

THE SOCIETY.

THE QUARTERLY MEETING IN PHILADELPHIA.

THE quarterly general meeting of the sixty-four Conferences of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, of Philadelphia, was held on Sunday afternoon, July 25, in St. Vincent's Hall, Germantown. John Rea, the newly chosen President, presided. Richard M. Reilly, President of the Particular Council, of Harrisburg, gave a spiritual reading from the life of St. Vincent de Paul.

The reports of the Conferences for the quarter ending March 31 were read by the Secretary, Jerome A. Maher, and were of a most encouraging nature, showing that, despite the lack of employment among the poorer classes during the winter months, the Society was able to respond to the many calls on its resources. The number of poor families relieved by the fifty-eight reporting Conferences was 1,261, made up of 5,459 persons. The expenditures were \$14,335.69, and the receipts \$13,936.11. Visits made to the homes of the poor were put down at 7,747, and several Conferences recorded a large amount of edifying work among the families visited.

The President, in commenting on the reports, said that most of those present would recall that at the quarterly meeting of the Society, held in December at St. Malachy's Hall, Bishop Prendergast delivered a very thoughtful and practical address on the subject of promoting temperance among the poor. In his remarks he recommended that parish Conferences co-operate with the parish temperance societies and use the exceptional opportunity which they had of bringing those addicted to the drink habit within the saving influence of sobriety. It was a well-known fact that in eight of every ten cases they assisted poverty and distress were brought about by drink, and in carrying out the advice of the Bishop they would be reducing drunkenness, a very meritorious work in itself and at the same time economizing the funds of their Conferences. Where the visitors found a man or a woman a prey to the drink evil it was their duty to bring the person, if possible, within the influence of the temperance society, induce him or her to go to the Sacraments and, having gone so far, to spend a dollar or two with the employment bureau to get the person work, thereby

giving a new start in life. They all saw how practical this suggestion of the Bishop was, and he (the President) was glad to see that a number of the Conferences had sent in reports dealing with this particular line of effort. He urged every Conference to put this plan into operation, as it would be most productive of good results.

The report of the sailors' committee, as usual, displayed evidence of activity. During the three months with which the report dealt the members made 313 visits to ships, brought 175 men to Mass, 213 to confession, 189 to evening devotions, secured the enrollment of 332 men in the League of the Sacred Heart, distributed 7,535 Catholic magazines, 679 prayer books, 623 Sacred Heart leaflets, 1,120 pairs of beads, 970 scapulars, 485 Sacred Heart badges, 138 German magazines, 135 Agnus Deis, 327 sailors' comfort bags, 335 holy pictures, 471 medals, 791 copies of *The Catholic Standard and Times*, 1,550 copies of "The Question Box," 225 Sacred Heart pins, 36 catechisms, 31 pocket statues and 42 German leaflets. The committee makes an appeal for wearing apparel and other necessary equipment suitable for the wants of men on shipboard.

The report of the summer outing committee showed that up to the present 508 children had been taken to the home at Port Kennedy this summer. A strong appeal was made to the conferences to contribute generously to this deserving feature of the work.

Michael Frances Doyle, Esq., moved the adoption of a resolution of regret on the death of Z. J. Pequignot, who was President of the Particular Council. In doing so he said that it was not his purpose to deliver a eulogy, because that would be out of keeping with the spirit of the Society. They all knew that Mr. Pequignot was a modest man, doing his work in an unostentatious way. His life was an example to every Vincentian in Philadelphia, and, in fact, to every Catholic in the archdiocese. In his death the society suffered the greatest loss it could sustain. The resolution was adopted.

Rev. M. A. Drennan, C. M., rector of St. Vincent's, extended a welcome to the Society. The people of his parish, he said, are always glad to see the members of the Society, because they are edified by their example, and by the record of work performed in other parishes they were stimulated to do greater good in their own. It was fitting that their visit should be made within the octave of the feast of St. Vincent de Paul. It was customary for them, after their meeting, to venerate the relics of their patron and one of their special founders, and as they venerated the relics they should pray that God would instill into their souls that supernatural kindness for the poor which was one of the characteristics of the saint whose feast they celebrated.

Those of them who were acquainted with the life of St. Vincent de Paul would be struck with this prominent fact—that St. Vincent seemed to grasp everything that was necessary for the poor of his day. St. Vincent was two hundred years before his time. They heard a great deal to-day about modern institutions for the poor, but did any of them stop to think that many of these were introduced by St. Vincent de Paul? They had night shelters and asylums and what are called modern means of relieving distress, but over 200 years ago St. Vincent left his stamp on those of his day in Paris; and if he lived to-day he would change very little the policy which he pursued in the sixteenth century. He was up to date in his work. He took in the situation fully. He grasped everything that was for the good of the poor, and although being a member of this class, he had such influence with other grades that the means to support his undertakings were always at hand. Father Drennan further dealt with the great organizing abilities of St. Vincent, and as an evidence of such referred to the Congregation of the Mission and the Sisters of Charity, which he established. He suggested the organization of branches of the Ladies of Charity in each parish to look after the sick and do that kind of work which only members of the gentler sex can do. Concluding a practical and interesting address, he congratulated Mr. Rea on his election as president of the Society, and hoped that he would continue the good work and follow in the footsteps of his predecessor, Mr. Pequignot, who was filled with the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul.

Mr. Reilly, of Harrisburg, followed in a neat address. He expressed himself as very much edified by the reports of the money expended, the great number of visits made and, indeed, the general activity which seemed to pervade the Society in Philadelphia. He was very much delighted to know of the great success of the outing committee. Alluding to Father Drennan's appropriate remarks on the spiritual side of their work, he said that their duty lies not so much in carrying bread to the poor as in carrying to them spiritual consolation. If they only supplied them with food, they were simply doing what every humanitarian society was doing and they were not doing their duty as Vincentians.

After the meeting the members repaired to the church, where the relics of St. Vincent de Paul were venerated.

* * *

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARTICULAR COUNCIL OF HARRISBURG, PA.

The annual meeting of the Conferences of the Particular Council of Harrisburg, of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, was held in St. Mary's Hall, Lancaster, on Sunday, July 18. There