



DEAN'S
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A TALE
ABOUT AN ORANGE.



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A TALE ABOUT AN ORANGE.



I WAS at work in the sitting-room. The front door opened, and father's welcome step, heard in the hall, brought Charlotte at once from the play-room. She was the only one who happened to be at home.

"Oh, father, father," she exclaimed, as she bounded into the room, and though

her eye caught sight of a large bundle lying upon the table, she said nothing about it, although she was but five years old. She helped father to put aside his hat, carried his umbrella into the closet, brought the dressing-gown and slippers, while he seated himself on the comfortable sofa.

“I wonder what is in that bundle,” said father, with an arch look.

“I don’t know; something nice, I think,” she replied.

“Supposing you open it and see,” said father.

In an instant Charlotte was tugging at the string and very soon several oranges were rolling out on the table.

“Oh,” exclaimed the child, “how nice they look!”

“You may have one, if you would like,” said father, as though any little girl would be found to decline such a tempting offer.

“Oh, thank you, I should like one,” said Lottie. “I always like oranges,” she continued with more deliberation, as



she selected a very fair one; "I should like a hundred thousand millions"

“ Well, let me open it for you ;” and the kind father seated the little one on his knee, and taking out his fruit-knife, peeled, and opened it, chatting all the while about that hundred thousand millions she wanted, and what she would do with them if she had them.

And then Charlotte ate her orange. The pleasant taste was still lingering in the child’s mouth, when the sound of trooping feet and merry voices proclaimed the return of the other children. Soon they were all in the sitting-room, one, two, three, four, welcoming father and the oranges at the same time. And now, each one held in possession one of those nice fruit. Some were tossed up in the air and caught again ; some were consigned to the pocket, for future occasion ; and Freddie, the pet lamb of the flock, was running about crying, “ Cut it for Freddie.”

“ I’ll peel it for Freddie,” said Lizzie ; and in a trice the orange was laid on the table, in the nicest mouthfuls imaginable. It looked a great deal more than when it

was whole, and the baby boy was greatly delighted. He offered a piece to everybody, father, mother, all must partake. Then spying Charlotte standing demurely by the fireside, he sprung to her exclaiming, "Lottie shall have piece of Freddie's orange." And the child took it. I was watching to see what she would do, though still busy at my work. I hoped she would say, "No, thank you, Freddie, I've had a whole one." But she did not. She took it without a word, and ate it, not however without a sly glance, to see if I was noticing. Our eyes met, and in that look, the story was told on both sides. Charlotte knew she had done wrong, her head was hung down in an instant. My look must have conveyed to the child more than my words; but I hate selfishness; and my displeasure in this instance, was, I know, strongly manifested. "Well," said I, "I'm sorry that I've got a little girl that could eat a whole orange herself, and then take a piece from her little baby-brother, after he had given away nearly half of what he had."

The child was silent a moment. Then she turned her head away from me, and with a sort of grieved look, said, in a very hopeless tone, "Well, I suppose then you don't love me."

"But I *do* love you, Lottie," I said.

"I do not see how you can, if you think me so mean," she replied.

"I love *you*, my darling, but I do not love what you have done. You knew it was wrong, did you not? And God"—

"He don't love me either, I suppose," said the child.

"Lottie, God does love you. He loves everybody, but He does not love the wicked things they do, and wishes to help them do right."

"But I thought God only loved good children."

"You make a mistake, dear. People sometimes tell little children that they must be good if they want God to love them; but this is not quite right. It makes you think that, if you are not good, God does not love you, though the Bible tells us that He loves us all, whether

we are good or bad. It is because He had this wonderful love, that He gave His dear Son to come into the world and die for us. God loves you dearly all the time, and wants you to overcome your naughty ways, and to be good always. When you are good, you please God; and when you do wrong, you grieve Him very much. And this is just the way mother feels. She wants you so much to be good, that when you are not, she is more grieved than you can think. But mother always loves you. Lottie will try not to be selfish any more, won't she?"

By this time, the tears of real sorrow were running down her little sad cheeks. I wiped them away, and kissed the little one, thanking God in my heart, that even out of evil, He had opened the opportunity of explaining His own wonderful nature; and earnestly I prayed that we might evermore remember that *God loves the sinner.*