

Perhaps that was why quiet Janet flitted into church in the dusk of the evening to say the Stations. Father Rogers, the senior curate, happened to be performing the same devotion, and presently became aware of a little figure bobbing along behind him, from station to station. When he came out into the vestibule, Janet was kneeling before the big crucifix. The priest waited until the child rose from her knees and tried to open the heavy door. 'Let me open it for you,' he said, 'It's a very big door for such a very small girl to manage all by herself. Let me see, Anna, aren't you in my instruction class?'

'Yes, your reverence. But, if you please, I'm not any Anna. I'm Janet—Janet Manning.'

'Of course you are. How could I forget? But we have hundreds of little girls, and sometimes their names get mixed. Well, Janet, you made the Stations with me. Will you offer yours, too, for my intention?'

'I can't, your reverence,' said honest Janet. 'I've offered them already to our Lord on the Cross, for my daddy.'

'And what is the matter with your daddy, little Janet?'

'If you please, your reverence, he is a rough, profane mon, and hasn't the fear of God in his heart.'

'Oh, dear! oh, dear! He's in a bad way altogether, child,' said Father Rogers. 'But you are taking the right way to cure him. Let us make a bargain, Janet. I will offer my Stations to-morrow for him, and you will remember my intention at the general Communion. Something tells me that God will hear our prayers. Now run home, Janet. You're a good child, God bless you.'

John Henry Newman's turn came when Andrew White failed to appear for the pastor's Mass. Father Costello looked in vain for a substitute. Not a boy was in sight, except a small, yellow-haired chap 'who ought to be a fool,' thought the priest testily. His frown relaxed, when the boy came forward—

'If you please, Father, I can serve.'

'Can you? Where did you come from? The Nursery?'

'No, Father, I'm in Sister Clement's room, and I sing in the boys' choir, and Father Reardon taught me how to serve.'

'Well, I'll try you out,' agreed the pastor.

John Henry covered himself and his teachers with honor. Never was altar-boy more reverent or more attentive to his duties.

'A remarkable child,' thought Father Costello. 'I must find out more about him.' In the vestry, when John Henry was putting by the cassock and surplice—that were much too big for him—the pastor eyed him sharply. What he saw evidently impressed him still more.

'You are the best altar-boy for your size that I ever had,' he declared. 'Come here, and tell me your name.'

'If you please, Father, I am John Henry Newman Manning.'

'A big name, my boy, to live up to. But I think you can do it. Do you come to my Mass every morning? I shall look for you if Andrew White fails me again.'

The pastor took a half dollar from his pocket and held it out to the child, but John Henry drew back.

'I can't take money for serving, if you please, Father. My mother wouldn't let me. And, besides, I didn't do it for you. I did it for my daddy. I offered it up for him.'

'Offered up what, John Henry?'

'My serving, Father. Gran told me to.'

Again came the question: 'What is the matter with your father?'

And again came the same reply:

'If you please, Father, he's a rough, profane mon, and hasn't the fear of God in his heart. Gran says we must snatch him from the devil,' John Henry added.

The pastor turned away for a moment. When he faced the child again, the smile was gone from his eyes, and a tender pity shone in them.

'Another of those good children,' he thought. 'They will surely save their reckless father.'

The days passed and the prophecy did not come true. John Manning went his usual way. Christmas and the New Year came, but no change of heart stirred him. If anything, he was more profane than ever, more often the worse of drink. Even Gran was losing hope of his reform, but she pressed one more advocate into the cause—the baby. The baby was her constant companion, and in their long hours together Gran taught the little thing her part in the reclaiming of her father. Together they said the Rosary for him, and afterwards baby rehearsed her 'piece.'

'Who knows but the Holy Name will bring him back?' Gran thought, as she redoubled her petitions. But the eve of the Holy Name celebration came, and John was at his worst. He knew that he was a clever workman, and it was nobody's business what he did with his spare hours and his pay, he told the foreman, Dan Casey. Dan retreated in a huff. He would have nothing more to do with the surly fellow. But that very afternoon the resolution was broken. John was the first man at his side when the accident happened, and John's strong hands helped him to lift Tom Hennessy from under the wrecked machinery. The three men had worked together for years, and when John began to drift down, Dan and Tom had done their best to draw him back. With keen remorse John remembered that only that noon he had driven Tom away with rough, harsh words. And now his true friend would never again come between him and his boon comrades of the saloon.

It was a changed John who came down the hospital steps with the foreman. They had stayed with Tom to the end. White-faced and silent, John walked along, listening dully to the words that Dan said over and over again, as if to comfort himself: 'He was a good man. Tom was a good man.'

'That could not be said of me,' was the thought that beat on John Manning's brain, and he sickened at the picture of himself that rose before him.

As the men drew near St. John's Church, Dan Casey laid his hand on his comrade's arm.

'Come, John,' he said. 'To-morrow is Holy Name Sunday. If we slip in now we can be heard quickly. To-night there will be a big crowd.'

John held back. 'I've been so long away,' he faltered. 'I can't go, Dan. Some other time.'

'No,' said Dan. 'Now is the time. There may not be any other for you or for me. There isn't for Tom Hennessy. Come.'

And John went.

Mrs. Manning tried to act as if it were quite an ordinary occurrence for her husband to come home sober on Saturday, and with his pay envelope unbroken. She took it as a matter of course when he handed it to her. 'Something has happened,' she decided, but asked no questions. Presently he told her. The tears that ran down her cheeks were not all for another woman's sorrow. 'Oh, John, it might have been you,' she sobbed. 'You would have been rid of a bad husband, Maggie,' he answered, and going into his room he closed the door. Mrs. Manning left him to himself. It would never do to fuss over John.

As she mended garment after garment, she dwelt upon what John had been in the early years of their married life, and then upon the change that had been wrought in him by evil company. Presently her heart warmed with the hope that the swift awful lesson would not be lost. It might 'put the fear of God in his heart,' as Gran would say. And maybe he would go to Mass in honor of the Holy Name! But next morning when she went out to early Mass, her husband was still sleeping, or pretended to be.

It was then that the baby said her piece. Pattering into the room and over to the bed, she stroked her father's face with her little hand. 'Get up, oo lazy mon,' she commanded, imitating Gran's severe voice and manner. 'Get up and go to Holy Mass. Oor wife an' chillun's gone. Get up, oo lazy mon.'