

The Church Boys' Brigade in Canada.

THIS organization is very little known at present in Toronto, and from all enquiries made, in the country towns and villages as well.

If the many parents and guardians who read this would take the trouble to make enquiries in their several parishes, about the Brigade, its objects and its responsible officers, they would have no hesitation in recommending and advising their boys to become members. As the boy is, so will the man be, and the very grave responsibility that rests with the parents and guardians in the bringing up of their boys, will help them to see and acknowledge the great influence for good which the Church Boys' Brigade has over all with whom it comes in contact. The object of the Brigade is the spread of Christ's Kingdom among boys, and surely no work so grand, so noble, commends itself as this does, nay *demand*s the unselfish, unswerving support of every right minded man and woman, more especially in the present day when it is so much easier than in times gone by, for the young boy to fall into vice and wickedness of all kinds.

The requirements of the Brigade are not such as to render it irksome for a boy to adhere to its laws, and no lasting, binding vow is exacted, of which he would not know the nature or realize the seriousness. The promises required are binding only so long as he remains a member of the society.

Boys of all denominations, between the ages of ten and eighteen, are eligible for admission. The responsible officers of each company are the Warden and sub-Wardens; the former in all cases one of the clergy, the latter from the men of the congregation, selected and appointed by the Warden.

The plan of holding the boys together is not by a course of religious instruction, as many think, but by gaining their confidence, proving to them that you are one of themselves, helping them in their many out-door affairs and sports, teaching them to strive to attain to all that is truly manly—to learn obedience—this last, one of the most important truths a boy can learn.

The meetings are generally held once a week, the Warden or sub-Warden being present for the opening and closing. The entire meeting, with this exception, being controlled by the boys themselves; a training in itself invaluable. The out-door branches are somewhat as follows:

The drill instruction is carried on in the most systematic and thorough manner, and is one of the main branches of the society. The officers, such as Captain, Lieutenants, etc., are chosen by the boys themselves, the instructor being an outsider in most cases. The value of this training is seen at once. It arouses in a boy the desire to be erect and soldierly, smart and obedient.

The outdoor sports have also the best of attention given them, the Council of the Brigade having organized Leagues in the different branches, such as football, lacrosse, cricket and hockey. Inter company matches (under supervision of the match committee of the Council) in all these branches are played off during the seasons, for valuable trophies.

During the summer a camp is organized, and all go under canvas for a few weeks. During this time the final military competition is held, and trophy awarded, general proficiency and cleanliness during the entire camp being as necessary for the winning company as mere excellence in drill.

This is but a brief outline of the Church Boys' Brigade in Canada, a work to which a few of our young men are giving their best energies—but ah! how many more are needed. Can we not remember when we were little chaps ourselves, how we looked up with hero worship to the bigger boys? How pleased and proud at the slightest notice taken, and how willing we were to run here and there, and do this and that, and why? Because we looked up to these bigger fellows.

It is, perhaps, not the easiest position in the world for a young man, but is it not worth while? 'Your friends, (if friends they are) make fun of you, you say—then these are the friends whose opinion is not worth the having. The Brigade wants young men of the manly, vigorous type, men who can not only show a good example but who can take the field and demonstrate by their brawn, muscle and agility, that one can be an athlete and still a Christian. Such men will do more to strengthen the Brigade than anything else. They have an attractive power, a strong personality, which appeals most forcibly to the younger boys. The Brigade also wants more boys, and the only way to succeed in this is through the parents and guardians, and if they will only take the matter up a little more, and ascertain for themselves the power that the Brigade really is, I feel confident that they will recommend it to their boys.

The credit for this work of the Church Boys' Brigade in Canada, is due to the Rev. C. H. Shortt of Toronto, whose untiring energy and perseverance have brought and kept before us this society which none can too highly appreciate.

SUB-WARDEN.

A PROTEST.

WHAT is it in this work-a-day world, where we are continually striving to put all thoughts of trouble and sorrow as far from us as possible that the average clergyman avail himself of so many opportunities in which he can render our efforts to that end valueless. He is supposed to be, and thank God, often is a comforter and a friend to his people, but there is one weakness which seems to be common to them all, and that is the strange way in which they ride over the hearts of those among their congregations who may have laid away for ever some loved one.

