

FAMILY LIFE UNDER GOD'S GUIDANCE.

YOUNG GROUP PEOPLE'S SUCCESSFUL EXPERIMENT.

For some weeks an international family gathering has been held at various places in England. The members of the family, collected together by the Rev. Cleve Hicks, who needs no introduction to readers of the C.E.N., came from several countries and some of them were still at school. Yet distance and the difference in ages counted for nothing.

First of all, eight delightful and helpful days were spent at an old farmhouse at Charlbury, in typical English country. Here were assembled George ("Bud") Smith, who is 14, comes from Rhode Island, has the muscles of an ox, and is fond of sketching; Ross Holland, aged 18, of Santa Barbara, who came from school in California; Horton Hunt and Loring Swain (son of a leading Boston doctor), both from Massachusetts; David Hagadone, a schoolboy from New York who had already mixed in diplomatic circles in Washington on account of his father's work; Nicholas Korff, who, since the Russian Revolution, has been an exile and wanderer in Europe. From Canada came Arthur S. ("Chou") Price, an 18-years-old schoolboy of Quebec, and Tom Piddington, whose home is at Vancouver, from McGill University, Montreal. Manfred von Cramon came from Silesia, Germany; Johannes de Kock, a Boer who was brought up to hate the British, but found through the Groups' visit to South Africa in 1929 the answer to racial hatred, had come from Princeton Seminary as the guardian of his American friends. Oxford was represented by Edward Goulding, of St. John's; Leslie Wenger, of New College; and Michael Barrett, of Trinity College. And, of course, there was Cleve Hicks, with whose presence no gathering of any kind could be dull or aimless.

THE LIGHTER SIDE.

The stay at Charlbury was a period of experimenting in what family living could mean when God's guidance was the principle on which all plans were made. But it was a holiday as well. Each of these young people had come on from the Oxford house party and they were being shown England at its best. The lighter side of the happy crowd thus assembled was illustrated in a number of ways. For instance, Horton Hunt fed the chickens and tried to ride a pig—he also tried to raise a ghost! There was tennis, and after tennis a dip in a narrow but deep stream nearby. Walks, too, and visits to such interesting spots as Shorthampton Church, with its ancient wall-paintings, formed part of the programme.

It was great learning to play together under guidance, as well as to pray together. The mornings were chiefly spent in writing letters and studying in preparation for campaigns ahead. One of the many things learnt was how natural and real God can be in family life. The first evening the party arrived there was a family quiet time, and the guidance that each of the boys had was vivid and practical. There were faith and thoughtfulness and good, sound sense. The secret of this family life was the morning and evening quiet times, which the boys led in turn. Prayer was spontaneous and power was ever present.

RESULTS.

Results followed inevitably. It was just natural for Horton and Manfred to get talking to the proprietors of a garage, with the assistant mechanics listening. A leading Quaker invited the family to a garden party to meet his friends. There was tennis with the Vicar, and a bus-drive to Stratford-on-Avon provided other opportunities: the driver said he felt it an honour to take them and wished he had met them before! At Stratford the party saw a performance of *Hamlet*. At a tennis party at the farm several of the players were as thrilled with the talks between sets as with the games, and many are now reading *For Sinners Only*.

Each of those in the family of which we are writing began to see the significance of a life like that, composed of young people with different standards of manners and some at the age of adolescence. "We were a real family because God was in the middle." That was the keynote. And it was realised what might happen if every home contained a family such as that, under God's guidance, always ready to expand and with no barriers. Nicholas, an exile for 14 years said he had found a new nation.

They went from Charlbury to Sheffield for a week-end city campaign, details of which have already appeared in the C.E.N. For this they were joined by others—an international family of girls who had made a similar experiment at Burford, and some older men with experience in business and the professions. Jack Ely, a New York barrister specialising in marine law; Dr. Frank Sladen, from the Henry Ford Hospital; and Dr. Worth Ross, a children's specialist from Detroit, were with them.

The girls included Anna and Marjorie Weld, aged 24 and 17 respectively, from Santa Barbara, California, and Prudence Smith, of Rhode Island, who is 15 but who started keeping quiet times at the age of 9. At Sheffield there were also present David and Philip Peters, aged 18 and 13, the sons of Councillor Alfred Peters, who planned the campaign.

IN THE LAKES.

Followed three days at Grasmere, in the Lake district. The family numbered twenty-seven, including some from Sheffield. Again results were quickly forthcoming. A process engineer from Manchester, chancing to visit the hotel, was so captivated by the enthusiasm of some of the youngest that he stayed on and found for himself how God could become real and effective in his life, although he had not been near a church for six years.

Then on to Darlington, where another job was tackled—a training house party. People came from all over the north of England, many giving up their only holiday in the year because they realised the importance of adequate training for the work of revival. The task of the team was to help to develop their vision of the huge possibilities and to remove those things that prevented them from becoming leaders in life-changing.

After Darlington the return to London was made via York, where the Minster was visited, Peterborough and Cambridge.

THE FAMILY SEPARATING.

By this time the family has begun to separate. Michael Barrett has returned home to Edinburgh, taking with him a bigger picture of how his career might most usefully work out if he were ready for anything to which God might guide him; Manfred von Cramon has gone home; Loring, Bud and Horton are thinking in terms of a house party for their school friends as soon as they arrive home before next term begins; Nicholas Korff has left for Germany; Johannes de Kock, with a new vision for his theological college, returns to Princeton; others go back to changed families. The family of which we have been writing have gone to carry on in their own homes the experiment of a family living under the guidance of God.