

REASONS FOR CHURCHGOING

PEOPLE who stay away from church "seem always prepared to make an eloquent defense of their inaction," observes a writer in *The Woman's Home Companion*. The challenges that they often meet prepare them with reasons good or bad, but the churchgoer is rarely asked to account for his action. Reasons inspired more or less by malice are often imputed to him; but this journal has instituted an inquiry, with results that are interesting religiously and psychologically as well. The question why is answered by one in saying: "Because it seems to me that the Church bears the same relation to right living that the flag does to patriotism—it upholds an ideal." A lawyer, who says that perhaps he "should not be expected to go to church at all," replies that he also in church observance follows an "ideal." He writes:

"Briefly, I go to church to worship God and because I know that I can live a higher, a broader, and a better life as the result. I am in action a busy man and my religion is rational rather than emotional. But I know that 'ideals' are the lever which moves the world, that behind every ideal lies a religious inspiration, and that churchgoing is the practical support of all religion."

Another has three reasons:

"1. Because of what it stands for. With all of its human imperfections the Christian Church stands for the best elements of life and the highest conception of God known to mankind.

"2. Because of its offspring. Nearly all the institutions and agencies interested in the uplifting of humanity are the product, directly or indirectly, of the Christian Church. And most of the people who give their time, talents, and money to the support of these beneficent institutions are members of, or results of, the life and work of the Church. I want to have a part in this general uplift.

"3. Because of its enemies. If a man is to be judged by his enemies, why not the Church? The foes of the home, marriage, and righteousness are also foes of the Church. All forces which seek mankind's destruction seek the Church's vilification."

A farmer's wife gives a mingling of religious and worldly reasons that bear a very human stamp:

"I am the wife of a farmer living in a thinly settled section of the country. I go to church services held in a log shack, to hear sincere, if not always brilliant, sermons; to sing; to wear my best clothes, and to see other people."

One who answers the question admits that (his or her) "reasons for going to church are un-Christlike as can well be imagined. Thus:

"I have been reared to think that all well-bred people go to some church. It doesn't take very much time out of your Sunday—two hours or so—and you leave an impression that you are distinctly high-toned and perfectly proper.

"No cold cream on hot flesh ever produced such soothing sensation as this churchly application will to your soul.

"Now, Mr. Editor, that is the square, honest reason why thousands of people go to church. But if you are hunting for a 'true religious uplift,' you'll squirm and be afraid to publish this."

Fifteen letters were sent to fifteen young men, known to be churchgoers. These were the questions asked:

"Name? Age? Married or single? Occupation? About how many Sundays of the year do you attend church? Why do you go to church? Please confine your answer within one hundred words." Fourteen out of the fifteen replied. Seven express a desire to exert a good influence over others by the rightful observance of the Sabbath. Ten believe that church attendance is a duty, and eleven speak of church attendance as a privilege. Only four speak of the sermon, and one touches a keynote when he says: "I never go away without a blessing. It matters not who the preacher is, whether he be an eloquent or scholarly orator or not. If he be a Christian at heart, he will bring us the blessing that we need."

CHRISTIAN SOCIAL WORK FOR COLLEGE MEN

WHAT BECOMES of the old men? Such is the question sometimes heard in the streets of New York as the pageant of young manhood presents its daily spectacle. New York is the Mecca of young men, but the graduate department of the Intercollegiate Branch of the Y. M. C. A. has found that no more than 8 or 10 per cent. of the college graduates coming to the city are joining the churches. The reason assigned is the lack of opportunities for social work, and this committee has endeavored to stir up some churches to their social opportunities, presenting them with a program for larger work of this nature. It is deemed desirable that there should be "the most intimate and general cooperation with these organizations now working on the improving of moral, social, and civic conditions in the city," and the graduate department has agreed for the present to act as a clearing-house between the work to be done and the men who can do it. In *The Christian Work and Evangelist* (New York), the Rev. Orrin G. Cocks gives the following plan which was presented to representatives of all the men's organizations of Manhattan and the Bronx:

"1. The men of the church organizations recognize the need of definite social work taking the energies of the churchmen for the sake of the city, the churches, and the men now doing little practical work. The need is evident. The men are ready. There remains the formation of a wise program and method of procedure.

