C. Thomas '08, of Berk-  
eley, was a guest of friends in  
College Park February 18 and 19.

Miss Alice Meese spent the  
week at Pacific Grove, as a guest  
of Mrs. McLellan, who is at the  
head of the C. T. U. work there.

Miss Meese was one of the sol-  
oists for the weeks concerts giv-  
en by the C. T. U. and her pleas-  
ing numbers won great favor for  
her in the Grove.

A delightful social event was  
held by the College Park church  
last Tuesday evening. It was a  
birthday party celebrating the  
22nd of February and the scheme  
carried out was representative of  
George Washington and his time.  
All those who were invited were  
provided with tiny bags into  
which they were supposed to put  
as many pennies as they were  
years old. The money raised  
went toward paying for the new  
piano.

Miss Eliot of Berkeley has been  
the guest of Miss Bessie Erhardt  
for the past few days.

The marriage of Miss Mamie  
Hocking to Mr. Galen Richard-  
son took place at high noon Sat-  
urday, Feb. 19, at the home of  
the bride's parents. Dr. M. S.  
Cross performed the ceremony.  
The newly married couple left  
immediately for a tour through  
the southern part of the State.  
Mr. and Mrs. Richardson will be  
at home in Fruitvale after the  
first of the week.

Mrs. Sawyer of Berkeley was  
the guest of Miss Edith Booth  
last week.

## ATHLETICS.

The boys took their second  
feat at the hands of Watsonville  
Y. M. C. A. Saturday with the  
score of something like 35 to 2.  
This is a big improvement over  
the last game in which the score  
was far bigger against us.

We should have put up a bet-  
ter game. Our team work, which  
before, has always been a strong  
feature, was lacking Saturday  
night. There were but a few  
times when we passed the ball  
from one end of the court to the  
other without being stopped. The  
guarding was poor on our side.  
The men seemed heavy on their  
feet. The work of Capt. Need-  
ham made him the star of the  
game for U. P. Every man  
seemed to fight hard but we did  
not fight together. Bloom, a  
center played a star game for  
Watsonville.

A large crowd gathered at the  
College Park station Friday af-  
ternoon to give the varsity team  
an encouraging send off for Berke-  
eley. Everything possible was  
done to aid in bringing victory to  
our team in its game with the  
Berkeley Y. M. C. A. But the  
hopes and expectations of both  
the team and the student body  
were doomed to disappointment.

Matters went wrong with our  
team in the first half. The  
guards allowed their opponents  
to run away from them occa-  
sionally, the center allowed his  
opponent to make a number of  
baskets and failed to turn the  
same trick himself, and the for-  
wards were unable to find the  
basket. Score at the end of the  
first half: 21 to 11.

Our team went into the sec-  
ond half with a determination to  
win and it seemed throughout  
the larger part of the half as if  
they would surely overcome the  
lead of their opponents. Our  
boys out-played Berkeley thro-  
out this half but in spite of their  
brilliant team work they were  
unable to bring the bacon home.  
Final score 32 to 27.

The first game called Satur-  
day night was between the U. P.  
and San Jose High girls. The  
game was the most one-sided af-  
fair in the line of Basket Ball  
that has been handed us this year.  
Our girls completely out-classed  
and out-generated their lighter  
opponents in every stage of the  
game. The game was very slow  
and there were but few brilliant  
plays made on either side. To-  
ward the end of the last half the  
San Jose girls made a goal and a  
free throw. This remarkable  
event brought forth such a roar  
from the gallery that for a while  
many of us thought that we  
would see "something doing" af-  
ter all, but the U. P. girls put  
a little more spirit into the game  
until after many delays and inter-  
missions San Jose went down and  
out with a score of 52-3 pinned  
on their tombstone.