

LITTLE MARY'S ORANGE.

CHAPTER III.—ELLEN.

(Concluded.)

I WISH all the little readers of THE SUNBEAM knew our Ellen. I am sure they would love her as much as Mary does. For, oh, she is very good; most amiable, gentle and kind is she to all her companions; so polite and respectful to those who are older than herself; so exceedingly graceful and yet so dignified in her deportment, and then, withal, as modest as the sweet spring violet. Everybody loves and esteems our dear Ellen. No wonder, then, that in little Mary's perplexities about the disposal of her orange, she had recourse to her, and Ellen listened very attentively, while Mary, with all gravity, explained the whole affair.

"And now, Ellen, what do you say about it?"

"Let me think a moment, and, first, let me see the orange. Oh, isn't it a beauty! It really makes my mouth water."

"Oh, I don't wonder at that; and so, after all, Ellen, suppose I just taste it to see if it is really as good as it looks."

"Listen, Mary dear. I am sure if you taste it, you will find it so good you will eat it all up at once, and then, you know, you will be sick."

"Yes, I am afraid of that. You remember how sick my last plum-cake made me; but this time I'll not eat all the orange myself, but I'll give a piece to you and all the other girls."

"Well, no; that would scarcely be a good plan, because you would have to divide it into so many little morsels, that no one would be able to get more than a mere taste of it."

"Why, what shall I do with it, then? Just lock it up in my box and keep it?"

"Oh, no! that would not do, for it would soon get rotten, or all dried up."

"Dear me, Ellen, it is really an awful trouble to have such a big orange, ain't it?"

"Listen, Mary; I have a good idea about it. Are you very generous?"

"Well, I believe so, but I don't exactly know. What do you want me to do, Ellen?"

"Make a lottery with it, and give every girl in school a chance of winning it for five cents. There are a hundred girls in school, and that would make five dollars, and then you would see how many good works we could do with all that money."

At these words poor little Mary's bright rosy face assumed a most woful expression, and her lip quivered as she said, very sadly: "Oh, Ellen, you are too perfect. Why—if I had known—I wouldn't ask you—I most wish I'd stayed with Maggie; she said she knew what was best to do with my orange."

"Well, my dear Mary, it is not too late yet to take Maggie's advice."

"No, it wouldn't do now; for after we would eat up all the orange I'd be sorry about the good works we talked about."

"Still, you are the owner of the orange, and can do as you please with it."

"Well, I don't wish to eat it all up, but just to take a little bite out of one side of it, to see how it tastes."

"Do so, if you wish; but in that case the lottery would be spoiled, for no one would take a chance on a bitten orange: so that would put an end to our good works."

"What a pity! Oh, my poor orange, I suppose I must give you up. I might have eaten you all by myself, and now somebody else will eat you, and I won't even know how you tasted; and one girl will get you for five cents, and I know you cost fifteen cents; for mother said so. Still I don't care for that, only I'd just like to taste it, Ellen," said little Mary, as she held up the orange to Ellen with both her dimpled hands.

"Yes, but, Mary dear, remember you are not obliged to make this sacrifice; you merely asked me my advice and I gave it to you. You are not obliged to do as I say; I merely spoke to you as I would have spoken to myself."

Gratified and flattered at being compared to little Ellen, little Mary exclaimed: "Don't say anything more, Ellen. I am determined to be generous; so take my orange. But hide it quick, so I cannot see it any more; and let us hurry and make the tickets for the lottery. But what will we do with the money? You haven't told me that yet?"

"Well, I hardly know myself. We'll have to think about it;—for you know there are so many sorts of good works. But let us begin at the beginning. Now, the beginning is to have our five dollars—in place of an orange, which we could easily eat up in five minutes."

Just as Mary was on the point of replying, the bell announced the close of the recreation. Before the next afternoon play-time, the tickets were all prepared, and placed in a beautiful little rose-coloured bag which Ellen's mother had given to her. And the proceeds of the lottery had been decided upon by the two little friends. After the first half hour had been devoted to running, swinging, or playing, as the rule prescribed, the little "Juniors" were all invited to take their seats in the arbor, as Ellen had something most important to tell them. You may readily imagine that there were a thousand guesses as to what this something was.

"Oh, I know—I know!" cried Maggie; "we are going to have recreation in honor of Ellen."

"No, no," replied another; "for if that was the case she wouldn't be the person to tell us."

"Maybe Mary has got a box of good things from home, and is going to divide it amongst us."

"Oh, I know the great news," said another. "Listen, listen: Maggie is going to get the Crown of Honor!"