Those who have bowed before this greatest of earth's sorrows know how sacredly the mourner holds it. They alone know how the memory of the beloved dead is guarded in the desolate and uncomforted heart, and how grief shrinks from even the lightest touch of a stranger. Only those who have touched the marble face of the one who was dearest on earth, and folded the white hands above the quiet heart know what a storm of anguish can sweep over him who is bereaved. Only those who have knelt by the grass-grown home of the dead and prayed—knowing the while how feeble and impotent the prayers for one touch, one word from the silent slumberer beneath, can realize the measureless depths of grief. And knowing this, as he must, a clergyman will stand in his pulpit, and to prove his eloquence and his power to move the hearts of his hearers, or to add pathos to his subject—perhaps to effect an object he may deem worthy the means—he will call upon those before him to imagine the exquisite bliss of being able again to hold that dear lost one in their arms, to hear the hushed voice speak in the old familiar tones.

Does he realize that among those who have no alternative but to sit helplessly and listen are some whose hearts day and night are filled overflowing with the bitter knowledge that when death bore away one sweet face he left behind a life grown utterly grey and desolate? Are there not many whose hearts hold little beyond the ceaseless yearning for some one 'gone before'? And do these need that anyone should picture the joy of beholding the dear faces again?

Not long since I made one of a congregation of perhaps two or three hundred in a little village church. In the course of his sermon the clergyman dwelt touchingly upon the joy of some day meeting all those we had loved and lost awhile. He appealed to his hearers to imagine the happiness, beyond all words of his to express, of being surrounded again, now, in this world, by those who had been so unspeakably precious—to picture the joy of clasping their hands and hearing again the loved voices. Many a tear-dimmed eye and

white set face around me told of the aching heart-beneath, and as he quoted in a voice into which he threw a world of eloquence:

'But oh, for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still,'

a young girl rose and slipped noiselessly from the seat in front of me. Her face was as white as one of marble, and the great grey eyes were brimming over with tears.

As the door swung to behind her I noticed a heavy fur wrap in the seat she had left, and quietly picking it up I followed the little mourner, thinking to restore it. A gust of wind blew noisily through the bare branches of the trees as I stopped out from the lighted porch, and for a moment I stood undecided which way to look for my unknown friend. Then my eyes grew accustomed to the change from the gaslight to the sickly light of the moon, and I saw the little dark-robed figure sitting like a shadow in and out among the trees and the white tombstones. A moment later, and she knelt with her face closely pressed to a gleaming marble cross, while sob after sob, broken and repressed, told what a storm of slumbering pain the clergyman's words had awakened.

A feverish desire took possession of me to bring him out and ask him if he was gratified at the result of his mis-used eloquence, but recognizing the difficulties in the way of carrying my wishes into effect, I turned back, gave the fur into the keeping of the sexton, and went my way, wondering for the hundredth time why those who are otherwise such a comfort to their people should so often send many of them from the beautiful service with an aching heart and a sorrow, which time had softened, roused into wearisome life again.

No one, unless his compassion were deadened to insensibility, would display before a starving fellow-being a lavish abundance of meats he meant to withhold, and surely it is not less inconsiderate to awaken in the hungry heart yearnings for that which would be infinitely sweet, but which is not in man's power to give.

Let the heart forget its griefs, if it can; and above all, do not thoughtlessly touch upon the sorrow of those who mourn for their beloved dead.

You do not know, your heart has never yet
Felt the wild storm of hunger and regret.
Nor yet the grief of one who stands aside
While death bears out with swift and noiseless
glide
The lifeless face, the still, unconscious form
Whose smiling lips but mock the heart's wild storm;
Whose love has been the one sweet treasured thing
To which the mourner's aching heart could cling.
You have not stood with pleading hands outspread
To stay the passing of the treasured dead,
Nor felt your quivering lips grow cold and numb
In fruitless prayers for one who could not come.
And so you say—God help you if you wake—
Though they may suffer, hearts can never break.

—M. G.

CHAMBER MUSIC.

One of the best things ever started in Toronto, and one which has deservedly won the support of every lover of classical music, is the Toronto Chamber Music Association. Its aim is to encourage and promote chamber music in a city already known for its talent, and the manner in which everything musical of a high class is encouraged and patronized. Their second concert given recently in Association Hall was truly an educational factor. The audience, although only fairly large, was a most appreciative one, and to nearly every listener present the occasion was in fact a realization of the hope, long expressed, that chamber music concerts could be established in Toronto.

The Association has for its Honorary President Lady Gzowski; President, Mrs. J. Herbert Mason; Sec.-Treas., Mrs. Torrington; and among the patronesses are thirty society leaders, who are also recognized lovers of good music, and who are giving their support and patronage to this latest commendable move.