

## MEMOIRS OF DISTINGUISHED GREGORIANS.

No. II.—THE MOST REVEREND JOHN BEDE

POLDING, D.D., O.S.B.,

FIRST ARCHBISHOP OF SYDNEY.

There are few names inscribed on the roll of students at St. Gregory's more illustrious than that of Polding. Though almost half a century has passed since he left Downside to labour in founding the Church of Australia, his name is still revered there, and his memory still held in honour by the present generation of Gregorians. We feel sure that a short account of the life of this venerable prelate will be of considerable interest to many of our readers.

John Polding was born at Liverpool on the 18th of October, 1794. His father was of German extraction, the original name of the family being "Polten." His mother was a sister of the Very Reverend Father Bede Brewer, President General of the English Benedictine Congregation. Both were excellent Catholics, and till their death, which took place when their son was still very young, they spared no pains to instill into the child's mind a love and reverence for holy things. The death of both his parents consigned the boy to the care of Dr. Brewer. At the age of eleven, in the year 1805, the President sent his nephew to study under the Benedictines of St. Gregory's, then sheltered by the Smythe family at Acton Burnell, near Shrewsbury.

Father Sharrock was prior at the time when John Polding first came to school; and Father Kendal, who succeeded him in that office in 1808, was the prefect and missionary. Father Kendal had some wonderful traits of character, and we cannot help thinking that young Polding derived much of his great love of missionary work from his old master. Above all things Father Kendal was a catechist, and possessed a wonderful power of winning the affections of children. There still exist in the archives of Downside the manuscript instructions on the Douay Catechism which he composed for the children at Acton Burnell, and for the college

students. A more solid and excellent course of instructions could not be desired. In fact Father Kendal in this way obtained for himself quite a reputation as a missionary, and especially as a catechist, in that part of England. On one occasion, in a general assembly of the clergy of the Midland district, Bishop Milner set him up as an example to the rest of the clergy in these respects. The mission of Acton Burnell in those days was a very extended one. Few of the congregation lay nearer to the Hall than three or four miles away among the hills, while in one direction the missionary had at times twenty, and even thirty miles to travel. All these places Father Kendal visited at stated intervals, and was ready at all seasons, wet or dry, to set off to them on any emergency. There are many wonderful stories told of imminent dangers and escapes he had during his missionary career. One of these we cannot refrain from introducing here. One day in the late autumn, we do not know of what year, he was sent for to a person dangerously ill who lived some miles from the College. He set off directly he received the message with the Blessed Sacrament. The nearest way lay in the direction of the Severn, which he had before crossed in a boat. He had counted on this ferry; but, as he approached the banks of the river, he noticed that a most unusually high flood had been caused by a fall of snow, and the water had quite overflowed the river bank, and was running at a very great speed. He made his way, however, to the ferryman's cottage, and asked to be taken over. The man replied that it was altogether out of the question, as no boat could live long in a flood such as was then running. Father Kendal thought for a moment of returning, but he reflected how great a consolation the dying man would lose if he did not get to him in time, and determined that, at all hazards to his own life, he would venture over by himself, if he could persuade the boatman to let him take the ferry. At first the man refused, but as Father Kendal pressed his point, and even offered to deposit money enough for the value of the boat should it be lost, he consented; it being agreed that if he returned safely he should receive back the money. Having paid for the boat, the missionary took his seat, received the oars, and committing himself to the care of Providence rowed calmly across the river. The boatman standing on the bank was overwhelmed with astonishment, as he expected every moment to see the boat swept away and swamped by the waters. On his return, which he accomplished in an equally successful manner, Father Kendal gave back the boat and received the money he had deposited.