This last announcement was received with merry peals of laughter, and Ellen, whose kind heart was pained at the embarrassment of her



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giddy little playmate, cried out: "Come, come quick, and I'll explain it all in two minutes."

Immediately the whole group surrounded her, all in profound silence, except a few noisy birds, who had built their nests around the arbor, and did not seem to care, nor to know what Ellen was talking about.

"Now," said Ellen, "I am going to propose to you, in little Mary's name, a charming project. She has received a beautiful orange from her mother. It is the largest orange any of you ever saw, I am sure; and to prove it I am going to show it to you. Shut your eyes, Mary."

Here Ellen held up the orange, which excited a cry of admiration; and as Mary peeped at it through her dimpled fingers, just a little sigh of regret rose in her heart at the thought of losing it forever.

"Who wants it? All of you, I am sure. Well, you all have a chance of gaining it for five cents. Mary is going to have a lottery on it; and if you all take a ticket, one of you will get the orange, and we will have five dollars, with which we are going to buy something for old Granny Moore and little Kitty. It will be a nice Christmas present for them. Five dollars will give them more pleasure than five hundred

would give us; and I am sure the Blessed Virgin will be satisfied with us all. And when she sees us helping the poor by depriving ourselves of some little trifle, she will obtain many blessings for us from our dear Lord and Saviour. Such blessings are worth all the gold and silver in the world. Ah, if I had some of the money that people think so much of, I would give it all to the Blessed Virgin; and I am sure she would say to me: Go and give it to the poor, and I will give you something better."

Ellen's words had an electrical effect upon her playmates. In a few minutes all the tickets were sold, and little Mary's heart beat with delight as she held her one hundred five cent pieces tightly clasped in her apron. The lottery was postponed until the next day; for now all hearts were so happy at the thought of taking all this money to poor old Granny Moore and little Kitty that the orange was of secondary importance.

CHAPTER IV.—GRANNY MOORE.

Poor old Granny Moore was sixty-five years old. Her hair was very gray, and her face was very wrinkled, and she was bent nearly double, yet still she tried to go out every week to do a day's washing, in order to gain a support for herself and her little grandchild, Kitty. While Kitty's mother lived, they got along pretty comfortably, but she grew sick and died, and then the poor old grandmother had to try to support herself and little Kitty. When she went to the neighbors, to wash or to help in the kitchen, she used to take Kitty along with her, and the little girl would sit very quietly by the wash-tub, and wish she were big enough to help her poor old grandmother.

And now we must follow Ellen and Mary on their errand of mercy. They got permission to go out in the city with Sister Agnes, and see old Mrs. Moore and little Kitty. When they reached the house, they found the door shut, but not locked. Pushing it open, they entered and found everything poor and cheerless looking; no fire, and no wood to make one. They looked in the cupboard, but there was no bread in it, nor anything else to eat.

Four hours later, by the help of a drayman, they had all the following good things brought to the house: A nice loaf of bread, some butter, and tea and sugar, a basket of potatoes, and some cheese, and some parsnips and cabbage. Ellen swept up the floor very clean, and Sister Agnes contributed her mite to the good work by sending the drayman for a load of wood.

Ellen had not forgotten to bring her own little statue of the Blessed Virgin, and when the drayman returned with the wood, he got a board, which he nailed against the wall; this Ellen covered with a piece of white muslin, and on it the dear statue was placed.

Then Sister Agnes held little Mary up, that she might place a little blue purse, containing three bright silver dollars, which were left after buying the provisions. In the meantime the drayman had brought in some wood and kindled up a bright fire. Never did little Mary feel so happy as when she looked round and saw all that had come from her big orange. "Oh, Ellen," she said, "I am sure Granny Moore and little Kitty will think the angels have been here while they were gone, and now let us hurry out, so they won't know who it was who fixed things so nice." And each of these two sweet children, holding Sister Agnes by the hand, hurried out, softly closing the door behind them. Sister Agnes kept their secret, but in all the big city of P—, the four happiest hearts that night were Granny Moore, little Kitty, Ellen, and little Mary.

Little Alice's grandfather is almost a centenarian. One of her companions one day asked, "How old is your grandpa?" "Hush," said she; "don't speak so loud. I believe God has forgotten him."

Teacher with reading class—Boy (reading): "And as she sailed down the river—"
Teacher: "Why are ships called *she*?"
Boy (precociously alive to the responsibilities of the sex): "Because they need men to manage them."

Boy (with basket)—"Please, mum, give me some dinner for my poor, sick father?"

Kind Lady—"Look here, I've been giving you dinner for your sick father for two weeks; and I saw him yesterday in the street, and he is no more sick than I am."

Boy—"Yes, mum, he isn't sick any more, but he eats just the same as ever."