

The Inglenook.

Church Connections.

"Nellie," said her husband, very soon after the young couple had settled in their new home, "we must make up our minds where we shall have our church home; don't you think so?"

"Yes," answered his wife. "I do not like going into a strange church and being shown to a seat. I do not feel at home at all."

"You would feel less at home if you were not shown to a seat, would you not, my dear?" suggested her husband, quizzically.

"Oh, you know what I mean, you tease," said Nellie. "But I want a seat of my own, and I want to go to a church as if I belonged there. Yes, I am quite ready to settle the question as to where we shall go. Indeed, I don't see but that it is settled for us. The First church is nearest, and, so far as I have seen, it is a pleasant congregation."

"We could go to the Carter avenue church; it is not much farther."

"No, not a great deal, but it is ill enough to make a difference to me in stormy weather," said his wife.

"The First church is larger," said Charlie; "perhaps we young country folks would be overshadowed there."

"Well, Charlie," said his wife, "I do not mind being overshadowed. There will be plenty of work for us if we are ready to do it, and I am not a bit afraid but we shall have all the place we are worthy of—that is, if you are ambitious for place, I am not."

"Nor am I for myself, my dear wife," answered the husband; "but I don't want the talents of the sweet singer of the Glendale church, of the teacher of the infant class, of the president of the young ladies' missionary band, etc., to be buried out of sight."

"In other words," laughed Nellie, "you are ambitious that your wife should shine."

"Well, Nellie, I never like to see anything wasted, and I am sure your talents ought not to be," was the reply. "But seriously, is there not more opportunity for our making ourselves useful in a small church than in a large one?"

"No, I don't see that there is," said his wife. "I mean to do what lies in my power wherever we go, and I don't see that one's utmost is more in one place than in another. But then, if you prefer the Carter avenue church, we will go there."

"No, dear, I have no preference for it over the other. The First church is more convenient. I was questioning a little what might be duty in the matter, but if we go to the First church to work, it is all right."

So that matter was settled, and the next Sabbath saw them at the First church. At the first opportunity, moreover, they presented their letters of membership, and so became thoroughly identified with the church.

It was some months after that a neighbor, Mrs. Boulder, called one day on Nellie, and the conversation after awhile ran on church relations.

"Aren't you very lonely, Mrs. Benson, in the First church?" asked Mrs. Boulder. "I should think you would be after coming from your home church in the country. Besides, the First church people are stiff and unsocial."

"Oh, I think you are mistaken, Mrs. Boulder," said Nellie. "That has not been our experience at all, and their friendliness has taken away the sense of loneliness that I must confess, I had a little of at first. The church is somewhat larger than the one I grew up in at home, and where I knew everybody. So that it was quite a contrast for awhile."

"Well, I know we tried going there when we first moved here, but no one took any notice of us, and so we went to Union street. They are not much better there, but we get along. I don't think church people are very friendly anyhow."

"They ought to be, Mrs. Boulder," said the young wife, with a very becoming matronly dignity, "and for my part, I have been treated better than I deserve in the First church. My dear old pastor in the church at home said to me just before I left, 'My daughter, he that would have friends must show him if friendly. When you get into new church relations, do not stand on your dignity and expect the others to make all the advances.' My husband and I have tried to act on that advice, and, without putting ourselves forward in the least, we have tried to show that we are not meaning to stand on one side waiting to be coaxed. We don't rush out of church as if we were afraid some one would speak to us (Nellie little knew as she spoke, how hard she was hitting Mrs. Boulder); we have gone to work in the Sabbath school, and we arrange our engagements so as to have Wednesday evening clear for the prayer meeting. We always find some one has a pleasant word for us after the meeting."

"Of all things!" exclaimed Mrs. Boulder, rising to take her leave, "sociability in a First church prayer meeting! I think my dear, you must be the first person that has discovered it."

Nellie found out, after a somewhat longer residence in the place, the reason that Mrs. Boulder had failed to find any friendliness in the First church. "Yes, Mrs. Benson," said the pastor's wife, "we all tried hard to win Mrs. Boulder, but we could do nothing with her. While she attended the church, she and her husband would leave the moment that service was over, and no one could get a chance to speak to them. They did not come to the Sabbath school or the prayer meeting, and when any of us called, she particularly was very cold and stiff, and we had to give her up."

"How pleasant your church people are, my daughter," said Nellie's mother, who was visiting them a few months after the young couple had taken up their abode in their new home. "You seem to have a great many acquaintances at least, and some of them talk like friends."

"Yes, mother dear, they are friendly," said her daughter; "and it makes our home ever so much more pleasant, that we have found such delightful church relations."

"You see they did not hold themselves aloof," said the pastor's wife to Nellie's mother.

The angel of the Lord, encircling round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.

Duties of a Hostess.

There are homes in which you are always conscious of your bounden duty to conform to rules. You feel that you must get up to a 6 o'clock breakfast when you have been accustomed to indulge in morning naps until 9; you cannot don your wraps and saunter out to enjoy an hour or two in an art gallery or a library of rare books, where one wants to invite one's soul for companionship, without your too solicitous hostess urging you to wait till she has ordered luncheon so that she may go with you and tell you all about them."

They are homes where the rules are not flexible because the makers of them are cast-iron people, but there are others where they lack elasticity simply from the family's want of tact in pleasing those whom they are anxious to please.

The really hospitable house is the one where the guest has been asked to come in order that she may be given an unusual pleasure, and where, for the time being, all the uncomfortable requirements of her individual home are set aside for a bohemian freedom and unaccountability.

The young married hostess may chaperon without monopolizing the callers of her girl guests. She sees these callers frequently in general society, and on many occasions for a chat, while the visitor, of whom they are also old friends, is only in town for a brief stay, and often groans inwardly at having to sit in enforced silence while her hospitable hostess rattles away the precious moments.

The visitor, like the editor, can stand a good deal of letting alone. Of course, if she be what is called a "born sight seer," one who must be taken from the crown of the Liberty statue to the roof garden crushes, she will not want to be let alone, or to let any one else alone.

To be indifferent about a guest's enjoyment is the grossest evidence of ill breeding and callous feeling, after extending an invitation, but far too few people understand the exquisite spirit of hospitality underlying the greeting of the Spanish hostess, when she so graciously says, "The house is yours, senorita."

Watching for Faults.

"When I was a boy," said an old man, "I was often very idle, and used to play during the lessons with other boys as idle as myself. One day we were fairly caught by the master. 'Boys,' he said, 'you must not be idle; you must attend closely to your books. The first one of you who sees another boy idle will please come and tell me.'"

"Ah!" I thought to myself, "there is Joe Simmons, whom I don't like: I'll watch him, and if I see him look off his book I'll tell the teacher."

"It was not long until I saw Joe look off his book, and I went up at once to tell the master."

"Indeed," said he, "how did you know he was idle?"

"I saw him," said I.

"You did? And were your eyes on your book when you saw him?"

"I was caught, and the other boys laughed, and I never watched for idle boys again."

If we watch over our conduct and try to keep it right, and always do our duty, we will not have time to watch for faults or idleness in others. This will keep us out of mischief, and make us helpful to others.—Our Young Folks.