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*D. M.*

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*"Ad profectum sacrosanctæ matris ecclesiæ."*

MUCH attention has lately been given in England to the employment of Lay-agency in the work of the Church. The great and ever-increasing disproportion between the number of parishioners and the working clergy, renders such aid very necessary. The want has been in some measure supplied by the help of sisterhoods, yet this does not meet the necessity for active agents in the work of the church. In the parish of Devon, indeed, and perhaps in some others, a body of "Lay Deacons" has been organized under the appointment of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Two suggestions have been brought before the English Church, viz., the appointment by the authority of the Church of an order of sub-Deacons, or the increase of the present Deaconate. Both modes seem attended by difficulties, arising rather from the dread of acting without precedent, or from the trammels of the State, than from inability in the Church itself to carry on the work assigned to it by its great Head.

The subject has been considered and turned to use by the practical men of our sister Church in the United States, where "Brotherhoods" have been organized, and much benefit received from their work. We lately noticed the formation in Cornwall, C. W., of an association or guild, having for its object the support and assistance of the clergy, the building and decoration of churches, &c. How far they have succeeded we are not aware.

The employment of Lay-agents naturally present two phases—1st, where the primary object is benefit to the Church from the work of the agents; 2nd, where the first aim is the good of the workers. The former has prominence in England, where the means are ready to work with, and the class to be worked upon is definite and numerous. There a large number of communicants can be met with, and many men of comparative leisure. It is pleasing to see how readily many of them have responded to the call of their Church and cheerfully volunteered to give up part of their time for the benefit of less favored men. In their case such an organization would seem to be readily established and easily supported.

The primary object of the United States Church where "Brotherhoods" are formed, appears to be the religious training of the agents themselves. Hence they assume in some measure the position of benefit societies. This phase of the work would seem more difficult to organize and harder to sustain. It seems to demand more personal energy and care from the clergy, yet it naturally belongs to a new country and to a changing population. The former would call for the services of steady and advanced churchmen; while the latter would naturally embrace the activity of the young. The design of the former would be to take care of those who