"2. It is assumed that the men's organizations, under proper direction and with a wise plan, are the logical bodies to take up in the churches such social work.

"3. It is proposed that individual churches, a combination of churches of different denominations in a neighborhood, or the denominational group be urged to employ at least one secretary, who shall be highly trained along social lines, who shall have executive ability to put untrained men at work, and who shall have an undoubted religious motive in doing this.

"4. It is understood in every case that cooperation with existing social and moral agencies doing satisfactory work be encouraged.

"5. The graduate department of the Students' Club agrees, until the work can be placed in the hands of a group of trained directors, to put into shape a definite list of opportunities for social and moral work throughout the city, which can be taken up by individuals, committees, or organizations. It will submit such suggestions, with the approval of the ministers of the churches, to the men's organizations. It will also assist in finding the most important and interesting work to concentrate upon and in beginning such work."

It is not to be implied that entire inactivity along these lines has thus far characterized the churches of Manhattan. Mr. Cocks gives a brief survey of the kind of effort that has engaged attention and the measure of success resulting therefrom. We read thus:

"St. George's churchmen have succeeded in keeping the streets surrounding the church and Stuyvesant Park free from solicitation at night. The Washington Heights Baptist Church has interested itself in the boys of the neighborhood, in the movement to change the amusements in Fort George Park, and in obtaining playgrounds for children on the Heights. The men of St. Michael's have aided the rector, Dr. Peters, in the work of the committee of fourteen and in legislation considered at Albany. The men of the West End Presbyterian Church have attempted to interest the small shopkeepers, clerks, etc., in their work in the reaching of 104th Street near Amsterdam Avenue. The members of the Brick Church Brotherhood have been organized for some time in committees interested in social and civic movements and are keenly awake. Two of the members of the Pilgrim Congregational Church are on the Harlem Committee of the Charity Organization Society. The organization has been conducting an unusual series of meetings on Sunday evenings which have had to do with social work. The men in the Church of the Holy Communion, under Dr. Mottet's leadership, have circulated petitions and been instrumental in obtaining a public school in the vicinity of Twentieth Street."



WHO WAS "LADY FROM THE SEA"?

MR. GEORGE MOORE, the Irish novelist, has announced a book for the early autumn. It is said to present among its characters many of his contemporaries in the Irish capital. Indeed, since this fact has leaked out, it is further asserted that "half-Dublin is furious because they are in the book, and the other half furious because they are not." Many authors are not so frank about their prototypes. Just now there is discussion over the original of Ibsen's "Lady from the Sea." A young woman who forged a check to save her husband's life is known to be the model of *Nora*, altho she did not leave her husband as did the heroine of "A Doll's House." *Hedda Gabler* had her counterpart in real life—a young woman whose strong character and absence of fitting occupation brought her into many uncomfortable positions. But who was the "Lady from the Sea"? John Paulsen, a well-known Norwegian author and a great friend of Ibsen, writes, in his recently published "Memoirs":

"Not very long ago it was said that a Danish actress whom Ibsen met at a little watering-place on the coast of Denmark inspired his conception of the character. This statement surprised me very much. I thought that all Ibsenites knew that the prototype of Ibsen's remarkable heroine is no less a person than Camilla Collett, as Ibsen admits in a letter to the celebrated authoress."

Mr. Paulsen goes on with some observations about Ibsen that may throw light on the work of expatriated authors. Henry James, for example, lived abroad for twenty-five years without once in that time visiting his native land; but he seems in the interval to have poured forth a stream of novels that mark with contemporary exactness the changing type of American character. Mr. Paulsen writes:

"During his long stay in foreign lands, Ibsen lived a very secluded life, and received but few people. But in return he observed the chosen ones all the more carefully, especially if they were compatriots. Once when I expressed surprise at his ability of keeping abreast with what was going on in Norway while living so far away from home, Ibsen said that every Norwegian who crossed his threshold seemed to bring with him the atmosphere of his country, and thus became his model. And when the characteristic traits were silhouetted against a foreign background he seemed to see more clearly the national faults and virtues. It was natural, therefore, that a noble and remarkable woman like Camilla Collett should become the object of Ibsen's special observation."