During this period of his life Father Kendal not only laboured to instruct the flock entrusted to him, and to form the character of the boys under his charge in virtue and jealous love for God's service ; but, when all were in bed, his candle might be seen burning late into the night, as he sat writing his sermons or drawing up instructions on the catechism. In the year 1808, upon the death of Father Sharrock, the prior, Father Kendal was chosen to succeed to that office, which he held till his death. Of all men, he was the most mild, gentle, and agreeable to those under him. He was particularly fond of children, whom even as prior he loved constantly to have round him, and whose tender minds he took such pains to form in virtue and piety. He is described by one who lived under him as "shedding round him an aroma of sanctity," and winning the heart by the smile that lit up his kindly face when he spoke to anyone. "I remember well," said one of his old subjects to the present writer, "when going to make my confession to him, how his presence impressed me with the idea of holiness, and how his kind words won my confidence and excited my veneration for him." Such was the holy man whom Providence marked out as the instructor of John Polding's youth. Father Kendal's was a character which could not fail to impress itself upon those he wished to fashion in virtue, and in the pious soul of Polding it must have worked wonders, and have been the unconscious cause of the desire which early sprung up in his heart, to devote his life and energies to some missionary work. And if young Polding was fortunate in his master, he was not less so in the companions he had in his boyhood at Acton Burnell. Father Bernard Barber, Father Austin Rolling, Father B. Wassall, Bishop Morris, Abbot Jenkins, Father A. Pope, Bishop Brown, were all in the school with him, and are all names of which St. Gregory's has reason to be proud.

When but a boy he seems to have had some foreknowledge of the high position to which he would in after years be raised. Even before he was clothed with the religious habit he was playfully styled "the Archbishop of Sydney" by his companions, from the confidence with which he foretold that some day or other that would be his title.

After spending five years in the school at Acton Burnell, he petitioned for the religious habit. He was clothed by Father Prior Kendal on July 15th, 1811. Three others received the holy habit at the same time—Br. Placid, afterwards Bishop Morris, Br. Maurus Phillips, and Br. Cuthbert Berrington, who, after trying

his vocation, resigned the habit and lived a most virtuous and edifying life in the world. John Polding chose for himself the name of Bede, no doubt in imitation of the choice of his uncle and guardian, Father Bede Brewer. Father Cahill, S.J., of Melbourne, who preached his funeral sermon, thus describes the period of his novitiate :—

“ St. Benedict, while communing in secret with God at Subiaco and Monte Cassino, sanctified and purified himself, but he became ‘ beloved of God ’ only after many efforts, many sacrifices. Even so does John Bede Polding labour hard to divest himself of all that is imperfect and fallen in human nature, in order to render himself like, in some degree, to the models which he has seen in Nazareth. He bends his neck to the yoke of obedience, after the example of Him who was ‘ obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.’ He grows in spirit even whilst kneeling in the chapel of the Novitiate. He prays, he meditates, and acquires that love of prayer which never slackened or grew cold in him, even to his death. There it was that he learned to speak and write those burning words in which he so often in his Pastorals endeavoured to awaken within the hearts of his flock the love of prayer. He advanced daily in the science of the saints. He acquires under him who holds the place of God the virtues which befit his state : meekness, affability, patience, charity ; virtues which shall shine forth in his life and give glory to God when well-nigh seventy years shall have passed by ! ”

During this year (1808) an accident happened to Prior Kendal which prevented him afterwards from taking any active part in the community life. He was going round the stables with Sir Edward Smythe, when a restive mare kicked, and striking a groom, threw him upon Father Kendal, and the groom’s thick and nailed shoes tore the skin of one of his legs very much. The lotion that was applied served only to inflame it, and in a few days an attack of St. Anthony’s fire set in, which kept him in bed for some months, and for the rest of his life he was prevented taking part in any public ceremony. The pain he suffered incessantly forced him to seek advice in almost every quarter, and took him much away from home during the remaining six years of his life. This was a great cause of sorrow as well as a great loss to the community, among whom Br. Bede Polding, who was professed on July 18th, 1811, was now one of the most fervent.

