
R E P O R T
OF THE
C O M M I T T E E
APPOINTED FOR
EXTRACTING FROM THE MINUTES
A BRIEF
S T A T E M E N T
OF THE
ORIGIN, LAWS AND PROGRESS,
OF THE
A S S O C I A T I O N.

House of the Oireachtas

REPORT
OF THE
COMMISSIONER
APPOINTED FOR
EXTRACTING FROM THE MINUTES
A SUMMARY
OF THE
ORIGIN LAWS AND PROVISIONS
OF THE
ASSOCIATION

R E P O R T, &c.

Mr. CHAIRMAN.

IN pursuance of the following resolution, passed on Thursday, 6th March, 1794.—viz.—RESOLVED, That the following members be a committee, to take from the minute book a brief statement of the original institution of this Association, the general and bye-laws, and a list of the present members, in order to have them printed for the use of the members, and information of others, viz. Rev. G. Horan, Mr. Watson, sen. Rev. G. Graydon, Hugh Skeys, Esq. Rev. James Maxwell, John Macaulay, Esq. and General Straton. Your committee have applied themselves to the accomplishment of the business with which they were entrusted, and report to you this day the extracts which they have formed. They have declined making any observations, however ample the field, and pleasing such an exercise, on the humanity and wisdom of this institution, or the benefits that must ensue to individuals and the community at large from its success. These motives and benefits have been most truly and impressively displayed in the able productions of our worthy members the Rev. Mr. Graves and the Rev. Doctor

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Burrowes;

Burrowes; we therefore hasten to discharge the duty imposed upon us.

The Association for discountenancing Vice and promoting the Practice of Virtue and Religion, commenced on the 9th of October, 1792, consisting of three members only, and the motives of their associating they declared in their first resolution as follows :

RESOLVED, That the rapid progress which infidelity and immorality are making throughout the kingdom, calls loudly on every individual both of the clergy and laity, who has at heart the welfare of his country or the honor of God, to exert all his powers to stem the baneful torrent. But, as many may be disheartened by considering the impotence of separate attempts to discountenance vice and promote the cause of religion and piety, it appears to us adviseable to associate for that laudable purpose. They farther resolved on holding their meetings weekly or oftener if necessary; that one person should be chosen to preside during that meeting (1); that a secretary be chosen to take minutes of the proceedings; that the necessary expences of the Association should be supported by voluntary contributions of the members, and such other persons as may be willing to advance the purposes of the institution; and that the following should be the subjects of their future discussion.

The religious education of the rising generation by parents, school-masters, and others. The best means of promoting a regular and conscientious attendance upon public worship and the holy communion. How to restore the practice of family prayer. How most effectually to prevent intemperance

(1) Vide third bye-law respecting the president.

rance in all ranks of men. How to discourage luxury, dissipation, and extravagance in the upper and middle classes, both of males and females. How to prevent prophane cursing and swearing, and particularly the horrid crime of perjury. What may be the best means of enforcing the laws in being against immorality, and whether it may be expedient to solicit any, and what further laws for the same purpose. The best means of promoting honesty and industry, and of discouraging idleness and beggary. How the real necessitous may be most effectually relieved; and, in a word, whatever may conduce to the temporal and eternal welfare of the public.—Such were the origin and motives of this humane and patriotic Association, and such the objects to which its deliberations were to be applied, and to the promoting of which the zeal and ability of its members individually and collectively were pledged. Their proceedings were regulated for some time by detached and occasional resolutions; at present they are governed by the following bye-laws :—

The LAWS regulating the proceedings of the ASSOCIATION.

I.

Every board must consist of five members at least.

II.

Every committee must consist of three members at least, and all members who attend shall be of it.

III.

The fifth member coming to a board shall be president for that meeting, unless the members present shall determine otherwise.

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IV.

The third member coming to a committee shall be chairman for that meeting, unless the members present shall determine otherwise.

V.

From the time of the president's or chairman's taking the chair, no subject shall be discussed publicly or privately, but what directly tends to the business of the day, until the meeting has been regularly adjourned.

VI.

The president, immediately after taking the chair, and before any business shall be admitted, shall cause prayers to be read by the junior clergyman present, or if no clergyman be present, he shall read them himself. He shall then cause the proceedings, signed by the president of the foregoing board, to be read by the secretary while he compares them with a copy of them in the fair book, and if he find them agree he shall sign the copy.

VII.

When any member speaks he shall address the chair, and the other members shall be silent.

VIII.

When two or more offer to speak at the same time, the president or chairman shall determine who shall speak first.

IX.

If, while any subject is in debate, any member speak to new business, the president or chairman shall call him to order.

X.

No question shall be put on any motion unless it be committed to writing and seconded.

XI.

Neither the president or chairman shall have any vote on any question except in balloting, unless the votes of the other members present be equal, in which case he shall determine the question by a casting vote.

XII.

When any resolution shall have passed, it shall be subscribed by the president with the initials of his name, and be numbered by him in the order it has passed.

XIII.

The president or chairman shall not leave the chair without permission, until the board or committee be regularly adjourned.

XIV.

The subjects to be discussed by the Association shall be as follow: viz. The religious education, &c. &c. &c. as before mentioned in p. 4.

XV.

All the members shall have an equal right of debating and determining every question.

XVI.

All the members are expected to attend as often as they can, and when absent communicate in writing to the secretary whatever they may learn from their experience, reading, or other information which

which may appear to them conducive to the ends of this institution (1).

XVII.

