

SUDDEN DEATH OF THE REV. W. R. FORSTER, RURAL DEAN OF WEST SIMCOE.

It is with very real grief that we write these words. No gentler, truer, honest, godlier man lives among the clergy of the Diocese to-day than he whose death, with exceeding suddenness, we have now to record. After long and painful striving he had just completed the New Church at Creemore, which was opened on the previous Sunday by his Lordship the Bishop of Toronto. It was a day of exceeding gladness to Mr. Forster and his family. A public service was appointed for Friday evening, at which the Rev. R. Radcliffe was to have preached; but as the result of the heavy snowstorm, he could not reach Creemore in time. In his absence, Mr. Forster preached his only sermon in the New Church. He went to the station after the service, hoping to meet Mr. Radcliffe, but was informed that the train would not be in for an hour yet. He then proposed to his daughters to drive them home, and just as he took his seat in the sleigh he said, "wait, I am fainting!" and never spoke or moved again. There was no premonition, he had seemed in perfect health and spirits up to the very moment of his death. It can easily be imagined with what crushing terror this calamity fell upon his most happy and most loving home, and how bitter their bereavement is.

Mr. Forster began his career in the Navy. He, after a while, came to this country, more than 30 years ago, with a considerable amount of money, and undertook gentleman farming in the neighbourhood of Springfield. The almost invariable result followed, the money gradually slipped away, and the farm after it. At the time of his death, he had a considerable estate at Claverleigh, one of the most charming spots in Canada, where he has lived for the last 17 years, but it is found to be so heavily encumbered, that it is very questionable whether anything will be left for his widow and children.

Mr. Forster was ordained Deacon by Bishop Strachan, on All Saints day, 1866, and Priest by Bishop Bethune in March 1867. He was first appointed to Mount Forest, where he remained for four years. He removed, in 1870, to the Mission of Creemore and Stayner, where he has ministered ever since. On the death of Dr. Lett, he was appointed Rural Dean of West Simcoe, at the request of all the clergy of the Deanery.

The Rectory of Collingwood was offered to Mr. Forster at Dr. Lett's death, and the Rectory of Barrie, last year, was pressed upon him, but he declined both these attractive positions, out of humility and in love for his own place and people.

He erected, in 1870, a new brick church, in Stayner, where previously there had been none, and having gathered together a congregation in the township of Sarnidale, another new brick church was built in 1886. And finally the brick church at Creemore was just completed, when by the mysterious providence of God he was called away in the 59th year of his age, to serve in the courts of the Lord's house above. He leaves a widow and seven children, one son, married, and six daughters, one of whom is married. In their desolation and sore loss they have a deep claim upon the sympathy of the whole Church. The writer of this obituary has long enjoyed the privilege of a most intimate friendship with Mr. Forster and his family, and never has he known any home so permeated with the spirit of Christ, so joined together in gentle, loving affection as this, upon

which this crushing calamity has now fallen. The whole Church in the diocese suffers a heavy loss in the withdrawal from her ranks of a man of such sterling worth, such earnest, pure, exalted, and stable character. In the parish and in his loving home there is a blank that cannot be filled.

At the funeral on Monday, in spite of the severe cold and storm, a vast concourse of people assembled to pay their last respects to their loving friend and pastor gone. All the clergy of the Deanery except two were present. The funeral service was most impressive; its chief feature being the celebration of the Holy Communion. The Rev. John Langtry, of St. Luke's, Toronto, being celebrant. In his impromptu address, which was rendered deeply impressive by being so often interrupted by overpowering emotion, Mr. Langtry described himself as the most intimate friend of Mr. Forster; he bore testimony to his exalted character and worth, and urged his hearers to resolve to-day to make all their life here a time of earnest preparation for that life of restored friendships and renewed affections which was not very far off from any of us.

Home & Foreign Church News.

From our own Correspondents.

DOMINION.

ONTARIO.

Church Work in Cumberland, County Russell.—Ground was broken for a new Church—the fourth English Church in this Township—at Canaan, on the 4th of Nov. last. A large "Bee" assembled on the morning of that day and dug out the foundation and drew to the ground all the stone required. First of all, however, the Incumbent, Rev. E. H. M. Baker, in a School-House adjoining the lot, celebrated a short service appropriate to the occasion, taken from Bishop Hobart's "Clergyman's Companion," after which, he and the congregation proceeded to the site, where the "First Sod" was turned by Churchwarden John Larmour, Esq. P. M., the donor of the lot, the Rector meanwhile invoking upon the work the blessing of the Holy Trinity. The Church, which will be named after St. Paul, will be a frame building 52 x 22 ft. with 15 x 12 ft. at the east end (it will stand east and west) reserved for a chancel, a vestry room flanking one side and choir stalls the other, and the whole separated from the nave by a screen.

For the furtherance of this work, which is to be pushed forward at once, an entertainment was held in the School House of the section on Tuesday evening, 4th inst., which resulted in an addition of a considerable sum to the Building Fund. The Bearbrook Church choir by their singing, the ladies by their unstinted supply of choice refreshments, and the Rev. Mr. Hannington, of New Edinburgh, and Mr. A. Code, of Ottawa, a Cumberland lay delegate, by their able and practical addresses—all contributed to make the occasion a success.