The period of juniorate was chiefly devoted to the study of philosophy and theology. In both the young religious made rapid

progress, and for philosophical speculation he developed a capacity far above the average. Theology in those days was well taught at Acton Burnell by Dr. Elloy, an exiled professor of the Sorbonne. Three years after the profession of Br. Bede Polding, Prior Kendal died at Wooton Hall, Warwickshire, on his return from purchasing the estate at Downside. His death, which came so unexpectedly, cast a gloom for awhile over the community and involved them in the great difficulty of removing the monastery and school from Acton Burnell to Downside, without any experienced head to direct them. The circumstances of this removal and the early days in their new home have been described elsewhere, and we can pass on to speak more directly of the subject of this biographical notice.

For twenty years the scene of Dr. Polding's life was at Downside. There he prepared himself to receive the holy priesthood by a fervent and exemplary life. There, too, he taught and laboured as missionary, as prefect, as novice-master, and as sub-prior. The minor orders, and perhaps the sub-deaconate, he received from the hands of the Venerable Bishop Milner. He was ordained priest at Old Hall College on March 4th, 1819, by Bishop Poynter. He however returned to St. Gregory's for his first mass, which he sung on the Feast of St. Benedict, March 21st. Very shortly after this he became prefect of the boys, in which office he endeared himself to all who were fortunate enough to be under him. The following most interesting account of Father Bede, or "Mr." Polding, as he was then called, is given by one who was a boy when he was prefect.

"My earliest recollections of Dr. Polding are associated with the day of my first arrival at Downside, in the memorable year 1829—the year of Catholic Emancipation. He, with Dr. Barber, then the prior, were the first whose faces and whose cordial, paternal welcome I met when I alighted from a York House chaise one beautiful afternoon in the autumn of that year at the dear old porch. Dr. Polding, the prefect, took me by the hand and the whole evening was my guide, leading me to the game of cricket that was being played on the lawn, and even placing a bat in my hand as a happy introduction to my new life. I remember, when the bell rang for studies at half-past five, I was at his side in the study-room, and, on the boys all kneeling upon the benches for the prayer, I, unaccustomed to the spectacle, did not take my hat off till gently told to do so by my fatherly guide, who then gave the order, "Say the prayers." This tender care and attention

continued through my first days of inexperienced entrance upon an existence so far removed from the till then only known and cherished ties of home.

“A little later he became my class-master in Sallust, while he was still the prefect, and highly to be esteemed was such a teacher, for his was not merely the accurate knowledge and scholastic ability of a good professor, but the wise and generous spirit of sympathizing and appreciative perception, which knew how to improve every opportunity in the lesson of educating the feelings as well as the mind. And in the two incomparable prefaces to the Cataline conspiracy and the Jugurthine war, as well as in the striking speeches and characters in those two histories, abundant occasion was furnished for the animating comments of our excellent master. Never shall I forget the tone of lofty elocution with which he repeated that noble sentence in the preface to Cataline: ‘*Omnes homines qui sese student præstare cæteris animalibus summo ope miti decet vitam ne silentio transeant,*’ &c. But it was not only in the time of class that he used to speak to boys of high and improving subjects. Of course I do not refer to his religious instructions on the catechism, or on some special festival; I allude to unexpected moments, when, perhaps, he found some pupil reading by himself in recreation time, and when he used to encourage so often any indication of an earnest love of knowledge and of its highest end. On one such occasion the writer well remembers with what impressive feeling Dr. Polding spoke to him of Mary Queen of Scots, telling him she was a saint and a martyr. His very tone of voice at such moments bespoke the truthful heart of the speaker. He was often in tears when he preached from the altar. This tenderness and affectionateness of character were, however, not without the firmness and even sternness which a prefect’s duty too frequently requires, and, in his case, his sensitiveness to anything like serious offence against more sacred obligations was so keen, that it was seen in his very countenance even for days. Those were called in the language of the house, ‘*black days*’—‘black, but beautiful,’—for they were the enduring tokens of a real, heartfelt identification of soul with his youthful charge.

