

THE ST. GREGORY'S SOCIETY.

THE St. Gregory's Society having now completed the fourth year of its existence, it may prove of some interest to give a brief account of its formation and progress, and to sum up in a few words the results of its work, so that a judgment may be formed of the extent of its usefulness.

From unavoidable circumstances, many of the Members of the Society are unable to assist practically in the working, and may possibly be somewhat ignorant of what has been done, and of the work proposed to be done in the future. Other old Gregorians are not at present Members of the Society, and may not even be aware of its existence. For the information then of these, and in the interests of the Society, we propose to review the progress and working of the Institution up to the present time.

It is well known that nearly every College and School has established from time to time associations of a similar character. Some have flourished and are still flourishing bravely. Others, from various causes, have declined or become extinct, in some cases to be resuscitated under new conditions and with greater promise of success. We have before us the rules and reports of some few of these Associations at various other Colleges and Schools. Unfortunately we have not at present been able to collect a large number of them, nor all of very recent date. A more comprehensive review must therefore form the subject of a future article, but something, perhaps, may be gathered from the extracts we shall give, useful in the way of instruction and comparison. The Societies about which we are in possession of some information are the St. Cuthbert's Society (Ushaw), the Oscotian Society, the Beaumont Union, the Edmundian Association, and the Society of Past Students at St. Augustine's, Ramsgate. In these, as in our own and in all Societies of a like nature, the primary object is the formation "of some centre of Union," as our Rules express it, "for the alumni and friends of the Old School or College, and the renewal, by an Annual Meeting, of the old associations which connect them with Alma Mater." It is evident that nothing could contribute so much as Societies of this kind to the keeping up of an *esprit de corps*, amongst those who have fought their early

battle of life together, or amidst the same surroundings, and that they serve also, by keeping up a lively interest in "the old place," in many ways to aid its future progress and development.

It may not be uninteresting to compare the objects and working of some of the other Societies with our own, though with the scanty information at present at our disposal, we cannot pretend to make anything like an exhaustive or conclusive comparison.

The St. Cuthbert's Society, so far as we are aware, the most important in point of numbers and of income, was founded as far back as 1854, and has flourished without intermission until the present time. In 1875 (the date of the report under our notice) it numbered 437 Members, and its invested capital amounted to £1,655 3s. 8d. The Rules are very similar to our own, sixteen Members only, however, together with the officers, forming the council. The yearly subscription is 10s., with the usual composition of £10 for Life Members (of which there were 88). A remarkable feature is that out of the 437 Members 255 were priests, and on the council out of 20 Members, all are priests except two. In the year 1875 we find £42 granted for Prizes in Divinity and Moral Philosophy; £90 for the expenses of the Matriculation and B.A. examinations for the year, and £35 for the 13th payment of a Burse established in 1862. We notice also in the report, a reference to a Jubilee Fund Scholarship of £20 per annum held for two years. These are the principal items of expenditure, and it appears evident that the funds are mainly applied to the establishment of clerical burses, and prizes for essays on moral and religious subjects.

We have unfortunately no reports of the Oscotian Society, which we understand is in a flourishing condition. From an incomplete copy of the rules we notice that present students, above the School of Philosophy, are eligible as ordinary Members, the Council consists of the officers and forty Members (as with us), the subscriptions are the same as ours, and that for resolutions disposing of capital, votes by proxy are admitted.

The Beaumont Union was founded in 1876, with the following objects:—1. To promote the studies of the boys. 2. To encourage public games. 3. To perpetuate old associations among former students. In 1877 the number of members was sixty-nine, but we have no reports of the income and expenditure. The annual subscription is one guinea, the life members paying fifteen guineas. The Rules provide that an annual dinner shall take place in London or elsewhere. The committee consists of the officers and not more

than eleven members, and it appears from Rule 19 that the whole financial business of the Society, including votes of money, is placed absolutely in their hands.

The Edmundian association is the oldest Society of which we have at present any information, as St. Edmund's College is also probably the most ancient Catholic College in England, having been founded in 1755. The association dates from 1853, but we regret that we have no more recent reports than that of 1866. By this, however, we see that at that date about 160 names had been inscribed on the books, and during the period of thirteen years £150 had been allotted for prizes, and £110 towards a Museum. In addition, the invested capital amounted to £700. The Balance Sheet for the year is simple. On the one side, receipts to the amount of £110 17s. 11d., on the other an expenditure of £33 for a dinner at the Castle, Richmond, and the balance in hand. The Rules are short, and present no special object of notice except that the annual subscription is one pound and that "*in case of non-payment of subscription within two months after application on the part of the Treasurer, the party who is a defaulter shall ipso facto, cease to be a member of the Association, and his name be reported at the next General Meeting.*" This drastic law seems certainly somewhat hard upon "the party," but our Treasurer would doubtless be interested to know its practical effect.

