

he travels to another region other influences are brought to bear and, if he possesses any individuality, any original force of character whatever, he is scarcely likely to continue attendance upon Church, and especially upon a strange Church, merely in obedience to a previously acquired habit. If he form new Church connections, he is impelled thereto by some definite purpose, and if he possesses any nobility of character, or conception of Christian duty that purpose is the fulfilment of the responsibilities which devolve upon him as a Christian man. When that is the case the Church has for him a definite relation; it has a definite meaning. It is not merely a place to make pleasant acquaintances or to form Christian friendships. Such may result but they are distinctly secondary. He does not join for any such purpose, but in order to complete the larger life which he believes lies before him.

It is the opportunity afforded him for carrying on that work which devolves upon him as a Christian. Without its aid he would be a solitary unit, and his influence ordinarily small. From it he derives impetus, his own religious life is quickened, his powers of doing good are strengthened, because he has behind him the potential force of the Church, which both aids and impels. It is the means that God has placed at his disposal of carrying on the mission confided to him as a follower of Christ. The tie, therefore, that binds him to the Church is of the closest character; he owes to it every sentiment of Christian allegiance.

The young man is the arm of the Church; his relation to it is similar to that which subsists between the member and the body. Further, his relation is that of a trustee the trust being the mission which Christ has confided unto the Church as his representative on earth, and which must be shared by all Christian Churches, together with the heritage derived from the founders (and builders of the particular Church who gave of their energy and substance to surround it with those material accessories which should make it an active, living force. The beneficiaries are the great hosts of other young men, the community at large, that great mass of the people who are unreached by any direct religious influence. In this relation he is positively identified with the Church, a part of it, all her interests are his interests, everything that concerns her welfare demands his attention and anything which might detract from her prestige as a centre of united Christian activity should call for his uncompromising opposition.

The Story of a Hymn.

A party of tourists formed a part of a large company gathered on the deck of an excursion steamer that was moving slowly down the Potomac one beautiful evening in the summer of 1881. A gentleman who has since gained a national reputation as an evangelist of song, had been delighting the party with the happy rendering of many familiar hymns, the last being the sweet petition so dear to every Christian, beginning, "Jesu, lover of my soul." The singer gave the first two verses with much feeling, and a peculiar emphasis upon the concluding lines that thrilled every heart. A hush had fallen upon the listeners that was not broken for some seconds after the musical notes had died away. Then a gentleman made his way from the outskirts of the crowd to the side of the singer, and accosted him with, "Beg your pardon, stranger, but were you actively engaged in the late war?" "Yes sir, the man answered, courteously, "I fought under Gen Grant." "Well," the first speaker continued, with something like a sigh, "I did my fighting on the other side, and think, indeed, am quite sure, I was very near you one bright night eighteen years ago this very month. It was such a night as this. If I am not very much mistaken, you were on guard duty. We of the South had sharp business on hand, and you were one of the enemy. I crept near your post of duty, my murderous weapon in my hand. The shadows hid me. As you passed back and forth you were humming the tune of the hymn you have just sung. I raised my gun and aimed at your heart, and I had been selected by my commander for the work because I was a sure shot. Then out upon the night rang the words:

'Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of Thy wing.'

Your prayer was answered. I couldn't fire after that. And there was no attack made upon your camp that night. You were the man whose life I was spared from taking." The singer grasped the hand of the Southerner, and said with much emotion. "I remember that night very well, and distinctly that feeling of depression and loneliness with which I went forth to my duty. I knew my post was one of great danger, and I was more dejected than I remember to have been at any other time during the service. I paced my lonely beat thinking of home and friends and all that life holds dear. Then the thought of God's care for all that He had created came to me with peculiar force. If He so cared for the sparrows, how much more for man, created in His own image, and I sang the prayer of my heart and I ceased to be alone. How the prayer was answered I never knew till this evening."—*Selected.*

Remember Your Own Faults.

In our criticism of others, let us remember that we have faults which our friends have to excuse. How much would be left of us if all those who see inconsistencies in us should chip away from our character and reputation? It is an invariable rule that those who make the roughest work with the names of others are those who have themselves the most imperfections. The larger the beam in your own eye, the more anxious are you about the mote in somebody else's eye. Instead of going about town slashing this man's bad temper, and the other man's fastness, and this woman's hypocrisy, and that one's indiscretion, go home with the Ten Commandments as a monitor, and make out a list of your own derelictions.

Christmas Decorations.

Eben E. Rexford contributes an article upon Christmas decorations, mainly as applied to churches, in the December *Ladies' Home Journal*. He treats the subject from the standpoint of one having a thorough knowledge of the value and application of different shrubbery and material, and a pronounced talent for obtaining harmonious, artistic and striking results. He details comprehensively the different materials that can be used, and how best employed, outlining a number of decorative schemes. Addressing himself directly to church decoration committees, he emphasizes the importance of thoroughly planning the decorative scheme before anything is done about trimming the church. "Unless this is done the result is almost sure to be unsatisfactory, because it is without a definite plan, and everything is done in a haphazard way. Always decide upon some scheme of decoration that can be explained to those with whom you work, so that all will have an intelligent idea of it, and can work toward the embodiment of that idea in what is done. If possible, have a sketch made of the effect you have in mind, so that a better idea can be gained of the scheme decided on than can be given by a verbal description. Not only does this insure more artistic results than the method usually employed, which is simply without method, but it helps to expedite matters."

A popular minister in Fifeshire, in the good old times, used at Christmas to be inundated with hampers filled with good things. On one occasion an enormous turkey was sent to him by the thoughtful kindness of a neighboring farmer; but as the minister's family had already provided for the Christmas dinner, the bird was sent to the market and sold. A passer-by, seeing this fine specimen of poultry, said, "What a splendid turkey! Just the thing for the minister's Christmas dinner." To the minister it was again sent. The provident wife sent it again to the market, and sold it again for a handsome sum. Another friend, similarly struck with the splendid proportions of the turkey, purchased it, and sent it to the minister. The good woman, not wishing to fly in the face of Providence, said at last: "It is clear that the Lord means us to have this turkey," and with the approbation of the family, it formed part of the Christmas dinner.