

## An Experiment That Paid.

(By Jennie S. Smith.)

'My dear people,' the pastor added, after a missionary sermon that was delivered with even more than his wonted earnestness, 'we have fallen short considerably in our missionary collections for the year. Let each of us, old and young, try to make up the deficiency. I never knew a child who couldn't do something for this cause if the effort were really made. But we must settle the matter with our own conscience. That will tell us what we can afford to give for the Lord's work.'

That afternoon the subject was taken up by the superintendent of the Sabbath-school and dilated upon by the teachers, and thus it happened that the question, 'What can I do in the matter?' came to the members of Miss Drew's class with a force that demanded attention.

'I don't know what I can do,' Lillian Broderick said, in answer to a direct appeal, 'I can never save a cent. My allowance goes as fast as I get it, and all I have managed to accomplish so far is to do my share toward the regular church and Sunday-school collections.'

Miss Drew understood Lillian thoroughly. She knew that although the girl was kind-hearted and generous almost to a fault, she also spent more money in unnecessary trifles than did any other scholar in the class. She believed, too, that all of her girls could do something toward paying off the debt if they really tried, and she thought of a plan that might help them along.

'We have been requested to make an extra effort,' she said in answer to Lillian's confession, 'and believing that a good deal can be done when we really set out to do it, I should like to try an experiment.'

Then she handed each of the girls a small box on which these words were written:—  
'Resolved, when tempted to spend money foolishly, to put it in the missionary box.'

'But the question is, What would you call foolish spending?' asked Nina Gray, seriously; 'there is such a difference of opinion in regard to what is necessary.'

'We must answer that question for ourselves. You are all intelligent girls, and have, I believe, a goodly share of sound, common sense. Besides, you have an inward monitor to consult. You understand best what you need to spend. I can't settle that matter for you. Now, are you all willing to try the experiment and sign the resolution?'

Why, yes, every member of the class was quite willing to sign the resolution, but the majority of them were inclined to believe that they never spent money foolishly. 'I scarcely have any to spend at all,' remarked Jeannette Thayer, the poorest girl of the number. 'My mother buys my clothes, and I am not apt to have the handling of money.'

'Of course we are not to be called to account for what we haven't,' were Miss Drew's parting words; 'but, girls, I want you to be true to yourselves in keeping this resolution.'

The following afternoon Lillian Broderick and her friend, Nellie Burns, happened to be passing through a railway station. There was the customary 'put-a-cent-in-the-slot' machine, and Lillian turned to obey the request.

Before she could accomplish her purpose Nellie's hand detained her and Nellie's voice said, 'Don't, Lillian.'

The girl looked around in surprise, and inquired, 'Why not? Have you, too, turned against chewing gum? I heard that Rosa loud had.'

'Yes, I have. The fact is, I happened to

hear two men saying the other day that if girls knew how they looked going around chewing gum, they would never acquire the disgusting habit. They believed it lowered them to the level of animals, and was as bad as boys chewing tobacco. I never before thought how it appeared to other people, but I haven't chewed a bit since. However, it wasn't so much on that account that I stopped you. I thought of our resolution. I couldn't stand quietly by and see you break it.'

'It would be spending money foolishly, wouldn't it?' assented Lillian; 'but the amount—I should almost be ashamed to put a cent in the box.'

'Why so? It would be a beginning, you know, and then you've promised.'

Lillian couldn't deny that fact, so when she returned home she dropped into the missionary box the cent that she had saved. 'Poor little cent!' she said, with a smile, 'you must be lonely in there. I would throw in a ten-cent piece to keep you company, only I want to see how much I am tempted to spend foolishly. If it proves to be a small amount I can add to it afterwards, perhaps.'

The next time that Lillian found herself about to indulge in a useless expenditure of money, she was going past the ferry house and noticed a friend inside at the further end. Ever ready for a pleasant chat with those she loved, she concluded that she would pay the fare and go in, for otherwise she would not be allowed to enter. Just as she took the three cents in her hand the thought came to her, 'I suppose this would be spending money foolishly, for I don't need to talk to Clara now. She will be sure to call before the day is out and then I can say all that is necessary.'

And Lillian resolutely turned her back on the ferry house and went home to put the three cents in her missionary box.