“As infirmarian—an office in his time almost a sinecure, compared with more recent years—none ever surpassed Dr. Polding; and it was, perhaps, peculiarly an office in accord with his natural humanity and benevolence. The only experience I myself can recall of his medical good offices was when once at Christmas I.

suffered from a very bad chilblain on the finger and was sent to bed, where for some days I was the object of his tenderest nursing. I remember, too, that one morning two or three in his class agreed together to take a 'sleeping morning,' as it was called, under pretence of having colds, but they were sent for, and requested to come down and breakfast with Mr. Sallust. On entering the class-room, which was the prefect's room, they found some cups of senna tea on the table, which they were invited to drink.

"Among his many engaging characteristics, he was an ardent patriot, and though a thorough Lancashire man, he always identified himself with Irish boys in their interest for their country and her wrongs, and presided himself, as well as I recollect, at the festive supper on St. Patrick's Day, at which none but the Irish members of St. Gregory's were present.

"Another remarkable characteristic of Downside's greatest prefect was his charming power as a dramatic teacher at the Christmas plays. He delighted in these entertainments, and was so happy as to be supported in their success by several of St. Gregory's most gifted sons, among whom one, after passing his novitiate at Downside, followed him to Australia, as Bishop of Maitland."

One amusing story connected with Dr. Polding as prefect has come down to us. A party of Bath people had driven out to Downside in a fly, and, the horses having been taken up to the farm, the chaise was left at the back of the house. The visitors went into dinner with the community, and never dreamt that any harm would befall their carriage. At the time appointed for their return the horses were brought from the stables to the place where the fly had been left, when, behold, it was gone! Search was made in every conceivable place, but it could not be found. Mr. Polding was sent for, and he at once suspected that his boys had been having a bit of fun at the expense of their visitors, and went off to look for it himself. He had not gone very far before he saw the carriage returning filled inside and out, and drawn along by a "team" of boys. On seeing Mr. Polding, the "horses" came to a sudden standstill, and the prefect, hardly able to repress his smiles, proclaimed "twenty Latin lines for the coachman and forty for each of the gentlemen inside." The "horses," probably because they had worked for their bit of fun, were allowed to go free.

Dr. Polding, whilst prefect, was the means of getting the

Sodality B.V.M. reconstituted. This confraternity has a history extending back for more than two hundred years, and would form the subject of an interesting paper for "The Downside Review." For many years, however, before Dr. Polding's time, on account of the changes from Old Doway to Acton Burnell, and thence to Downside, it had almost died out of remembrance; at any rate, it had quite ceased to have any practical existence, and the prefect, zealous for anything that would tend to promote piety among his young charge, obtained permission from the prior, Father Barber, to endeavour to re-establish it. This was accomplished in the year 1827, when Dr. Polding drew up the "Libellus Precum," now used by the "Sodales," and had the "Sodality Cross," worn by all the members, designed and executed. We believe that we are right in supposing that the Indulgences accorded to the old Sodality were continued to the new one at the request of Cardinal Weld, whose name appears first on the list of members of the newly-constituted confraternity. In a letter written in the year 1827 to one of the community, the writer says, "Please thank Mr. Polding for the Sodality cross and book. I am much pleased to find he adopts such efficacious means of establishing piety, fervour, and study." Another of those who had lived under Dr. Polding in the College of St. Gregory's, wrote as follows in the "Tablet" (March 24th, 1877):—"There are members of the Benedictine Order in this country who have ever looked up to this distinguished member of their Order as sons to a father, owing to him as they do both their training to a high tone of the Benedictine spirit, and the enlargement of their minds with intellectual and moral culture beyond the routine of the classes and schools. In those earlier days of his fervid priesthood the apostolic spirit was already ardent in his soul. There were solemn moments when to the young Benedictine aspirants to the priesthood his heart opened to its secret depths, and he spoke with the fervour that burnt within him of those vast regions, then spiritually desolate, as the most attractive of fields for missionary labours, whilst he dilated upon the life of sacrifice and hard labour which the call to such missions demanded."

