

and their sentiments that day had justified his estimate of them, and he would say "proficiat" with all his heart.

The celebration which had begun with mass concluded with the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, and with that blessing the jubilarians have turned the brow of the hill and commenced the descent.

AN OLD GREGORIAN.

ONCE more the Old Gregorian puts pen to paper, at the request of the editor of the "Downside Review" and others, to record some of his recollections of days long since passed. There is one subject on which not much has been said yet, but one on which the young generation have formed erroneous ideas—the music of former days. Gregorians have always been famed for their music, not only in the church, but also at times of recreation. At Douai, Acton Burnell, and Downside, music has always been cultivated. At Douai all the ecclesiastical chant had been modernized by a famous musician of that town named Faboulliez, to the pleasure of the singers and delight and edification of those who listened. At Acton Burnell, where Gregorians were so charitably given an asylum by Sir Edward Smythe for more than twenty years, there was an organ in the chapel, but I have little information regarding the music. Robert Pope, as a student, received music lessons on the organ and piano from a professor at Shrewsbury. He took his vows with several others in the month of April, 1814. In the same month the community moved to Downside; but, oh what a change—a room sixteen feet by sixteen formed the chapel! On Sundays the door was left open, and the community retired into the hall, which also served as their refectory. Brother Alexius Pope or Bernard Collyar presided at the piano, and Prior Lawson and Dom. Harrison, who were good players, assisted on what was then called the bass violin, but now violoncello; in their absence Brother J. Jenkins took one of the instruments. The music used was Novello's and Webb's masses and motets, and was varied with Faboulliez's masses and motets. I have been trying to discover in what year Novello brought out Mozart's masses, but cannot ascertain. I think it was after the year 1820, in which year the new chapel and college were commenced. Count Mazzinghi, a well known composer in those days, evidently knew the capabilities of

the Downside choir, and having had his son in the college from the year 1814, yearly paid a visit of a week or two, practising with the choir, and on Sundays playing the piano at the services. Finding that a new monastic chapel was being built, he undertook to compose a mass for the opening day (July 10th, 1823). At the opening ceremony the count played the organ which had been purchased from the Brighton Pavilion, and the chief singers from the cathedral of Wells gave their services on the occasion.

Immediately after the opening Father Pope, who had been the leader of the choir for so many years, was appointed to the mission of Coughton, the seat of Sir Charles Throckmorton. Bernard Collyer had gone with Bishop Slater to the Isle of Mauritius. Brother Bernard Short had been trying to learn to play, but age being against him, he did not make great progress. He could accompany Vespers and Compline, and just manage to play easy masses and motets. In the year 1815, a Mr. C. Manners had been brought from the North of England to be organist and conduct the choir in Pierrepont Chapel, Bath. Finding that his singing was appreciated by the public at Bath, he was advised to go to Italy for two or three years to study music. He returned to Bath, and immediately made a name for himself; but in the autumn of 1824, thinking that his health was broken from over-exertion, and finding that he was losing some of the sweet notes from his voice, he determined to offer his services to Father Barber, the then prior of Downside. His terms were to teach the choir, to play the organ at all services, and in return to receive board and lodging with the community, and a fee for private pupils. Mr. Manners was famed not only for the smile on his countenance when singing, and the sweetness of his voice, but also for the distinctness with which each syllable was pronounced. By his coming the progress of the choir was great, but the chief things we sang were his own composition—high masses or motets. For a first communion was composed the "*Quid est homo*," a duet and chorus and other motets. But with regularity of living and the fresh air of the Mendip Hills, Mr. Manner's health improved, and with it his voice regained its former sweetness. Having been here for about eighteen months he was persuaded to visit some of his old friends in Bath: he did, and returned the following day, but having once given way, he daily received urgent requests to come and give only one more lesson at his own terms, his visits to Bath became more frequent, and finally he left the college. His successor for a short time was Mr. Priest, the organist at Pierrepont Chapel; but he could not be here on the

Sundays. His successor was Abraham Taylor, a native of Bath. He was to give lessons on Saturdays, practice with the choir in the evening, and play the organ on Sundays at the services. As a boy he showed the most extraordinary talent for playing the flute. His organ and violin playing were above the average. The choir did not recede under him, but kept up its reputation—Mozart, Haydn, and Palestrina being often performed with great success. Mr. A. Taylor commenced his teaching January, 1825, and continued till his death. He was drowned by the upsetting of a boat at Weston-super-Mare in July, 1842. Mr. A. Taylor was the composer of two *Tantum Ergo's*. He arranged the Requiem mass for four voices and composed the music for the verse "*Rex Tremendæ*" and "*Recordare*" in the Dies Iræ. Mr. Bianchi Taylor, who had settled in Bath as professor of music, was now introduced. He did not stay for the Sundays. Brother Charles Davis who had been taking lessons on the organ and piano for some years was appointed organist, and continued in that post after my leaving in the year 1844.

That the present generation may form a better notion of the capabilities of the singers and music of those early days, 1818 and 1819, I may state that the Rev. J. Elloi, D.D., who had been professor of Divinity at Acton Burnell and also at Downside having died, his body was taken to Bath for interment. The Downside choir attended and sang the Requiem to which they had been accustomed; Brother Alexius Pope was at the organ. Sir George Smart, who at that time was at the head of the musical world, happened to be at Bath, and was present. At its conclusion, Sir George was asked by a noble lord who was a real musician, what he thought of the Requiem? His reply was, that it was "extraordinary music wonderfully performed." Till Mr. Manners came to St. Gregory's, there was no students' band, but then almost every student began to take lessons on some instrument or other. A string band was formed of violins, tenor violin, violoncello and double bass, discoursing good, but easy music. Other instruments followed in the course of years, and the band continued with a long life and much success.

AN OLD GREGORIAN.