

THE DEMOSTHENIAN SOCIETY.

“As thy days so shall thy strength be.”




THE Demosthenian Society, one of the first literary societies ever founded in this country, and by all means the oldest in the State, owed its birth to the first class that ever graduated at Franklin College. Messrs. W. Jackson, J. Jackson, G. Clarke, W. Williamson, Henry Cox, J. V. Harris, Thomas Irwin, Jared Irwin, Robt. Rutherford, Wms. Rutherford, and A. S. Clayton, while members of the Junior Class were the founders of the Demosthenian Society, and drew up a constitution and by-laws, and gave the above name to the newly-formed society. As far as the writer knows, not one of the above-named gentlemen is now living. The birthday of the society is generally considered to be the 19th of February, 1801, though, in a letter to the society, Mr. Wms. Rutherford states that on the 5th of February, 1803, the Junior Class consulted together and formed a society “for the promotion of extemporizing, or extemporaneous speaking.” This organization was perfected on the 19th day of the same month; hence this day is generally regarded as the birthday of the society. The society was recognized at once by the Faculty and Board of Trustees as a splendid feature of the College course, and was generously nourished in every way possible.

The society has continued in a prosperous condition up to the present time. It owns a handsome hall, and a library of several thousand volumes, containing some very rare works. Some of the most distinguished men who have graduated at the University have been Demosthenians, among whom may be mentioned Robt. Toombs, Benj. Hill, William Lumpkin, and numerous Congressmen, United States Senators, noted divines, and in fact men of note in

all the professions throughout the South. In addition to these there are a great many honorary members of distinction, whose letters of acceptance are still preserved in the society's records, and which would be worth their weight in gold to collectors of such letters. Among these are Henry Clay, Martin Van Buren, Judah P. Benjamin, Andrew Johnson, W. L. Yancey, Washington Irving, Wm. Cullen Bryant, Wm. Gilmore Simms, and many others.



The Phi Kappa Society.

N the 22d of February, 1820, a party of students seceded from the Demosthenian Society and formed the Phi Kappa. This party consisted of Messrs. J. H. Lumpkin, of Lexington, Ga., Wm. R. Crabbe, of Columbia County, Ga., Edwin H. Macon, of Greensborough, Ga., and Henry Manger, of Athens, Ga. J. H. Lumpkin was elected the first president, and E. Lee the first clerk. There is a tradition to the effect that the object of the foundation was at first to make the society a secret fraternity, and with this end in view the first meetings were held in the belfry of the chapel. This tradition is strengthened by the fact that the society to this day has a number of secrets that are known only to its members, and these secrets are all of them recorded in the Greek language. At first the young society met with very little encouragement, and found it very hard to keep alive. The Demosthenians naturally looked down upon the new rival, and being the stronger of the two, the Phi Kappas found it very hard to compete with her; but its growth has been steady and sure, and to-day the stone that the Demosthenian builders rejected has become the chief corner of the University. After meeting with varied success the society, finally, through the help of kind friends, and by the strenuous efforts of its members, was enabled to erect a hall. This building was of wood, and in it the society met until the new hall was built.

In 1832, Alexander Stephens started a subscription to build a brick hall, and, meeting with considerable encouragement, he went ahead and had the hall that the society now meets in erected. In building this hall the society incurred a debt of three thousand dollars, which hung over it until 1838, when three honorary members, Howell Cobb, John Milledge, and W. C. P. Whitehead, subscribed

one thousand dollars each to defray the debt. The society, prompted by gratitude to these members, passed resolutions of thanks, had them printed in golden letters and hung over the president's chair, and they hang there to this day. The society from that time on has been in a very flourishing condition. Her membership has been large and intelligent, and upon her roll appear the names of Georgia's greatest sons. She has been victorious for the last five or six years over her rival in the annual debate, and bids fair to continue so in years to come. It is to be hoped that the influence which she has wielded in moulding the great men of our State shall never grow less, but shall wax stronger and stronger in years to come.



Commencement Programme.



THURSDAY, JULY 12.

10 P.M.—Complimentary Hop, from '87 to '86 ; Dupree Opera House.

FRIDAY, July 16.

10 A.M.—Board of Trustees meets. 10 P.M.—Reception to Graduating Class by Prof. and Mrs. White.

SATURDAY, JULY 17.

4 P.M.—Class Tree Exercises. 8 P.M.—Champion Debate between the Phi Kappa and Demosthenian Societies.

SUNDAY, JULY 18.

11 A.M.—Baccalaureate Sermon. 8 P.M.—Sermon to the Prayer-Meeting Society.

MONDAY, JULY 19.

11 A.M.—Oration before the Library Societies, by the Hon. W. B. Hill, of Macon. 4.30 P.M.—Sophomore Exhibition.

TUESDAY, JULY 20.

9 A.M.—Meeting of the Society of Alumni. 11 A.M.—Oration before Alumni, by Judge Logan E. Bleckley, of Atlanta. 4.30 P.M.—Junior Exhibition. 8 P.M.—Chancellor's Reception.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 21.

10 A.M.—Senior Exhibition and Delivery of Diplomas. 10 P.M.—Commencement Ball, Dupree Opera House.

