

The Family Circle.

AUGUST.

The hills and the valleys are fast asleep
In the warmth of the summer noon;
The yellow lilies stand straight and tall
Like sentinels under the grim stone wall;
Butterflies, amber and white and brown,
Whirl and flutter and settle down;
Birds, like bits of the cloudless sky,
Silently over the pathway fly;
Brown bees, tired of the chase they've led,
Rock in the clover blossoms red,
And softly, sleepily croon.
Poppies, scarlet as sunset seas,
Nod and bend in the idle breeze;
Grasses, fringing the fields of wheat,
Shimmer white in the waves of heat,
And maple: under the light wind's play,
Glimmer with mingled green and gray.
The quiet world, in the silence mild,
Thrills like the soul of a dreaming child.

But when the day's brief reign is past,
And shadows rise to rule at last,
And all the flowers are dying;
When down the misty mountain-sides
The murky twilight lurks and glides.
And all the lights are flying;
When gently through the silent dusk
The pink rose leaves are falling;
And from the shining upland plain
The whippoorwills are calling;
When the fire-flies flash their torches bright
Through willow boughs low bending—
Ah, me! I fear

The summer's ending.
Into my heart there comes
A vague but sad regret,
Ah! fair sweet summer day, too soon
We shall forget!
Too soon forget the mystic charm
You weave above you—
Too soon forget your smiling face,
Though now we love you.

Oh! golden lie the waiting fields,
With sunshine o'er them glancing,
And bright the winding river gleams,
And all the rippling rills and streams,
With mirth are dancing;
The lakes are seas of burning glass,
The brooks are crystal clear;
Like cheery prophets in the grass
The crickets' chirp we hear;
But through the beauty and the glee
There rings a note of sorrow:
To-day is sweet, but, ah! too fleet—
Too soon will come the morrow.

—Harper's Bazaar.

THE EXTRAVAGANCE OF SOLOMON GILL.

"I wouldn't like to say as it were wicked," remarked old David Lumsden as he met Johnny Button crossing Plumridge Green, "but I'm bound to say as it ain't fittin'."

Lumsden and Button were the two old men who met young Potterbee on the night he preached his first sermon, and they were now engaged in discussing the conduct of Solomon Gill.

"To my knowledge, Gill have been hard put to it this winter a'ready," he continued, "an' he ain't so young as he were. He ought to be a-savin' somethin' he did. But you can't move Gill when he has made up his mind. He've giv' that missionary supper this thirty year, an' 'tis my belief that if he know'd he'd go scat to-morrow morn, he'd spend his last penny on it."

Johnny Button indulged in a snigger, which was instantly suppressed. He was not by nature a humorous man, but he had occasional moments when, as he said, "things came to him, funny-like."

The "thing" that had come to him at this moment was a very old story about Lumsden. It was said that Lumsden had once been a "chief man" in a neighboring chapel, where upon a certain occasion it had been necessary to find a home for a "supply." No one had felt equal to the honor, and there was a prolonged discussion on the subject, which ended in Lumsden offering to submit to the inconvenience if the people would pay the costs which he incurred. This was agreed upon and Lumsden received much praise for his public-spirited conduct.

"You'd like him to be treated respectable?" he was reported to have said.

The people agreed that they would.

"And waited on proper? If we be poor, 'tis no cause why we should be looked down upon."

This was felt to be an admirable sentiment, which did Lumsden honor.

"They 'supplies' what come from the collidge is used to luxury," he continued. "'Tis said they do moastly sleep on feather beds, and stay with gentlefoak when they do go to praich. They do have four meals a day reg'lar, and the collidge is a kind o' palace. I know a man as seed it, and he told me."

These facts produced consternation. Such grandeur in connection with "supplies" had not been dreamed of.

"We wonder as you dare attempt it. 'Twill be dreadful tryin' for 'ee to keep it up proper from Saturday night to Monday morning. And very like he'll stay to dinner Monday too. They moastly does."

"You leave that to me," Lumsden replied. "I'll not disgrace ye."

