

CHURCH SOCIALS AND SOCIAL LIFE.

"WHY do not you ministers give sensible speeches at church socials?" was the question asked by a lady friend one day as two of the aforesaid ministers were preparing to sally forth to one of these festive occasions. Ever since that question has been haunting me; not that I am prepared to admit the truth of the implied indictment, either in regard to myself or my brother ministers. I have attended about twenty since October last, and there is not one from which I do not carry away some pleasant reminiscence, some golden thought fitly framed or some bright fancy richly clad. Of the fifty addresses to which I listened I have no remembrance of anything that would offend against morality, and little that could offend against good taste. The addresses, perhaps, were not *all* up to the high-water mark of culture, but they were in the main suited to the audiences to which they were delivered, and were infinitely superior in their tone and more attractive in their matter than the political meetings which were held during the same time. Much as the church social has been decried and condemned as an unmitigated nuisance, I conceive that it has a place and sphere of usefulness, and might have a much greater if half the time spent in condemnation was spent in hearty effort to improve it, for until the love of sociability becomes extinct, and young people are born old, it will continue. Christians cannot afford to ignore any legitimate and wholesome means of influence, nor support anything that is unwholesome; so if it can be shown that this may be a source of good, if it be not so now, then there is ground not only for its existence but for its encouragement. I would exclude from this paper everything that has a purely financial end in view, without any higher or ulterior aim, and include everything which has for its object social improvement.

These congregational gatherings are not without their uses to ministers themselves as students of human nature. In our services we see our people as they wish to appear, at our social