We are unaware when the Society of Past Students, St. Augustine's College, Ramsgate, was founded, but we have before us the Report of the General Meeting held July 27th, 1880. The Treasurer's Balance sheet shows an income arising from Members' subscriptions, balance in hand, and the interest on £10 funded, of £4 1s. 3d., and an expenditure of £41 16s. for prizes and £2 4s. 6d. for Printing and Stationery. We have no copy of the Rules.

It is to be regretted that the information at our disposal regarding other Societies is so scanty. At some future time we hope to be able to make a more reliable and comprehensive comparative statement, and in the meantime we shall endeavour to collect copies of all the latest regulations and annual reports. At present, however, we are chiefly interested with the rise, progress, and present condition of our own St. Gregory's Society, of which the following particulars may prove interesting, and useful as a record.

Of the original Society of the same name, which died of inanition at some date between 1850 and 1860, nothing can be discovered except a record of names at various meetings. The meetings, as registered, began on the 23rd July, 1845, at Lovegrove's well-known

hotel at Blackwall, twenty-three members being present. Subsequently this convivial Society appears to have held its meetings at various other places of entertainment, Greenwich being the most favoured, but Downside also being selected. The Albion, in Aldersgate Street is sometimes the scene; but we find also "Sayer's Symposium." One meeting was at Salt's Hotel, Kingston, Dublin, In 1850 the members numbered 113, but we have been unable to discover any copy of the Rules.

It is singular that the little evidence of which we are in possession leading us to the conclusion that the body was well cared for, inanition should have been the ultimate fate of the Society. Still, from one cause or another, such appears to have been the case, though happily, the spirit remained, and after a lapse of a few years it once more manifested itself, and took to itself a new body, which though now but four years of age shows already so much vigour and elasticity, is furnished with such thews and sinews of war, and is governed with so much prudence, taught by the experience and errors of the past, that we may confidently predict for it a stable and prosperous existence.

On the 12th of March, 1877, a meeting was held at Downside to consider the re-organization of the Society. This question was discussed at length, resolutions adopted and a committee appointed to prepare a scheme and rules. A printed sheet of proposed regulations, which differ but little from those subsequently adopted, was laid before the meeting for its guidance; and at a second meeting certain provisional rules were adopted, subject to the approval of the first general meeting, the President (Fr. Prior Murphy) nominating as Vice-President the Hon. and Rev. Mr. Petre, as Chaplain, the Rev. F. A. Gasquet, and as Secretary the Rev. Hugh Edmund Ford, it being considered that these three officers should necessarily, for greater convenience be resident at Downside.

It is scarcely necessary to do more than draw attention to the fact that in 1877 Mr. Petre was still residing at Downside, to make us feel certain, that to him we are indebted to a very great degree for the re-establishment and organization of an institution so useful to the interests of Downside. Soon afterwards, a meeting was held in London, the provisional rules discussed and amended, and in this amended form they were laid before the first general meeting of the St. Gregory's Society, held at Downside in July, 1877, and were then adopted with some slight alterations.

The first annual report was published in 1877, and shows the

number of Members to be 120 (including 14 Life Members) and the Community of St. Gregory's.

In 1878 the Society consisted of 7 Honorary Members, 146 Members (of which 22 Life Members) and the Community.

In 1879 there were 8 Honorary Members, 168 Members (of which 23 Life Members) and the Community.

In 1880 there were 7 Honorary Members, 203 Members (of which 27 Life Members) and the Community.

It cannot be denied that these figures show a healthy and steady progress, with every promise for the future. We will now consider the financial position of the Society.

The first annual Balance Sheet published shows a sum of £231 16s. invested in consols, and an income of £95 10s. 6d. (including a donation of £5). The principal items of expenditure are votes for the Petre Library, Athletic Sports, the Sodality, and prizes for Study, in all £23; printing and other office expenses, leaving a balance in hand on income account on the 30th of June, 1878, of £50 13s. 3d.

The Balance Sheet for 1879 shows an invested capital of £231 16s., and an income of £75 4s. 3d., (including donations to the amount of £2.) The principal items of expenditure are:—For the Petre Library £5; for the Junior Library £5; for a prize in Music £3; for Study prizes £15; in all £28; printing and other office expenses, leaving a balance in hand on income account on the 16th July, 1879, of £88 9s. 10d.

