

young and old, men and youths, matrons and maids, and children in troops. The eight oil lamps shed light on a most interesting and animated scene. The appearance of the church filled the hearts of its decorators with a pardonable pride, and the faces of the audience were suffused with a glow of satisfaction and expectancy as they gazed at these things displayed for their delectation and snare. The elders of the church rubbed their hands at the prospect of large money. The preacher, in the pauses of his bustling to and fro, softly chuckled to himself. Bill was all smiles and importance; he was in charge of the "boxes."

Now, to the dwellers in cities, familiar with art, and critical, the White Church entertainment would have been exceedingly tame. But upon the faces of that country audience could be read happiness, excitement, wonder and delight. Mothers listened, and gazed with trembling eagerness as their boys and girls appeared on the platform and their hearts thrilled at the delicious applause. The audience received everything enthusiastically, dialogues, however wooden, recitations gay and sad, speeches and ancient jokes.

But now the programme was over and the auctioneer took his stand on the stage. The boys nudged each other and whispered; the girls tried to look indifferent, but the heightened color of their cheeks betrayed the interest in the proceedings.

Bidding was brisk and prices high. From the start Bill had kept his eyes fixed upon Miss Darrel and when, at the same moment as a great be-ribboned, be-flowered basket made its appearance on the auctioneer's table he noticed the tell-tale blush creeping over her face, he promptly began to bid. A keen observer might have seen the suspicion of a wink in the eye of Miss Darrel's uncle at this juncture. But no matter. Perhaps it was only the tremor of an eye-lash. Anyhow, when the price of the basket had crept up to a dollar and a half only one remained to bid against Bill.

Bill took an occasional glance at Miss Darrel's face and kept bravely on. The preacher did not show any inclination to yield.

"A dollar fifty-five."

"Sixty."

"Sixty-five."

Miss Darrel's face had become quite unconcerned! Bill hesitated.

"Going at a dollar-sixty-five—going—"

"Seventy," from Bill.

"Seventy-five."

"Eighty."

The audience looked on and listened with supreme delight.

"Go it, Bill."

"Never say die."

"She's worth it all," came from the boys.

"Am I offered any more for this? One dollar and eighty cents," the auctioneer asked.

"Dollar eighty-five," said the preacher.

"Ninety."