

Communications.

AN EVIL IN THE CHURCH.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE RECORD.

DEAR SIR,—I see a great evil all too general and too prevalent in some sections of the Church, that comes under my observation, not excepting our own Canada Presbyterian Church. I see a minister enter on his labours in a somewhat difficult and unpromising field. His stipend, at the outset, is small, perhaps four or five hundred dollars a year. It is all the people can give, in the circumstances. He labours on in the face of difficulties and discouragements for from ten to twenty years, and is in some measure successful. His congregation is doubled, perhaps trebled, in that time. The people are getting more comfortable all the while. They are getting better houses, more horses, better carriages, more land, and are able to dress better; and the minister, to command their respect, must keep pace, if possible, with their advancing respectability. His expenses are increasing, from various causes; but his stipend remains the same. If he ventures to hint at an increase, perhaps a few angry words, an incipient discontent among the people, are all he gets for his pains; perhaps, after a while's bickering and grumbling, a few dollars, say fifty or a hundred, are added, not in a way calculated to strengthen his hands and encourage his heart. I have even heard of well-to-do people diminishing not very large subscriptions because the congregation to which they belonged was increasing.

By-and-by, the minister is more or less broken down and worn out. His mental energies are impaired, his heart is sad and half broken under a load of care that has been thrust upon him, in his endeavours at once to be faithful in the discharge of his ministerial duties, and to make ends meet in his attempts to keep up something like a decent appearance in his person and household. He dies, or he must retire. In the latter case he retires penniless; he has never had the means of helping that, while he has been expected to be a pattern to his people, in the matter of Christian liberality, as in every other virtue. Then what about a retiring allowance? This is a question congregations would rather not consider; they would rather be quit of it on any pretext. *At the suggestion of the Presbytery*, however, it comes to be discussed by them; and the tone in which that is done leaves the chilling impression on one's mind that their old minister, who has spent the best of his time and talents for their good, is now regarded by them as a burdensome pauper, of whom they and the world will be well rid, when at last he closes his eyes in death, and goes to his rest.

After a while comes a new settlement. A younger man, who has not yet had time to get careworn, enters on the labours of the other, and reaps a rich harvest. He is almost literally hugged and petted on every hand, by old and young, male and female. Everything is done to encourage him in his work. With the greatest enthusiasm, he is guaranteed ten or twelve hundred dollars a year; and perhaps a half year's stipend is paid to him on the day of his settlement, by a people who seemed, latterly at least, to grudge every cent that went to make up his predecessor's five or six hundred. Shame on that people! I say; not for the manner in which they treat their new minister—let them have all due credit for the im-