No motion shall be passed into a resolution on the day it is proposed, unless it be unanimously agreed to, if on the second day of discussing there shall be a difference of opinion, it shall be postponed to the succeeding meeting, the motion shall be mentioned in the summonses for that meeting, and it shall then be finally determined by a majority of votes,

XVIII.

Upon the appointment of any committee, the member who has made the motion committed shall consider himself as particularly bound to procure the attendance of the committee, previous to the next meeting of the Association.

XIX.

When any essay is approved of by the Association for publication, a committee of three shall be appointed to prepare it for the press, with the consent of the author, if known, and to select such anecdotes from history and biography as may be illustrative of the subject, which if approved of by the Association shall be annexed in notes or appendix to the essay, and printed with it as from the editor (2).

A secretary

(1) All members residing in the kingdom are considered as *attending* members, such as do not generally reside are styled *honorary* members.

(2) By a resolution of 3d of April, 1794, a list of publications by the Association is to be printed, one to be hung up in the board room, and one distributed to each member.

XX.

A secretary and treasurer shall be appointed by ballot on the first Thursday in every February, when in order to make the election, twelve members must vote; the secretary and treasurer elected shall continue in office one year, on the expiration of which the accounts of the treasurer shall be audited; in case of the death, resignation, or removal of secretary or treasurer, the business of the vacated office shall devolve upon the other until a successor is elected, which shall be done by ballot on the first Thursday in the succeeding month; notices of the election shall be given in the summonses for that meeting, twelve members at least shall vote, and a majority of votes shall determine.

XXI.

No composition whatever shall be printed by this Association, until referred to a committee of three, to be by them approved, and confirmed by the Association.

XXII.

If any subjects be introduced for discussion at any meeting of the Association without previous notice having been given thereof, and any member shall object to its being then debated, all debate thereon shall immediately cease, and the motion shall lie over to the next meeting, when it shall be in the order of the day, and be determined according to the rule of the 17th bye-law.

XXIII.

The following mode of balloting shall be adopted, viz. The names and places of abode of each candidate, together with the names of proposer and seconder shall be hung up in a conspicuous

last Thursday in August, November, February and May, as soon as convenient after one o'clock (1).

XXVII.

The above shall be the bye-laws for this Association, and none shall be repealed or altered except by three successive boards; and any future bye-law must, for its final confirmation, be unanimously approved of by the board at which it is proposed, and by the two succeeding boards; and no repeal or alteration of any future bye-law shall be made but with the unanimous consent and approbation of the board at which it is proposed, and of the two succeeding.

Such are the laws by which the Association directs its proceedings. With respect to the actual accomplishment of the highly interesting objects of moral and religious reformation which engage the attention of the members of this society, they expect its attainment only from the purity and reasonableness of the principles which they recommend, and a calm attention to the advantages which experience has manifestly evinced to have ever resulted from their practice. The Association wields not the sword of magistracy, nor does it possess any compulsive terrors; it presumes not abruptly to obtrude even its counsels on societies or individuals. Its influence in restoring decayed piety, and re-establishing that rectitude of manners, from whence this nation has evidently fallen, is meant to be conveyed in accents of temperate and affectionate admonition, not in tones of authority and reproach. From the nature of

(1) By a resolution of 20th July, 1793, the proceedings of the Association for the preceding three months shall be read, together with the bye-laws, and an abstract of them shall be printed at the end of every year. All members to be particularly summoned on those occasions.

of *such executive powers*, there may arise in the minds of some who contemplate our proceedings, objections to the seeming inactivity of our progress, and precipitate imputations on us as merely an assembly of deliberating theorists and not actors. In order therefore to remove this objection where made, and to prevent it where not formed, your committee have briefly selected, and placed under view the principal objects which the Association have already brought to some effect, those which they attempted but hitherto without success, and those that are at present in progress.

Objects of the Association brought to some effect.

The religious education of children by the annual examination in the principles of the Christian religion, of the select children of the public charitable institutions in the metropolis and its environs, and the adjudgment of premiums to the best answerers. (1) The diffusion of religious knowledge by the distribution of 650 quarto bibles, (2) and the publication of about 40,000 religious and moral tracts for gratuitous dispersion. The due observance of the sabbath, through the influence of the archbishop of Dublin directing sermons on that subject to be preached *annually* in all the churches of the metropolis, and his Grace's dioceses, and by the extension of the same practice throughout the kingdom, in consequence of the recommendation of the other Archbishops and Bishops to their respective clergy. The due observance of Good Friday in the metropolis,

(1) See report of committee for conducting these examinations.

(2) These bibles were obtained by the co-operation of the society for promoting Christian knowledge, at an expence to the funds of the Association of 135*l.* 8*s.* 4*d.* to reduce the price of each to the distributor to 2*s.* 8½*d.*

From this simple statement of only the principal operations of this society during the space of two years and five months since its commencement, so far from having cause to lament the tardiness of its pace, it being still in reality but an infant institution, it has, in our humble opinion, matter for rejoicing at its progress, and cause of gratitude to the Divine Being, to whose influence alone it must ascribe the advances which it has made, and the guidance of that zeal, which in such peculiarly interesting objects of pursuit, if governed by human wisdom only, might have defeated the ends in view.

Your committee cannot now think of terminating their report, without congratulating the Association on the recent accession of strength and influence which it has obtained, by the liberal donation of the Earl and Countess FITZWILLIAM to our funds, and by the condescending mark of his Excellency's approbation of our institution, by voluntarily becoming its President. From his Lordship's well-known principles and zeal in promoting every object of Christian faith and practice, on which the happiness of society is principally founded, we confidently look forward to the support and extension of our undertaking in our sister kingdom as well as in this.

G. HORAN, CHAIRMAN.