At Navan, in the same mission, an entertainment on a larger scale was held the evening following, 5th inst., which was also most successful, the object in this case being to aid in raising funds for the enlargement of St. Mary's Church, now altogether too small for the congregation, and to add a chancel thereto. Here a programme consisting of vocal and instrumental music, readings and dialogues, was presented, such as would have done great credit to far larger places than Navan, while another admirable address from Mr. Code, and a very eloquent one from the Rev. H. W. Smythe, late of Michigan, U. S. who took the place of Mr. Hannington, (called by duty to New Edinburgh), lent additional interest to the occasion and increased the enjoyment. The ladies, both in the quantity and quality of their refreshments, simply outdid themselves. Net cash result; \$40.

PERTH.—The annual missionary meeting was held in St. James' Church on Sunday the 9th Jan. at 7 p. m. Addresses were delivered by the Deputation, Rev. Messrs. Patton and Daw, assisted by the Rev. Messrs. Stiles and Farrar. Before introducing the speakers, the Rector, the Rev. R. L. Stevenson, read the parish report, which showed that the sum total contributed

for missions during the past year amounted to \$292 56. This included \$85 50 proceeds of offerings at the week day services during Lent for the diocese of Algoma. The Sunday School has also undertaken the support of an Indian boy at the Shingwauk Home, at an annual cost of \$75. The offertory at the close of the meeting amounted to \$42.53.

On Xmas Day the offerings of the congregation, for the sole use of the Rector, amounted to \$178 09. In the previous week, presents in kind, of the value of \$31, were sent into the rectory.

The communicants at the early and mid-day celebrations of the Holy Communion nearly doubled the number who communicated on the Xmas of '85. Several beautiful memorials of dear ones entered into rest have been presented during the past year. Notably, a set of silver gilt altar vessels of a superior design, with suitable altar lines, at a cost of over \$200, from the Church furnishing stores of Messrs. T. Pratt and Son, London, Eng., in memory of the late Mrs. M. E. Smith—nee Stephenson.

Two side-screens for the chancel at a cost of \$320, in memory of the late H. D. Shaw, Esq., the balance of the gift of \$1000 to be applied towards fitting up the basement of the Church for occasional and other services. And yet another \$300 from Mrs. Peter McLaren for the erection of a pulpit, in keeping with the reredos, choir stalls, and lectern placed in the Church two or three years ago by her at a cost of \$1157, after designs by Mr. Frank Darling, Architect, Toronto, who has also made drawings for the screens and pulpit, which, it is expected, may be in place before Easter.

How much better such gifts to the memory of the faithful departed than the costly monument in a cemetery—too often unmeaning lumps of stone—an urn on the top of a lamp post, leaving in our minds an "aching void"—merely suggesting to our thoughts the query: "To what purpose is this waste?"

In addition to these beautiful memorials, the Church has been further honoured, and God glorified, by two thank offerings from ladies on recovery from illness, one of ten dollars to purchase for the Church an alms-box for offerings for the use of the sick and poor, and another of twelve dollars, to procure suitable book-markers for the penitential seasons. An anonymous donation was also sent by express—twenty-five prayer and hymn books for distribution in the pews.

STIRLING.—The residence of the Rev. Thos. Godden was entered Christmas week by some sneak thief, and his Christmas collection and some other cash, amounting in all to \$50, was abstracted from the drawer in which it had been placed. We sympathise with him in his loss.

PICTON.—A correspondent informs us that the Christmas decorations, yet up in St. Mary Magdalene's Church, are both tasty and elaborate. The chancel window is beautifully draped with evergreens, with a star in the centre, and over the window is the motto "Prince of Peace," in large characters, and on either side of the window are appropriate mottoes of beautiful design. At the front of the chancel is also an elaborate wreath of evergreens. The font is a complete mass of evergreens, half buried among them being visible the well known quotation "Suffer little children to come unto Me." Amid evergreen festoons and wreaths about the reading desk and pulpit can be discerned, "Glory be to God on high, Peace, good will toward men." Each window is wreathed with evergreens, bearing a large star in the centre, and in front of the galleries are lyres, harps, anchors, triangles and stars; constructed of evergreens on a white background, the effect of which was most pleasing. The attendance at the various services during the holiday season—and indeed, we may say upon all occasions—is large, and the church, for the first time in many years, bears the enviable record of being out of debt. Rev. E. Loucks, the rector, is unremitting in the solicitude he exercises over the members of his flock.

NAPANEE.—St. Mary Magdalene's Church—The annual Christmas, or to be more exact, Epiphany entertainment was given to the Sunday School pupils of this Church on Tuesday evening last, in the new opera hall. Every seat was filled, and we may at once say that we have rarely spent a more enjoyable evening, all the arrangements for the amusement of the people, both young and old, being most satisfactory. It was a happy idea to let the children be the chief performers and do the entertaining of their fellow pupils, and right well they did it with a success that would have been creditable to their seniors. The programme began with a variety of musical selections by the little folk, very steadily executed, and giving evidence of careful teaching. Mr. Cortez Fessenden, Principal of the High School, was next introduced by the Archdeacon, and delivered a short but highly interesting and lucid address, explanatory of electric lighting. Mr. Fessenden brought an