

Geraldine

"Oh, girls, only ten days more and we will be going home," cried Helen as she met a number of the students in the hall. Of course all the girls clapped their hands, exclaiming rapturously in a chorus—"Yes, just think, only ten days more!"

They walked together to the recreation hall, where in the cosy-corner all by herself, sat Geraldine, who, because of her happy and pleasing disposition had received from her companions the name "Little Sunshine." There she sat, the very picture of sadness and distress. Her friends, eager to find out the cause of this unusual manner, quickly gathered around her and soon succeeded in cheering her by their kindness and mirth. At the first lull in the conversation, Charlotte inquired softly,

"But what was the cause of those tears a few moments ago, Geraldine?"

To this Geraldine answered with a few gentle words in which she related to her friends how the happy thought of Christmas was embittered for her, by the fact that her father, whom she loved with all the affection of an only daughter, had not the Faith; did not believe in the dear Christ-child, and on this account could not be truly happy as she would have him be. After listening attentively and thoughtfully to this Charlotte said, hopefully,

"Never mind, Geraldine, don't feel so bad; we'll all make a Novena to the dear Little Infant of Bethlehem for your intention, won't we, girls?"

"That's just what we'll do," chimed in the chorus of girlish voices.

"And," continued Charlotte, "The Little Infant will see that all will come out as you wish it; so cheer up now. Let's get our fishus and go to Chapel right away to start our Novena!"

"Yes, let's," responded all, and off they started. On the ninth day after this all her friends offered their Holy Mass and Holy Communion for Geraldine's intention, and we will soon see how their faith was rewarded and their prayers answered.

A few days later—Geraldine was called to the 'phone, where she learned, to her sorrow, that her father was quite ill at the hospital in the city. She hastily donned her wraps and after an hour's ride in the large sleigh, found herself at the door of Saint Joseph's Hospital. Here the Sister Superior received her kindly and, after helping her to remove her wraps, and speaking a few cheery words of encouragement to her, showed her up to her father's room.

Her father was, indeed, quite ill and at first Geraldine found

it hard to keep back the tears, but the presence of his daughter so cheered and comforted him that she was allowed to remain at the hospital and be with him as much as she wished, and so she was happy. In a week's time her father had so far recovered as to sit up in a chair and, with Geraldine by his side chatting sweetly with him, the time passed by rapidly and pleasantly. In her winning, girlish way she succeeded in speaking about what was uppermost in her mind, about that for which she and her student friends were so earnestly praying. And though he did not seem to think at all seriously of what she said, Geraldine was satisfied by the fact that he really did listen; and she noticed that he became more serious as time went on. She continued her earnest, prayerful entreaties whenever she could slip into the Chapel and, what was her surprise when, after breakfast on the day before Christmas, her father greeted her with the words:

"Well, daughter, I guess you've won out!"

"Why, Daddy, what do you mean? Won out what?" exclaimed Geraldine.

"I just mean to say," continued he, rather hesitatingly, "that you may count on my accompanying you to the Chapel tonight —"

"Oh! You good Daddy, thank you so much," answered Geraldine, overjoyed at the happy surprise.

From this time on happiness reigned supreme in her heart, and, during her preparations for the feast day, she redoubled her aspirations, feeling confident that since she had succeeded thus far, she would certainly obtain all she had asked.

Midnight came, and together they walked down the long hall to the beautifully lighted and decorated Chapel. Together they remained during the Holy Sacrifice and the eloquent sermon which the Reverend Chaplain preached at its conclusion.

Often before had he heard the words that he now listened to, but never before did they appeal to him as at present. Those words of the Angels' song,

"Glory to God in the highest and on earth Peace to men of good will," impressed him now with a force all their own, for had he not seen them illustrated daily during his two weeks' stay at Saint Joseph's? He had marvelled at the life of the nuns, at their self-sacrificing devotion to duty and at the atmosphere of peace and happiness which their very presence seemed to create. One day he had even ventured this remark to one of them:

"I've been wondering how you Sisters can be always so cheerful and contented with so many duties pressing upon you!"

And the nun had smilingly replied, with her accustomed composure:

"The love of God makes all things easy and pleasant."