We have already said that Father Polding held the office of prefect of the boys for several years, and that Bishop Morris was a contemporary of his at Downside. Among the "Morris" papers is given a little history or trait which we hope to be pardoned for inserting. On May 27th, we forget what year, the

boys were keeping the feast of Father Polding, whose patron in religion was Ven. Bede. Among the toasts and sentiments of the evening was the following, proposed by the future archbishop: "May the wreath which has been woven by affection never be blasted by dissensions or discontent during the next year!" The times when such things were in fashion seem a long while off now, but, though sounding so quaint and odd to us at this day, they were evidently listened to as quite proper and *en règle* in those olden times.

As parish priest at the Downside mission, Father Polding showed himself most zealous, and succeeded in bringing many into the Church. One little incident in his missionary career in Somerset is perhaps worth recording. Very shortly after the religious came to settle in this part of the country, they heard some of the rustics of the neighbourhood speaking about a certain Old Betty whose religion consisted "in playing with her marbles"; at first they thought little about it, till someone suggested that "playing with marbles" must be an expression for saying the rosary. The idea found favour in the mind of Father Polding, and one "month day" morning, he with another religious started off intent upon discovering this old dame. After a long search they discovered her at Coleford, between Downside and Mells, and were delighted to be able to prove the correctness of the surmise about the "marbles." Old Betty was an Irishwoman, and having married a soldier, had years before come with him to live at Coleford. She had never seen a priest for a weary long period of years, but had kept true to the faith, and as old age crept on and she could no longer work, was ever occupied in telling her beads. This practice had given rise to the report that old Betty's religion consisted in "playing at marbles." Father Polding had some difficulty in persuading the old lady that Providence had really sent her a priest, but at last she understood that it was so, and very shortly after this first visit Father Polding had the consolation of attending her on her happy and holy death.

At this period of his life his thoughts frequently turned to Australia, and to the dream of his boyhood, that he was destined to labour in that great field for missionary enterprise. On his appointment as novice-master in 1824, the same yearning to give himself to the work of that distant mission still appears to have possessed his soul. He pointed out the far-off land of South Wales as spiritually the most destitute in the British dominions, and as loudly calling for zealous and single-minded

missioners. His appeal was not in vain, for several of those who were then brought within the circle of his influence devoted themselves in after years to this work.

During this time he made the best use of his talents to store his mind with the learning necessary for the station to which he was to be raised. It was now that "he acquired that profound and extensive knowledge of philosophy and theology for which he was distinguished through life. His superiors, with full confidence in the soundness of his judgment, made use of him in preparing those admirable and instructive notes which render Husenbeth's edition of the Holy Bible so useful to Catholics."<sup>1</sup>

The first novices Father Polding was called upon to train, or at least four of them, met together on the feast of St. Gregory, 1875, to celebrate the fiftieth year of their religious life, and, before separating again, they addressed to their old novice-master a "memorial of gratitude." From it we learn more about Father Polding as he then was, than from any other source, and we consequently do not hesitate to quote freely from its deeply interesting and picturesque pages.

"Besides the vivid image of our old master that is imprinted on our mind, and the affectionate remembrance of his spirit as it dwells in our consciousness, we could have wished that in person he might have presided over our spiritual festival, and that we might again have heard the accents of that voice, which first awakened in us the knowledge and love of the religious life. . . .

"We were among those that first entered the new College of St. Gregory's, when it replaced the old mansion, a College that has since given place to one yet newer and more spacious, and whilst students there, you were our vigilant prefect and well trusted guide. Thanks to your paternal supervision, those were the happy days of our expanding youth. And well do we recall that period of transition, beginning with the year 1824, when, as postulants, though still students in the College, we were summoned early each morning to matins and meditation. . . .

"Vividly do we remember that Sunday in March; it was after vespers, when our prefect, leaving the College with us to become our novice-master in the Monastery, conducted us first of all to the sacristy, and there touched our hearts with his first discourse on the regular life we were entering upon. . . .

