

INGLE NOOK CHATS

THE GIRL WHO COMES TO BOARD IN THE CITY.

The girl who leaves her home in the country usually comes to the city either to take her Normal course as a teacher, to go to Business College, to become a shop girl or perhaps to improve herself in music or singing. She leaves her home very definitely and completely for a time at any rate, and she is lucky if she finds any sort of a substitute for it in the average boarding house.

I was shopping with a young girl the other day who keeps house for her father and when I invited her to go with me to a restaurant she was delighted with the idea. "You don't know how good it tastes," she said. "It's so nice to get away from one's meals for once."

"For once," yes. But suppose that she is condemned to take a restaurant lunch or dinner, day in and day out for many a month, and she will be ready to swear that nothing tastes as it did at home.

The average working girl is content with poor board and poor accommodation if she can but dress well, and in a city where so many girls live at home and are able to dress themselves on their salary this makes it rather hard for the less fortunate. But it is a question that must be settled by each girl for herself, and she should realize that her health is "more than raiment."

It is rather difficult, or has been until recently, for a girl to obtain board at all, for she often runs up against the prejudice that some of her sex have unfortunately created.

"We don't want any women lodgers in the house," a landlady said to a friend of mine. "They're always poking about the kitchen and wanting irons or trying to wash out their handkerchiefs."

But she afterwards confessed, when she had been prevailed upon to try this particular one, that "she liked 'em better than medical students," with which high compliment my friend was forced to be content.

Over and over again one hears of the lonely young men in the great city. "I haven't been inside a home for two years," one said to me. But what about the lonely girls? There are few hostesses who think much about inviting those women boarding in the city whom they may chance to meet, and unless a girl makes a friend of some man who takes her about and, as she would say, "gives her a good time" she is apt to spend many lonely hours. It is all very well to say "Oh, she'll soon get to know people in a boarding house." She will—but they will be of all sorts.

The parents of every girl so situated should give her letters of introduction to their friends, if they have them, in the city, or write to the latter asking them to call upon their daughter. What a clergyman or minister can do he will do, but in a large city it is impossible to give to newcomers all the attention they need or indeed in some cases, to find them out.

The girl in the city boarding house must remember that she is in a miniature world of her own, that her actions are noted and commented on, though not always or of necessity in an unkindly spirit. Friends are there for the making, but no friendship should be rushed into—and no sides should be taken, when, as sometimes happens, the newcomer finds herself a prospective pawn in the hands of feminine players.

But the girl we are speaking of will doubtless become a roomer in a private house—since almost every householder lets rooms—and there she has but to act the part of a lady and adapt herself to circumstances. She can, if she likes, finding the inmates congenial, become part of the household, if she chooses to make herself agreeable. But again I would say, "Don't make the first advances. Wait until you are asked to spend the evening with the family, or to play the piano, if it is not 'so nominated in the bond'."

It is harder, in this free Western land, to remain apart without giving offense, but it can be done. I once knew a fellow-lodger who went nightly down-

stairs to sit with the landlady who discussed the peculiarities, failings and worldly circumstances of her lodgers with the utmost freedom. One day I asked the former why she would condescend to do this and she said "If I didn't she would talk about me, and she's got such a venomous tongue that I'm frightened of her." But such women can always be ignored, and, when the chance comes, left.

The bedroom which is let is supposed to be swept and kept clean, the bed made up and towels provided, etc. by the landlady, but it may be that the girl renting the room may need to do a little dusting now and then, and she should keep her bedroom, small or large, as tidy as she can, for no lodging-house keeper is supposed to hang up gowns and coats everlastingly. Consideration for others is after all the greatest thing in the world of boarding.

And now a final word as to the use of

the drawing-room or sitting-room. No girl should go to a house where there is no place set apart for receiving her visitors. It is a vexing question sometimes for the mistress of the house to consider, but if she is going to take women as lodgers she must give them some place in which they may receive their friends, unless she wants to see them talking on stairs, porches and hallways.

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