

RETURNED STUDENT AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE CHURCH.

A conference small in numbers but large in promise, was held at Shanghai December 28 when a group of Chinese women, returned students, met to discuss the question of their relationship to the Church. Students from England, Belgium and various colleges in the United States were present and took part in the discussion. The problem of how to utilize the leadership of educated women is one of the most acute now facing the churches, and the proportion of women in the churches in Shanghai constitutes a challenge to the best thought amongst us; the proportion is about one in three. The conference was divided into morning and afternoon sessions, the morning session led by Dr. D. W. Lyon, the afternoon session being an informal discussion. Dr. Lyon began with the thought of China's most pressing needs and went on to elucidate the fact that to meet these needs there must be organization to conserve effort and unite services. The chief organization to this end is the Christian Church, which with all its imperfections here and elsewhere, is capable of infinite development and self-sacrifice. The afternoon session raised several points; the first, "Why is the average returned student loose in his or her church connections?" Second, "Why should a student join heartily in the life of the church?" Third, "What can the returned student expect to find in the church in the way of work and welcome?" Fourth, "What definite forms of work are open to educated women in the church?" The discussion all through the conference was free and frank. One speaker expressed the opinion of the meeting when she said that in her student days she had thought that her own personal experience was sufficient and that outward forms, such as church membership, were unimportant; but since then, she had found vital connection with a church was essential to her own growth. The fact that there is very little work being done for young women in the churches in Shanghai, outside the students in mission schools, seems to be a challenge to this group of women. There will never be young life in the church unless special provision is made for it. At the conclusion of the conference, six of those present gave in their names as wishing to form a class for instruction in the principles of girls club work, in case such an opportunity should open up in their respective churches. A conference like this is surely a good omen. We know how much the Church at home has owed to the earnest effort of its enlightened women, and as educated women more and more get behind the work of the Church in China, the same advance will certainly follow. The conference was held at the invitation of the Young Women's Christian Association.—"Millard's Review."