"It would be long to tell of the vigorous vitality of that novitiate, and of the work it accomplished in your disciples. . . .

<sup>1</sup> "Australian Catholic Times," April 26, 1877.

Led into the narrower path by an affectionate heart, yet rudely tried on right occasions, we practically learnt to comprehend how silence strengthens the understanding, and how obedience invigorates the will. For a stronger will brought ours into action, until we learnt to respond to each call of duty with promptitude, and to abide in peace when duty gave no sign. Happy, thrice happy, were those simple times, when all around was edification, when cares and anxieties were strangers to us, when our very failures were our instructors, when the probations and prunings that we underwent left no wound or sore, so confident were we of their aim and intention. . . .

“Into the daily study of the Holy Rule you put light, after which we committed it to memory. . . . To these we may add the recollection how happily study alternated with prayer and the choral office, study giving light to prayer and prayer giving life to study, so that nothing was long, or dry, or strained, or tedious, but everywhere prevailed what the rule calls the *fervor novitiorum*. And the hours of relaxation were happily interchanged with manual labour, after the old Benedictine spirit, at one time in the grounds, at another in the fields, contributing as much to practical sense as to health of mind and body. . . .

“We recall likewise to memory those never-to-be-forgotten conferences in evening hours of recreation, when you were the speaker, we the listeners and questioners. Sometimes they expanded our knowledge, sometimes they raised our sense to higher things; often they sprang out of some anecdote or some incident of the day; always they refreshed us. Not unfrequently were those conversations directed to inspire us with the missionary spirit and the love of souls, and to instruct us in the self-denial and self-sacrifice that the serving of souls demands. It was in those conferences that the thirst of your heart became known to us—that thirst to see the then neglected missions of Wales and of Australia worked by self-denying men in an apostolic spirit. . . .

“In recalling those times and their aspirations, it is not a little striking to see what has actually come to pass. Of our two chief religious teachers at St. Gregory’s, one<sup>1</sup> was called forth by the head of the Church to found and form the Church in Wales, whilst the other was called to found and construct the Church in the vast regions of Australia. . . .

“Nor did our relations with our spiritual father come to an end

<sup>1</sup> The late Bishop Brown.

with our novitiate. As master of our juniorate you continued our spiritual formation, conducting us at the same time through the elements of mathematical and physical science. After this course was concluded, you taught us the arts of speaking and thinking; and, after an ample course of rhetoric and logic, introduced us to that more profound and difficult science of metaphysical speculation. Of that abstruse science, the one who holds the pen in this address may venture to say, that having pursued it in most directions, more or less from that time to this, he does not think that in the course of a single year he could have received a better preparation."

We have quoted at length from this "memorial," because its pages give us an interesting insight into the monastic life of St. Gregory's at the time when Dr. Barber was the prior and "Mr." Polding the life and soul of the place. It also tells us a great deal more than we can learn from any other source about the subject of this biographical sketch from the time when he ceased to be prefect to that of his consecration. The office of novice-master he continued to hold as long as he remained at Downside. In the General Chapter of the Congregation held in 1826, Dr. Polding attended as deputy for Father Dunstan Scott (of Lambspring), and he was at that meeting chosen Secretary to the President General, which office he held till he left England for Australia.

*(To be continued.)*

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## FROM DOUAI TO DOWNSIDE.

