

was of princely whiteness. On the table was a huge loaf of home-baked bread, a loin of pork roasted to a turn, and an apple-pie, flanked by a jug of fresh cream. But the place of honor was given to a missionary-box of the largest attainable dimensions, which stood upon a basin turned the wrong side up, between the pork and the apple-pie.

"Ye'll make yourselves kindly welcome," said Gill, as he shook hands with the deputation from Barford, which consisted of old Mr. Shannon, and a sallow missionary who had been astonishing an audience at the chapel for the last hour with extraordinary stories of the work of Christ in Madagascar. Baxter, and Button, and three or four of the chapel worthies stood modestly near the door till the deputation were seated. They then took their places on a plank, insecurely supported by two empty soap-boxes, and held an animated conversation with each other by means of nods and nudges.

And I who witnessed it, can aver that it was a sight to see old Solomon Gill rise solemnly to ask a blessing. He had a noble head, with a high, bald forehead, such as I have often seen since in the portraits of great ecclesiastics, which the famous masters of a great age of painting have bequeathed to us. He wore his ploughman's smock, which one might easily have mistaken for the cassock of a saint, so fair and white was it. And in that wrinkled face of his there was a true light of sainthood, a softened glow of great peace, which is found only on the faces of those who are much alone with God.

"We thank Thee, who hast given us richly all things to enjoy," said the old man, solemnly.

I have sometimes thought that that thanksgiving might have better suited the tables of the rich; but I have never heard it there. I only heard it once; and it was upon the lips of an old ploughman, who earned from nine to eleven shillings a week.

"Well," whispered Baxter to Johnny Button, "I must say as Gill have done it 'andsomer than iver this year. I dunno' how he do manage it."

"Does it on princerple," said Johnny, drily, with a recollection of the morning's conversation.

"I don't s'pose now that there missionary do get a meal like to this ivery day."

"Not he. Do look as if he'd like to, however."

"Wonerful, to think what he have gone through."

"Lost his little childer there, they do say. Died one arter another wi' the fever. He've got a look himself like widow Penrose's son what died."

"They do say as he's goin' back, howsomever, an' his wife as mad to go as he be. Takes a brave heart to do that, I reckon, 'specially when they thinks o' them lielt graves."

"I doubt I couldn't do it," said Baxter, with a sigh. He was thinking of his own four little children, and of the one who died of the measles in the spring.

"Gill could," said Johnny.

"Ah, Gill's someway different to we. I've often wondered what it was. Maybe Christ is more real-like to him than what He be to some on us."

The meal was over, and the crowning event of the year for Solomon Gill was about to happen. This was the opening of the missionary-box.

It was solemnly deposed from its place on the basin, and Gill's hand trembled as he took one of the knives to open it.

"I ain't as quick as I were," he said. "My poor hands 'as got all crippled up with the rheumatis this winter. But, bless 'ee, I'll manage it all right, if ye'll only give me time."

No one thought of offering him help. The missionary, who had it on his tongue to do so, saw well enough by our faces how we regarded the affair. Gill was tasting the most ecstatic hour of his simple life. He lingered over the box fondly, as if anxious to prolong the exquisite suspense. He cut the paper at the back, which concealed the flap of the box, gingerly, as though it hurt him to do so. I saw the missionary pass his hand over his eyes, and I respected him for those tears. Perhaps he was thinking that those little graves in a far land were worth the price after all, so long as men like Solomon Gill existed.

At last the wooden flap opened with a creak. The money began to pour out into the plate upon the table. There were scarcely any coppers. There were many sixpences and some shillings. There was one gold piece, which I thought I recognized. I knew that Gill had had a half sovereign that year as a Christmas-box from his employer.

It was slowly counted up, while we stood around the table in expressive silence. The half-sovereign lay by itself in golden dignity; the little piles of silver stood round at a respectful distance; the coppers seemed ashamed of themselves, and cowered in the shadow of the cream-jug.

"Three pound, fifteen and sevenpence," said Mr. Shannon, slowly. "Well, Gill, that's the best you've done yet. I wish my people in Barford would do half as well."

"Tain't too much for such a cause," said Gill, his face all aglow. "I wish 'twere more, sir. When I think o' all the good Lord ha' done for me, I feel as I can't niver do enough for Him."

There was a pause, and then Gill said timidly, "You wouldn't think it proud o' me, sir, if we was to sing the Doxology, would 'ee? I feel as if I'd like to sing summat, an' there ain't nothin' I'd like to sing so well."

So Gill produced his well-worn tuning-fork, and struck the key-note, and we all sang with a will.

It was a pity Davy Lumsden was not there; but, as he said next day, he "stayed away on princerple." — *The British Weekly*.

Be sure that every one of you has his place and avocation on this earth and that it rests with himself to find it. Do not believe those who too lightly say that nothing succeeds like success. Effort—honest, manful, humble effort—succeeds by its reflected action, especially in youth, better than success, which, indeed, too easily and too early gained, not seldom serves, like winning the first throw of the dice, to blind and stupefy. Get knowledge—all you can. Be thorough in all you do, and remember that though ignorance may often be innocent, pretension is often despicable. But you, like men, be strong, and exercise your strength. Work onward and work upward, and may the blessing of the Most High soothe your cares, clear your vision, and crown your labors with reward.