"It must have been tempting for a poet to analyze this complex enigmatic nature. Ibsen had admired her from his youth up and her remarkable works of fiction had influenced him in several respects. It was in Dresden in the early seventies that Mrs. Collett, who was then on her way to Italy, first appeared in Ibsen's family circle, where she was immediately received as a dear and long lost friend."

"Almost every evening she came to tea at Ibsen's, and naturally, when she was around, conversation inevitably turned on woman's rights. Ibsen's idea of woman's position had been most conservative if not religiously orthodox up to this time,

but now it slowly underwent a change. Mrs. Ibsen had her share in this change, for she, too, felt the subtle influence of Camilla Collett's arguments. Otherwise Mrs. Ibsen was very hard to influence. Not very many years later Ibsen's new point of view found expression in 'A Doll's House,' which Camilla Collett hailed in the most enthusiastic way."

"When the 'Lady from the Sea' first appeared I was in Copenhagen where Magdalena Thoresen, Ibsen's mother-in-law, and Mrs. Collett were also stopping. As everybody else we spoke of the new play and I was amused to find that both ladies flattered themselves upon having inspired the dramatist. Mrs. Thoresen, who was a woman of the world, hinted vaguely and delicately at it, and, in a way, it was not strange that she should consider herself the heroine, for, like *Ellida*, she was extremely fond of the water."

"But as soon as Mrs. Collett had read the book she felt that she was *Ellida*. 'I am the "Lady from the Sea,"' she said with characteristic frankness. She said it as calmly as tho it were the most ordinary thing in the world."

"I objected that Mrs. Collett had nothing to do with the sea, that she had been brought up in a little inland village and that she was not fond of the water."

"Don't you understand the symbolism of Ibsen's work at all?' she asked me in the same calm way. 'With Ibsen everything is symbolic. What Ibsen calls the sea is merely another way of expressing the weird fascination of the nature at Eidsvold which put its stamp on my whole being.'"

"Mrs. Collett wanted certainty, however, and with characteristic naïveté she immediately wrote to the dramatist to find out. In reply to her letter Ibsen admits that she had greatly influenced his conception of things, and that she had many points in common with *Ellida*."—Translation made for THE LITERARY DIGEST.



MRS. COBURN AS ELEKTRA

In the out-door presentation of Murray's translation of the Euripides tragedy.

AN UNTILLED FIELD FOR AMATEUR THEATRICALS

THE RAGE for amateur theatricals has become so wide-spread that one of our writers on the drama finds the time apt for giving some practical hints.

Amateurs could not do better, thinks Mr. Walter P. Eaton, than cultivate "the professionally untilled field of outdoor theatrical entertainments." Indeed, his sagest advice to amateurs is to avoid, so far as possible, the field where the professional is supreme, and "act in plays which have a definite historic or artistic value, but which can not be seen on the professional stage." The main reason why outdoor acting should recommend itself to amateurs is that it "calls for less subtlety and technical skill than indoor, and many plays impossible to amateurs on a stage are well adapted to amateurs in a grove." In *The Woman's Home Companion* he gives us a few more reasons why:

"The open-air stage is the simplest, in some ways the most effective, in the world; outdoor acting is, if rightly understood, the least technically involved, the most naïve and simple. Almost any lawn-party can be made more attractive by a little outdoor play, varying the usual monotony of strawberries and bad music. And almost any lawn, under the kindly cover of night, can become a Forest of Arden."

"The reason for the extreme simplicity of the outdoor stage is just this kindly cover of night. Select a spot of level lawn between two trees, throw upon it the light of two or three