It is not, I believe, generally known how it was that the members of St. Gregory's escaped returning to Douai. The French King, Louis XVIII., had been restored to France. The Government resolved to give back the property, which at that date was in their possession, to the lawful owners, of which the Revolution had deprived them. Our College at Douai was fortunately in their hands, and was restored. In the autumn of 1816, Father Lawson, brother of the baronet of that name, and Father Harrison, went to Douai to take possession and make arrangements for the removal of St. Gregory's to the old College. On their arrival there, they found the monastery, which had been the gift of Abbot Caverill of Arras, totally destroyed. The church, one of the most beautiful in the north of France, a ruin; a few pillars alone

remaining. The College was in most excellent repair and preservation; a part of the garden had been utilized by having a prison on it, and was not to be restored. The large College would suffice for both students and monks till a new monastery should be built; therefore the removal should take place. But man proposes and God disposes. Joy had been expressed to the Fathers by many at the intended return of the community; everything was being settled very satisfactorily. Good Father Lawson was on his way to the Church of St. Jacques to say Mass, when suddenly the word "*Gardi!*" was heard, and at the same moment a quantity of filth was discharged from a window above on the good holy man. An immediate return to his hotel was required, and the washing and purifying of his outer garments. A day or two afterwards the journey home was commenced: Calais safely reached. On the following morning the packet-boat for Dover was boarded, and the wind being favourable promised a beautiful but cold sail. But a storm was brewing, and for more than twenty hours they were buffeted by the winds and rain; in fact, there appeared little hope but a watery grave. The following day they were landed in the Thames, giving thanks with all their hearts for preservation. This settled the matter, better to stay on *terra firma* than trust to the sea. At the chapter held in 1818, Father Lawson resigned the priorship, and Father Luke Barber, then very young, but endowed with manly sense and rich piety, was chosen as his successor. A determination to build at Downside was made, and preparations were to be made for that purpose. Douai was offered to St. Edmund's, formerly the Paris house, the members of which at that time had no home. They accepted it as a *loan*, and it now forms the flourishing community and college on St. Gregory's property. To return to dear Alma. Sir John Cox Hippeley, M.P., of Stone Easton Park, had been always friendly, and, finding that there was an intention of building, very kindly introduced his architect. At Sir John's expense plans were given: Downside House was to remain for the community, a corridor was to connect a centre building, ornamented with pillars, on the first floor, another corridor to connect the proposed college; a facsimile of the old mansion externally, but not internally. Mr. Underwood had grand ideas, and they were declined. A young man was introduced named Goodrich, who gave plans which were approved of, and the foundation was laid with great ceremony on the feast of St. Benedict, July 11th, 1820. After the vacation, 1822, the College was entered, with a great increase of students.

The beautiful chapel not being finished, the solemn opening took place on July 10th, 1823, when Bishop Baines pontificated, Dr. Coombes preached. The community choir was assisted by the chief singers, boys and men, from the cathedral of Wells. Count Mazzinghi played the music of a Mass composed by himself for the occasion.

The New College, as it was called, made a sensation ; a member of Parliament drew the attention of the House to the alarming increase of Popery : that two colleges had been lately opened, one at Stratton-on-the-Foss, the other at Downside near Bath !! Visitors were constantly coming to see and admire the building ; among the rest, Britton, the author of " Cathedral Antiquities of Great Britain," declared it to be the finest piece of modern Gothic. Welby Pugin, shortly after his conversion, saw and acknowledged that the effect of the chapel was good, and that, considering the lamentable state of Gothic architecture in the year 1820, it was most successful. To the young men of these days, the above may seem extraordinary from the confusion of style in the building, but they should remember that Rickman, the Quaker, who was the architect of Mount Carmel Church, Redditch, had not written on Gothic architecture, nor had Welby Pugin then appeared.

AN OLD GREGORIAN.

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## THE NEW BENEDICTINE MONASTERY AND COLLEGE, FORT AUGUSTUS, N.B.

THE recent Benedictine foundation in Scotland calls for some notice in our pages. In August last, the buildings, comprising monastery, college, and hospitiun, were completed and opened with a solemn Triduo in honour of St. Benedict.

On the evening of the 23rd of that month, the present writer found himself in company with many others on board the Loch Ness steamer, on his way to take part in the interesting celebration. The evening shadows were fast settling down on the mountains when our party caught their first glimpse of the tower of the new monastery. All of our party had heard much about the buildings at the Fort, and some had seen them at various stages of progress ; but one and all were astonished at the mag-