Our Young Folks.

THE QUEER LITTLE HEN.

There was once a little brown hen,
A dear little, queer little hen,
Her work was to lay
Just one egg every day;
And she did it this good little hen.

She'd fly up in a tree, and right then,
Seated high on a branch, this queer hen,
Her egg she would lay,
Her one egg every day,
This good little, queer little hen.

'Twas a strange thing to do, I must say.
Lay an egg from a tree every day.
And what good was the egg?—
Just tell that, I beg—
That fell from a tree in that way?

But some people do things just as queer;
I know it; I've seen it, my dear.
They have a good thought,
But it just comes to naught;
From the wrong place they drop it, my dear.

There's a lesson for you and for me
From the hen that laid eggs in a tree.
If we do a right thing,
If a good thought we bring,
Let's not choose a wrong place, you and me.
—Independent.

A BAD "SITTER."

When the Princess of Wales was a young bride she was constantly in request for sittings to portrait-painters, sculptors and photographers. She was not, however, a good "sitter," and used to pout when compelled to endure the tediousness of sitting in a studio. Mr. Frith, the painter, was engaged to paint a picture of the marriage of the prince and princess, and he gives a pleasant glimpse of his tribulations with the Princess Alexandra:

The princess, says Mr. Frith, was very young and very beautiful, as all the world knows. She graciously consented to come to my house, and to afford me every assistance in the way of sittings for my picture.

The princess is also well known for her kindness of heart. Oh, how that heart would have ached if its owner had realized the aching of mine when I, too soon, discovered that the illustrious young lady did not know that keeping her face in one position for a few minutes even was necessary to enable an artist to catch a resemblance of it!

The first sitting can I ever forget? I did not dare to complain till after two or three fruitless attempts. With downright failure staring me in the face, I opened my heart to the Prince of Wales.

"You should scold her," said the prince.

Just at this time the princess was sitting for her bust to the celebrated sculptor, Gibson, R. A., in a room at Marlborough House. I was sent for by the prince, and before I was admitted to an interview I was shown into the sculptor's studio, and found him waiting for a sitting from the princess. The bust was already in an advanced stage. I did not think it was very like, and in reply to Gibson I said so.

"Well, you see," said Gibson, "the princess is a delightful lady, but she can't sit a bit."

At that moment I was summoned to the prince, whom I found with the princess; and I saw, or thought I saw, a sort of pretty, smiling pout, eloquent of reproof and of half-anger with me. The prince had something to show me,—photographs, I think,—and then he led the way to Gibson, the princess and I following.

No sooner did we find ourselves in the sculptor's presence than—after some plea-

sant remarks upon the bust—the prince said:

"How do you find the princess sits, Mr. Gibson?"

"Now," thought I, "if ever a man was in an awkward fix, you are, Mr. Gibson, for after what you said to me a few minutes ago you cannot, in my presence, compliment the beautiful model on her sitting."

The prince looked at Gibson, and Gibson looked in dead silence at the prince and then at the princess. Then he looked again at the prince, smiled and shook his head.

"There, you see, you neither sit properly to Mr. Gibson nor to Mr. Frith."

"I do—I do!" said the lady. "You are two bad men!"

And then we all smiled; and Gibson went on with his work, the princess sitting admirably for the short time that I remained.

RESULT OF A "DARE."

A certain elderly gentleman, who was uncommonly nice in his tastes and habits, made exception in one respect. He chewed tobacco. Of course he did not manifest this habit in public. He was very secret about it, and the fact of his indulgence was known to but a few intimate friends. One of these asked him, on one occasion, how it happened that he, who was so particular about everything else, should have taken up this offensive practice.

"Oh," he remarked, with a sad smile, "when I was a schoolboy, the lad who sat next me chewed tobacco. He used to dare me to take a quid, and I had not the moral courage to decline. Thus I formed the habit, which has clung to me throughout my whole life." Of course this gentleman has lived long enough to perceive that it would have been a greater mark of courage had he declined the "dare" of his school companion. Boys do not stop to think of that. They are so fearful of being charged with cowardice that they really make cowards of themselves without knowing it.

GOLF.

One of the great advantages of the game is that you can play and have good sport even if there is no one to go around with you. You can try to beat your own best previous record, and, if possible, to lower the best score ever made by anybody over the course. If you succeed in this last, you will have gained the proud distinction of holding the "record for the course." Another good modification of the game is the "foursome," where there are two partners on each side, striking alternately at the same ball. But the ordinary match is against one adversary, and there is no reason why a girl may not play an interesting game against her brother. She may not be able to hit the ball quite so far, but once near the hole, where accuracy and not strength is required, she should be able to hold her own, and it is an old saying that many a game is won on the putting-green. Or again, she may be handicapped by an allowance of so many strokes, for in golf, as in billiards, handicapping does not detract from the interest as it does in tennis. There is no fun playing tennis against a very much weaker opponent, for you win rather on your adversary's mistakes than by your own skill, and this is fatal to true sport.—*Harper's Round Table*.