In 1880 the invested capital is £274 13s., and the income £65 9s., (including donations to the amount of £1 3s.) The principal items of expenditure:—For the Cricket Ground £10; for Study prizes £15; for Natural History prizes £2; for a Workshop £10; in all £37, leaving a balance in hand on the 13th July, 1880, of £78 1s. 3d.

In 1880, at the July meeting, sums of £15 were voted for Study prizes, £10 towards the Cricket Ground, £10 towards the Workshop, £5 for the Collection of Photographs, (£5 was voted in 1878) and £10 towards the expenses of the first number of the *Downside Review*, in all £85.

These are the latest financial accounts of the society published, the votes of the Annual Meeting in July, 1880, not being included. It cannot be denied that they show a praiseworthy example of prudence, moderation and economy, not forgetful of encouragement to those institutions which it is the principal object of the Society to uphold, and still mindful that the possession of an invested

capital from which, as it increases, more substantial sums may be drawn, is one of the strongest supports and most substantial guarantees for the prosperity and continued life of the Society.

The Rules, on the whole, appear to work well, but it may reasonably be doubted whether the provision establishing a Council, numbering 40 Members, exclusive of the staff of 13 officers, is of great practical use, or worth the cumbrous machinery and invidious process of selection involved in the annual election and scheme of retirement. It was evidently thought that by placing so large a number on the Council there was more chance of obtaining a good attendance at its meetings. But has this been in any way the case? and is not the result of the present method rather to form a difficulty in finding a sufficient number of names to make up the required 40, while at the same time some, by an invidious distinction, are never proposed, and others as may often happen, most useful and energetic members, are compulsorily obliged to retire?

According to the report for 1880 it appears also that the number on the Council is 38 only. It is perhaps therefore not unworthy of consideration whether this cumbrous machinery might not altogether be swept away, and in its stead (with certain regulations) that the Society in general should resolve itself into committee or council; or that a reasonable number of working members should form the Council, with a lengthened tenure of office, being eligible for re-election.

Another point not unworthy of consideration is whether it would not be more advantageous than the accounts of the Society should be made up and the annual Report presented at the Annual Meeting in July instead of November as at present provided. Surely there could be no difficulty in this. Nothing is gained by the publication in November, and there would be many advantages to be derived from the arrangement that the year should be considered as the Scholastic year.

We take the opportunity of bringing one more matter of importance before the Members of the Society, and that is the number of arrears of subscription (as they appear from a perusal of the Balance sheets published in the Reports). Up to the publication of the latest Report (1880,) we find that

In 1877	out of	106	ordinary	Members	88	only,
„ 1878	„ „	124	„	„	110	„
„ 1879	„ „	145	„	„	114	„
„ 1880	„ „	176	„	„	65	„

have paid their subscriptions. Of the 1881 subscriptions, now due, one subscription has been paid in advance.

We know the difficulty and work involved upon the Honorary Treasurer, and the amount of correspondence and book-keeping involved in getting in subscriptions. It should not be forgotten that his arduous duties are purely honorary and it is only fair, therefore, that his time should be spared as much as possible. It should be remembered also that the revenue of the Society is funded, and that arrears of subscription entail consequently a loss. We could hardly recommend in the interests of the Society the harsh measures involved in such a rule as that adopted by the Edmundian Association which we have quoted, but a mild appeal to Members of the Society through the medium of our columns may, we trust, not be entirely without effect.

We have not, in this paper, attempted anything beyond a short review of the history and progress of the Gregorian Society. The general utility, organization and aims of this and kindred Societies will no doubt, at some future time, form ample matter for a dissertation which could scarcely fail to prove interesting and useful. At present much necessary information, both historical and for the purposes of comparison, is wanting.

BATHING PLACES—OLD AND NEW.

THE sensitive moralists of some of our journals and reviews have shewn a tendency to class the interest of the public in swimming exhibitions and competitions in that category of remotely contingent tendencies to degeneration, "signs of the times." The interest has shown itself among us. Without attempting to intimate its possible future development, we will content ourselves with pointing out the cause.

The accompanying etching of the "Petre Bathing Pond" can do little more than suggest the charms of the spot which claims so large a share of public attention during the summer months. The pavilion is seen, but its elaborate details and complete arrangement are scarcely distinguished. The richly coloured rockwork, now overgrown with ferns and mosses, which encloses it on three sides, could not be rendered by line alone. Over this rises a bank crowned with young trees and shrubs, whose reflections wave and tremble as the ripple passes over them, lending to the water a weird fascination which rivets the eye. On the fourth side, and