Lumsden certainly did not disgrace them. He had long felt that his cottage needed papering, and manifestly this was the predestined hour for the operation. A fresh coat of whitewash is known to be a good thing for health, and when you are whitewashing one room you may as well do the whole house. It is likewise an accepted axiom that cleanliness is next to godliness, and when a charwoman costs only one-and-sixpence per day, no one would grudge that the cottage should be thoroughly scrubbed. As for slight repairs to a window that would not open, and a bedroom door that would not shut, these were matters which Lumsden could do himself, and charge for a purely nominal rate. The end of the affair was that Lumsden got his cottage completely repaired at the cost of the Bethesda folk, besides laying in so much food for the "supply" that it was commonly estimated that he didn't need to buy anything more for a week. Such was the philanthropy of David Lumsden. Johnny Button happened to think of it when he heard Lumsden denounce the extravagance of Solomon Gill, and that was why he sniggered.

"There's no call to laugh," said Lumsden, severely.

"I was a-thinkin' o' somethin'," said Button, meekly. "Foaks can't help their thoughts."

"An' I'm a-thinkin' of somethin' too," said Lumsden. "I'm a-thinkin' what'll become of Gill if that rheumatism of his gets worse. I'll warrant he ain't saved a penny agens't a rainy day."

"Not like you, eh?"

"I should think not indeed. Foaks like Gill thinks as Providence hasn't nothing else to do but pay their debts for 'em. I'd rather pay my own in case Providence shouldn't happen to remember."

The two old men strolled across to the chapel, whose doors stood wide open, for Roach, the carpenter, was busy putting up the platform for the missionary meeting. Baxter, the wheelwright, was already there, under pretence of helping him. They also were engaged in discussing Solomon Gill, but from another point of view.

"He's about done, is Gill," said Roach, as he sat down to rest on a trestle. "He've struck the tune wrong these two Sundays runnin'. My opeenion is as the time's come when we should have an orgin."

"I don't hold with orgins, myself," said Baxter.

"That's 'cause you don't know no better," said Roach. "I'll allow they ain't much good when you do twiddle-twiddle 'em like that chap do down to Barford Church. You do want to bang 'em and whack 'em, and then they're grand. I've heer'd a horgin as shook the winders."

"Where might that be?" said Johnny Button, whose knowledge of music was supposed to be profound, owing to the circumstance that he had once been known to play the Old Hundred on his flute without a single error of any importance.

"Down Belchester way," said Roach. "It were a new chapel they'd put up, an' it were on the opening day. It were a chap from Belchester as come over an' played. My! You should ha' seed him! When he couldn't get no more sound out o' the top part o' her, he jest stood up, an' jumped like mad on them things they call the pedals, like a jumpin' on her toes, so to speak, an' you should ha' heard 'er roar!"

"I don't like music like that," said Button, critically, as became a master of the flute. "I like it soft, like birds a-singin'."

"Well, an' he played her soft too, if it comes to that. When he'd made her roar, he made her whisper, so to speak. I seed foak a-cryin'. I did."

"I ain't goin' to say a word agens't Gill," said Baxter. "I don't say as I'd stand out on princerple agens't one o' them little orgins—harmonys they calls 'em, they don't shake no winders, an' you can sing to 'em. But Gill's good enough for me. There ain't a better man hereabout, an' when the sermon's a bit poorish, I take a look at Gill all a-beamin' in his pew, an' someway I feel better for it—feel as if it were a middlin' good sermon after all."

"Be you goin' to Gill's supper to-night?" interposed Lumsden, who was anxious to lead the conversation back to a theme on which he was better qualified to offer an opinion.

"I be," said Baxter, "an proud to go. Wouldn't miss it nohow."

"Well, what I've been a-sayin' to Johnny Button is just this," said Lumsden, oracularly, "that I didn't think we ought to encourage Gill in any sich extravagance. I don't believe as he can afford it, and he oughtn't to do it."

