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"Yes," he said, "I've seen it. My reactions? Well, I smiled to myself and wondered whether they had any better reason for lifting the ban than they had for imposing it. I used to board with an old couple who were absolutely down on dancing, but I could never get any reason—any legitimate reason—for their objection."

"Their attitude was always, 'You mustn't do it, and don't ask why not.' And so the young folk of the Church used to slip out whenever they could and have a dance. It wasn't anything wicked to them—just something they were told not to do . . . It's no good forbidding young people to do a thing without giving them a good reason for it."

Youth Worker

Next we went to a youth worker. "There is a fundamental issue involved in this controversy," he said, "for dancing is about the only way boys and girls can meet socially; after all, most of our secondary schools are not co-educational. Unless the sexes met freely during the 'teen ages, their whole relationship later in society would become chaotic. Can you imagine the reaction if we asked youth to come along and sew patchwork quilts? The primal motive for their coming together must be for enjoyment, but having established the motive and brought them together you can progress to a lot of other things—courtesy on the dance floor, decent relationship between the sexes, duties of hostessing, and so on."

Episode in a Girls' Hostel

There were about a dozen girls in the hostel sitting-room in the early evening. At the piano one girl was playing "Mairzy Doats" and two others were dancing. Footsteps were heard outside the door and the couple broke apart. The music hesitated for a moment and then went on. When the matron had gone again the pianist remarked vehemently, "Why they object to dancing, I don't know."

"Ridiculous, I call it," said Anne, and put her head back in her book.

Rae was new to the hostel. "Don't they believe in dancing?"

"They say it's immoral," said Hazel. "Well, I suppose you could make it immoral if you liked. But you could do that with a good many other things as well."

"A South Island Methodist Synod has given permission for 'Acts of Dancing' to be held on Church premises. That means that two or three dances can be included in the social programme now."

"How silly! What's the difference between that and an evening of dancing? Anyway, 'Acts of Dancing' sounds like committing some sort of crime."

There was a pause and a quiet girl in the corner said, "I've never been allowed to go to dances. Or to have a long frock either."

"Gosh!" said Rae, "What a life!"

Soon they were discussing the latest film, for apart from the fact that dancing wasn't allowed in the hostel, opinions on this topic affected them little and interested them less. In any case, on Saturday night most of them would be off to a dance somewhere or other.

At a Bible Class

It was the day after the Synod's decision had been released, and 15 boys and

girls, their ages ranging from 12 to 16, were discussing plans for their Bible Class social. Enthusiasm ran high over the programme.

"We'll have mostly games and competitions, with a few dances."

"Yes, proper dances. We did folk-dancing last time, but it's not nearly as much fun."

"That's right. And we must have someone to play for us."

Not to one of them did it occur that there was anything wrong with dancing, or that it was an activity one didn't connect with the Church. It was just a normal everyday thing which one took for granted.

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