

a deep voice grace was said. Then, much running to and fro till all did leave y<sup>e</sup> room in order. Did then return to y<sup>e</sup> parlour, where was tea. Then some more conversation with some of y<sup>e</sup> Holy Fathers, and so to bed.

*(To be continued.)*

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## THE ST. GREGORY'S SOCIETY MEDAL.

At the General Meeting of the St. Gregory's Society, held in the month of July last year, it was decided that a medal should be struck to be awarded by the Society, and a Committee was appointed to select a design and submit it to a Meeting of the Council to be held subsequently.

That no decided action has yet been taken is due to various causes, but what has been done towards this object it may be as well here to recapitulate; and it may not be one of the least uses of such a publication as the "Downside Review" that it affords a medium for thoroughly ventilating a proposition of such importance, and for laying before members of the Society who may not be enabled to be present at the meetings all that may be said for and against the various schemes suggested, and thus enabling them to arrive at a well-considered conclusion.

In the course of the previous year the two gentlemen deputed to make a report on the subject made inquiries in various directions, not only in England, but in Rome, as to designs and as to the best persons to whom to entrust the work. And it may here be mentioned that the Committee were left absolutely without definite instructions to guide them. No suggestions for the design had been set before them, nor was there any limitation as to cost. Negotiations with artists in Rome having from various causes failed, the Committee met at the well-known engravers and die-sinkers, Messrs. Wyon, of London, and thinking themselves hardly justified in recommending to the Council an expenditure of such magnitude as the cutting of new dies would entail, selected from the stock in hand of these gentlemen, two designs—the one representing a head of Minerva, the other a figure of Diana hunting—which they decided to submit to the Council, the first as a prize for classics, the other for athletic sports. The

reverse in each case was to be a wreath, within which would have been placed the inscriptions. In the meantime, however, from consultations with members of the Society, the Committee learned that there existed considerable diversity of opinion, both as to the designs which the medals should bear, and to the importance of the subject exemplified in the question of the expense which should be incurred; and these opinions were afterwards thoroughly discussed at a meeting of the Council, held in London on the 10th April, 1880.

It appeared first, that while some were decidedly adverse to expending any considerable amount of money upon a medal to be given as a prize to the boys, and which it was considered would be as much valued by them for the honour which it represented as for its intrinsic value, others were of opinion that it should not only be considered as a school prize, but as *the* medal of the St. Gregory's Society, and that consequently every pains should be taken to secure a real and original work of art, and that the expenditure of a sufficient sum of money, once and for all, to secure this object, should not be scanned with too close an eye, however laudably disposed we might feel to prevent too great a drain on the capital resources of the Society.

With regard to the design, some were in favour of a more devotional subject, others were opposed to this, and a few appeared to have a strong objection to at least one of the mythological subjects which had been suggested by the Committee. That the arms of the College should form the reverse of the medal appeared also to find great favour; but the difficulty arose, that although a certain coat of arms appears in various parts of the College, and on College property, the right to bear these arms, or whether any definite coat of arms exists, has never been clearly settled; besides which, the striking of a new die would materially increase the cost of the medal, and some delay would necessarily ensue before the question could be satisfactorily settled with the Heralds' College. There appeared, then, to be these differences of opinion or propositions:—The use of a stock die to save expense, a greater expenditure for an original design, a classical design, a design of devotional character, a wreath or the College arms for the reverse of the medal. In order to conciliate all parties, a suggestion was then made and adopted, that the medal should bear on the obverse a head of St. Gregory the Great, and that the reverse should be at present a wreath, from a stock die, for which the College arms might hereafter be sub-

stituted when it shall be clearly ascertained in what these arms consist; and a sum not exceeding £70 was voted to carry out this object. The three gentlemen who were deputed to select a design in accordance with this resolution met shortly afterwards at the British Museum and examined the large collection of Papal medals which is there to be found. But amongst these they were only enabled to discover two which bore an image of St. Gregory, of which one only was in a sufficiently good state of preservation to be of use.

It must be remembered that although probably a complete set of medals of all the Popes exists, no medal of any description is known anterior to the fourteenth century, while, as our readers are aware, St. Gregory the Great lived in the latter part of the sixth century. We give here a

cut of a design prepared from that one of the two in the British Museum which seemed to be the most suitable for the purpose, and which to our mind has much to recommend it. The head appears even to suggest some probability of being a portrait, at least traditional, or from existing likenesses at the time of its being cast



(for it is a cast), probably in the fifteenth century. It will be observed that the Pope does not wear the tiara, and although in his statue at Downside, and in a statue in one of the churches at Rome, he is invested with this emblem of dignity, it is evidently a conspicuous anachronism, for the tiara was unknown for some centuries after the time of St. Gregory the Great.<sup>1</sup>

A plaster cast having been taken from the medal, a consultation was held with Messrs. Wyon, who estimated the cost of preparing a die in accordance with the design submitted at £52 10s., the cost of making impressions for the reverse of a wreath from a stock die being included. The total cost of the medals in this manner would be in gold £11 11s., in silver £1 5s., and in bronze 10s. 6d., whilst the original die would remain the property of the Society. Before, however, definite instructions had been given to proceed with the work, murmurs arose from some members of the Society who had been unable to be present at the Council meeting, in connection with the somewhat large expense which it had been

<sup>1</sup> See Walcott, "Sacred Archæology" (1868), p. 382, art. "Mitre."

resolved to incur; others were not completely satisfied with the proposed design (indeed we heard some rather disparaging and not over-respectful remarks on the subject); so that taking all things into consideration the Committee came to the conclusion that although they would have been strictly justified in acting on the authority given to them by the Council, still the wisest course to pursue would be to leave the matter open until the next general meeting, when the Society as a body might come to a well-considered and definite conclusion.

In the meanwhile there is no reason why the medal should not be awarded as originally intended, to be delivered to the recipient at some later period.

For ourselves, we have no hesitation in expressing our decided opinion that in a matter of such importance a reasonably large expenditure should be heartily agreed to, for the purpose of procuring a medal of which the Society could be proud, and which should be worthy to stand, so to speak, for all time. We think that the medal should be looked at not so much as a prize to be given only for the purpose of encouraging the studies and pursuits of the boys, but as *the* special medal of the Society of St. Gregory, to be used and applied as such medals usually are. Bearing in view the differences of opinion which exist concerning the design, we think that (under the circumstances) the one suggested is by no means unsatisfactory, and is capable of thoroughly artistic treatment; for it may be observed that, if only for the reason of the present state of the original precluding a mere reproduction, it has not been intended that such should be the case. Whatever may be decided upon, we hope that the obverse of the medal of St. Gregory's Society may bear a design in treatment and execution which we may regard with pride, and, even if the reverse should for the present consist of a simple wreath, that, as soon as possible, it may be changed to the arms of the "Alma Mater," to whom we, individually and as a body, look back with grateful and filial affection.