"Don't you worry about Gill," said Baxter, with a sardonic smile. "There's some foak as find more pleasure in givin' than what they does in savin'. 'Tisn't every one as looks as long at a ha'penny as you do, Davy."

"An there's some foak as lives long enough to wish they'd got a ha'penny to look at," retorted Lumsden. "'Tis a poor look-out when you're nigh seventy an' got the rheumatism bad, to think o' all the money you give to them missionaries, what never had no rheumatism."

"I don't see mysel' what the rheumatism has to do wi' it," said Baxter. "If they missionaries don't have rheumatism, they has things which is a hundred times as bad. There's widow Penrose's boy down to St. Colam, he went for a missionary, and everybody knows as he come home as yellow as a guinea, and sho's a-wearin' black for him still."

"Very like," said Lumsden, "very like. That ain't my point. My point is that there ain't no call for Gill to starve hisself to feed foak what's better fed nor what he is. I don't believe in payin'

men to put their heads in the lion's mouth neither. Not that there's much o' that. They missionaries knows how to take care o' theirselves, you may depend."

Lumsden and Johnny Button strolled away, taking the path across the Green which led them out on the high road, past Gill's cottage.

"You see," said Lumsden, pointing ironically to the smoke that was rising from Gill's chimney, "he's at it a'ready. Boilin' and baking like mad, I'll be bound. You take warnin', Johnny, and don't you go and spend your substance in riotous livin' like to him, for I warn 'ee, Johnny, though I be your freend, that I won't help 'ee when ye come to the husks which the swine do eat."

"I know ye wouldn't, Davy," said Johnny, meekly. "No, not a stiver."

"I might want to, ye know," said Davy, by way of vindicating his better nature. There were times when he suspected that Johnny made fun of him.

"Ah, but ye wou'dn't," said Johnnie. "Not if ye wanted never so. I've know'd ye want to put sixpence in the plate many a time, Davy, but ye never did, did ye? An' I said many a time, when I've seed 'ee put a ha'penny in, 'Well, Davy did want to put a sixpence in that time, but maybe he didn't want hard enough.' It takes a powerful lot o' wantin' to git as high as sixpence, don't it, Davy?"

"It do," said Davy, solemnly. "I'll say this for mysel', I allers take a sixpence with me when I goes to meetin'."

"An' can't never get it put in. Eh, but that must be a trial to 'ee, Davy."

"'Tis so, Johnny, in a way o' speakin'. Some on us is tried one way, and some on us another. 't all comes of bein' a man with a far-seein' mind, Johnny."

"I always know'd you'd that sort o' mind, Davy. You've been famous for that sort o' mind iver since you comed among we. Kind o' mind that acts on princerple, ain't it, Davy?"

"That's it, Johnny. 'Tis princerple what keeps me from givin'. I says to mysel', says I, "'Tain't 'cordin' to princerple to give your 'ard-earned money to them what wears better coats nor what you do.' Now Gill ain't got no princerple. He ain't gifted with a far-seein' mind. He'd give his shirt away if he felt like it, and never ask whether he'd got another at home in the drawer."

"Ah, 'tis so," said Johnny, with an air of profound commiseration. "An' as for them husks you was a-speakin' of, I daresay the pigs felt, when that there prodigal come among 'em, they didn't ought to let 'im have any. 'Tis a queer thing, is princerple!"

Davy glanced at Johnny suspiciously, but Johnny had the art of looking quite impenetrable when he pleased. He wore just now the air of a man who was uttering a few pious meditations in a lonely place, where no one could overhear him.

Solomon Gill's supper that night was one of unusual splendor. His cottage was a two-roomed one, with a lean-to scullery at the back, for Gill was a bachelor, and needed little accommodation. As a rule he did his own cleaning and cooking, but on this great annual occasion he got old Mrs. Maddison to come in and help him, and Mrs. Maddison's bread was a thing of renown at Plumridge Green.

The brick floor of the living-room had been scrubbed till it had a ruddy polish; the common black-handled knives glittered like silver, and the coarse table-cloth