

The Green Marble.

(By Mrs. F. M. Howard, in
'Christian World.')

Mary Ellen loved marbles. She had a little yellow bag with a draw-string run into the hem, and she had more marbles in it than she could count, still she wanted more, and when her mother called her in to do an errand for her one day she begged for a nickel to buy marbles with in payment.

'Run along fast then,' said Mrs. Pierson, 'for Nora is in a hurry for the raisins.' Mary Ellen had on her pretty pink dress with the ruffles over the shoulders, and a hat with long sash ends which streamed out behind her when she ran, so she felt very good and obedient, and skipped away so briskly that the wind carried her hat ribbons out like banners.

She gave her orders at the grocer's, then went into the drug store where a large jar stood on the shelf, filled with marbles. Her nickel would buy five of the handsome glass ones which she liked, but as the druggist turned them out she found six that she was sure she must have, they were all so lovely.

'Which will you have?' asked the druggist. He was getting tired waiting for Mary Ellen to choose between the green marble and the pink mottled one which she held in her greedy little hand, and another customer was coming.

'Please, sir, I want them all,' said Mary Ellen.

The druggist laughed, for he had a little girl at home of his own, 'Pick out the five you like best, sissy, and drop the other into the jar,' he said as he tossed her nickel into the drawer, and went to wait on the other customer. She was all alone, and the two marbles looked more and more beautiful as she tried to choose between them. Four had already been slipped into her pocket, and but one more was honestly hers.

Poor Mary Ellen, she had never taken anything which did not belong to her in all her life before, but—oh, they were so pretty—and there was no one there to see—and she turned and fled from the store with a very red face and with six

marbles in her pocket. It was a very unhappy little girl who went slowly into the pleasant sitting-room where mother was hemming the strings for her new white apron.

'Did you buy your marbles, Mary Ellen?'

'Yes, ma'am.' All the marbles but one came out of her pocket.

'They are real pretty, but what ails you, child? Does your head ache?'

'No, ma'am.'

'Did you leave the order?'

'Yes, ma'am.'

Mary Ellen went out to the barn and took the green marble from her pocket. It did not look nearly so green and pretty as it had in the store, and the little girl most heartily wished it was back there again, safe in the jar. A little girl friend came to visit her a few days later, and she gave it to her, hoping to lighten her mind of its trouble.

'Why,' said the little friend in surprise, 'it's the very prettiest one you have. I wouldn't think you would give it away.'

'I don't care very much for it,' replied Mary Ellen, with a thankful heart, as she saw it going into her friend's apron pocket. A week after the little friend came back with the marble.

'I guess I don't want it,' she said. 'It's always rolling away and getting lost. I think it is homesick for you.'

Mary Ellen tried to laugh at the funny idea, but with a very sick heart; she was again the unwilling owner of a green glass marble.

She tried to lose it, but some one would always come running with, 'Here's your green marble, Mary Ellen,' until she hated the very thought of it.

Mr. Sanborn, the druggist, was a friend of Mr. and Mrs. Pierson, and often came to the house for a friendly call, and Mary Ellen had always liked him and enjoyed his visits. She saw him at the gate one day, and almost shrieked aloud, in her fear that he had come to complain to her mother of the wicked little girl who had come to his store and stolen a marble, and she slunk away as fast as she could and hid in the barn.

'Why, Mary Ellen, I was really ashamed of you,' said her mother after the caller had gone, and the guilty little girl had come in.

'Mr. Sanborn likes to hear you say your verses, and I wanted you to sing that nice little song for him which you had learned.'

Mary Ellen hung her head, and made no reply. She could never sing for Mr. Sanborn again, she knew, with that naughty heart of hers throbbing so fast and hard, and after that she would go a block out of her way rather than meet him or pass his store.

Mrs. Pierson awoke one night in alarm. Mary Ellen was moaning and crying in her cot, her face flushed, her hands hot with fever. Don't take me to jail, please, don't, Mr. Sanborn. I stole your marble, but here it is. The green one — and then her heavy eyes opened to look up into her mother's anxious face.

'You will take it back to Mr. Sanborn, and tell him how sorry I am,' she sobbed after the story of her naughty act was told, and all of the sorrow and shame it had cost her.

Mary Ellen was a very sick little girl for many days, and even after kind Mr. Sanborn had sent her a bag of cool, sweet oranges as a token of his entire forgiveness, the green marble haunted her dreams. She never cared to play with her marbles after she was well again, and never, never, never did she take anything which did not belong to her.

The Marshal of the City of Refuge.

(By Frederick Hall, in 'S.S. Times.')

When he reached the fence, Toggles stopped before the sign that he and grandpa had nailed there the day they made the farm a City of Refuge for the birds. He read it through again:

TRESPASS IF YOU WANT TO
BUT DON'T HARM THE BIRDS

The summer was almost over; it was what grandpa called Indian summer now, and Toggles had been thinking that he and the birds had had a very good time of it. Among