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GUILD OF CHURCH MUSICIANS.

Sir.—Most members of the Church of England in Canada will heartily sympathize with your correspondent, the precentor of Kingston Cathedral, in his endeavours to raise the standard of Church music, and increase the efficiency of Church organists, choirmasters, and choristers. But to attempt this under the auspices of a sixth-rate English institution like the Guild of Church Musicians, is surely an inexcusable mistake. Churchmen, and especially those who are bona fide graduates of an university by examination, must feel somewhat ashamed that a prominent man like the precentor of Kingston Cathedral should appear so ready to peddle hoods and other millinery, together with diplomas. Let your correspondent ally himself with the Royal College of Music, Eng.; the Royal Academy of Music, Eng.; the Royal College of Organists, Eng.; Trinity University, Toronto, or the Conservatory of Music, Toronto, or the College of Music, Toronto, if examinations are necessary. Either of the above institutions would no doubt provide examiners of experience, but it is doubtful whether they would bestow such a high-falutin title as A.G.C.M., etc., or shower pretty hoods over the successful candidates.

LAYMAN.

THE DECLINE OF THE CHURCH.

Sir,—In an editorial of your issue of April 3rd, you make the statement that our Church has practically become a city and town church. To a certain extent, only, this is true. Many of our "town" churches are a disgrace, in many ways, still being nursed by mission funds, whereas, they should (many of them) have been self-supporting years ago. The city work is evidently flourishing from reports of Easter vestry meetings. Some lay blame at the feet of the clergy, and many are the reasons offered for the decline. But are not the laity as much to blame for this as the clergy, if any blame can be attached to it? Surely, all our country clergy are not as indifferent, and dull, as some of your correspondents seem to indicate. I offer a suggestion or so, from what you say, re "the Church has practically become a town or city Church." If it really is so, then why? One reason, the city parishes are more concise, easier to work, more concentrated, than the ordinary country parish, in many cases, two to do the work, so that efficient and systematic pastoral work can be done in the homes of the people. This is one of our great weaknesses in the country, I fear. Our laity do not do their duty in supporting the Church, and a few overworked men are scattered over far too much territory, as a necessity of this neglect on their part. Here then, is a difficulty that should be faced at once, "our country parishes are too large to be properly worked." It is not the "wooden heads," frills and titles that are to blame. The machinery is good, but poorly arranged. As the individual life makes the life of a nation, so it is in the Church, and so long as our country parishes are so large, the important work of pastoral visitation has of necessity to suffer, and I ask, what country clergyman does not feel this hardship, forced upon him, most keenly? Are there no "burning words" ever uttered from the country pulpit, yes, and often; are not the country clergy as earnest and sincere as our city brethren? Yes, often more so. The trouble lies not here, "burning words" will not suffice, but what is wanted is a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon our laity to fan their indifference, until they burn with zeal and enthusiasm for their Church, and learn to be loyal and true to her, and teach their children likewise. In spite of all the many years of earnest work our laity in the country neglect to an appalling extent their religious duties at home, where family altars are never set up, or children taught to love and reverence the Church, her faith, history, etc.

Lack of parental duties to children is much to blame for our decline I think, sir. What is the result? Children grow up and are still growing up, utterly indifferent to the Church, get married into the sects and "isms," and because they are not brought up to love the Church, away they go. I know many such cases, alas. Religious teaching is denied our children in the public schools, parents won't attend to it, and thus we find the only teaching they get in the country is too often the incompetent instruction in a summer Sunday school for a few months each year, and because the clergyman is overworked he cannot attend even to them then, and neither can he teach them much in their homes (or the parents), because he has so much ground to cover, to make even a hasty superficial pastoral call, to keep his people from dissent. In my mission, I have to cover, single-handed, the same amount of territory covered by no less than three Methodist ministers, two Presbyterian, two Baptist, one Congregational, to say nothing of the narrow and bitter "Free Methodists" and Plymouth Brethren, and other "isms." How can any man do efficient pastoral work, when thus hampered? These ever aggressive bodies are continually pushing their way into the homes of our people, often making two or three calls to my one, and one is kept on the rush the whole time, to keep the little flocks together. To say nothing about being able to enter into, and influence the sanctity of the family life of our flocks, which often means careful and persistent work. If you vigorously oppose such aggression, you get the retort, that "one Church is as good as another," "we are all trying for the same place," and so forth, and get stamped as a "bigot," which often ends in losing some, as sons or daughters have been married, and gone to other bodies. In the face of this, is it any wonder then, we are told the Church is on the decline? If we are to go ahead in the country, we want changes at once. (a) By our laity being more loyal to the Church, and teaching their children to be likewise. (b) By the laity rising to their Christian duty, to support the Church more liberally, and thus enable more men to occupy the ground. (c) By reorganizing our country missions and parishes, and make them smaller, thus enabling the clergy to do more efficient work in the homes of our people. (d) By making our Sunday schools more attractive, so as to retain our young people longer, and thus teach them more about the Church, her faith, history, doctrines, etc. (e) And not least, by earnest and united prayer for a greater outpouring of God's Holy Spirit upon clergy and laity alike, and for more earnestness and loyalty in and for our beloved Church. Much more might be said, but let this be done, and I venture to say, that under the guidance and blessing of our Heavenly Father, you would in a few years see a great change, and may that day soon come.

EAST SIMCOE.

A fine peal of eight bells has been presented to St. John's, Leicester, by a member of the congregation, at a cost of nearly a thousand pounds, in memory of the reign of the late Queen. By the sanction of the King the bells will be known as the "Queen Victoria Memorial Bells."

The new reredos which has been designed for the church of St. Agnes, Bristol, as a memorial to the boys of Clifton College who have fallen in the war in South Africa, is a remarkable one, inasmuch as it contains the figure of Lord Roberts. It is believed to be the first time a public man has been represented on such a piece of work, and it shows the Commander-in-Chief in a kneeling position. Behind him stands Dr. Browne, the Bishop of Bristol, and, what seems more strange still, there are the figures of a nurse and a footballer. In view of Mr. Kipling's "muddled oafs," this tribute to the sport of the British schoolboy is extremely interesting. The reredos is a very fine work of art, and its general excellence equals the appropriate character of this unique memorial."

JUNIOR AUXILIARY.



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PRAYER.

Heavenly Father we pray Thee to bless us, and all the members of our society, and give us love for Thee. Prosper the missions of Thy Church, and strengthen with Thy Holy Spirit all who are engaged in missionary work through Jesus Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Oh, what can little children do
To make the great world glad?
For pain and sin are everywhere
And many a life is sad;
Our hearts must bloom with charity
Wherever sorrow lowers;
For how could summer day be sweet
Without the little flowers!

LESSON.

We now come to the last division of the general missionary work of our Church in Canada. The headquarters of this work is in a little village named Sabrevois in the province of Quebec. You all know that in this province are many people who speak the French language and who are called French-Canadians. Many of these people either because they have not been properly taught the truths of Christianity, or because they did not like the manner in which they were taught by the

Foundation
Trowels

The ceremony of laying a corner stone is hardly complete without a silver trowel. We always have a number in stock because they sell. We can supply them in silver or silverplate. Write us regarding them. We shall be pleased to forward all the information in our power.

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