Up to this time Jeannette Thayer's box had remained empty. Not once had she caught herself spending money foolishly, for she had no money to spend. Jeannette never suffered for any of the necessities of life, but she wished sometimes that she could have a little spare change like many of her companions did. 'There is so much that I could do with even a small amount,' she said to herself one day, and as if in answer to this desire, she found a fifty-cent piece lying on the road that very afternoon. There were no houses near and no people around at the time, so Jeannette hadn't any way of finding the owner. In that case it belonged to her, she knew, but she kept it for a few days to see if anybody seemed to be looking for it. Then she began to wonder which she would get of the many things for which she had longed. She thought over each article separately, and concluded she had no especial need for any of them. Now that she could really buy something, they didn't appear so desirable after all. 'I must do the very best I can with the money,' she reflected, 'for it may be some time before I have any more.'

Once during that time of indecision she thought of her missionary box, but only to determine that as she hadn't been tempted yet to spend the money foolishly, there was no reason why it should be used for that purpose. Finally she made up her mind. Around the corner was a photographer who took tin types, six for fifty cents. Jeannette had often looked at his sign and longed to be a customer. A short time before the whole family had been taken in a group, but the girl had never had any of her pictures to give to her own particular friends, for the few that were taken had been claimed by relations. Now was her chance. So after fixing herself up with more than usual

care she started around to the photographer's. She set off eagerly, but somehow when she arrived at the door she hesitated about going in. The idea of having her picture taken didn't seem like such a good one, after all. 'It's rather foolish, too,' she began to say to herself; 'tin types are not usually decent, and besides no one really needs my picture, and—well, I declare, I have actually caught myself in the act of spending money foolishly, and that piece must go in the missionary box.'

Jeannette laughed softly to herself as she turned to go home, and she felt glad of the decision she had made, for the weighty question was no longer on her mind, and then, too, she would not be compelled to take the box empty to her teacher.

On the way she met Laura Pardee. Laura was another of Miss Drew's scholars, and as she also was much interested in the missionary-box experiment, it was natural that the subject should be discussed by the two girls.

'It is wonderful how much money people spend foolishly when they are not thinking about it,' Laura went on; 'why, several times I have stopped myself buying little things that I didn't need at all, only they just happened to take my fancy at the time. I have saved twenty-five cents, and it does me more good to know that it is in the missionary box than it would if I had spent it for all those things. Do you know, I think this is an experiment that pays, for besides making up the deficiency, we are beginning to consider our own actions more.'

Then Jeannette told how she had saved her fifty cents, and Laura related the experiences of one of two other girls with whom she had talked. In the midst of the conversation Lillian Broderick came along and inquired, 'What are you two having such a good time about?'

'About our missionary boxes,' answered Laura. 'How is yours getting along?'

'Famously. It's been the best accuser that I ever had. I wouldn't have believed that I so often spent money foolishly if I hadn't started out to try this experiment. Why, girls, I have been a regular spend-thrift, and the money went mostly in such little bits that I never noticed it going. I have saved forty cents already, and I have been thinking how much I must have spent before we tried this plan. It's really wicked, and I'm going to be on the lookout after this, for in a year I could save quite a sum out of my allowance, and yet enjoy myself all I need to. And what do you think? Mamma and papa are trying it, too, and they have saved a good deal. Papa is apt to be very thoughtless about little sums of money, and I suppose I inherited the trait from him. Well, good-by, I see somebody at our front door, and I must hurry along, for I really believe it is Clara Desmond.'

It was Clara, and she soon learned from Lillian all the facts about the missionary-box experiment, for Clara was not in Miss Drew's class; although she attended the same Sabbath-school that her friend did. In the course of half an hour she became as enthusiastic over the matter as Lillian herself, and she went home with a determination to have that kind of a missionary box in her own room. Somehow the idea spread rapidly after that day, and when the time arrived for the special missionary collection the good pastor was surprised at the amount given.

'I believe it is all owing to Miss Drew's experiment,' remarked the superintendent, and then he was called upon to explain, for the idea had not yet reached the parsonage. 'And Miss Drew's class did nobly,' he said in conclusion. 'They brought in the largest amount. My niece, Laura, is