

'Daddy, dear,' she said one morning, climbing up on to his knee, and winding her little arms around his neck, 'do you think you could do without me, this year?'

The man laughed heartily at the innocent question. 'No, indeed, Pet. Were you thinking of making a visit?'

'I want to go to the convent school, where mother went.'

The man's face darkened. 'Who has been putting that nonsense into your head?' he asked.

'No one, Daddy dear. But I found her prayer-book and Rosary, and I made old Martha teach me how to say them.'

'Old Martha! Well, I'll attend to her!'

Old Martha was ordered to leave, despite the tears and protests of the child.

'If Martha leaves me, Daddy dear, I know I'll die,' she wailed, and it seemed as though she really would. She stopped eating, grew listless and pale, until the father, in dismay, called in a prominent doctor from the city.

The doctor shook his head gravely. 'The child seems all right, physically, although it is evident that she is going into a decline. I know of a similar case where the child lost her mother and mourned for her loss until she grew very ill, but Marjorie does not remember her mother.'

'Marjorie was but a baby when my wife died. Do you think a change of climate would help?'

'I can not promise.' The doctor reached out and gathered the child into his arms.

'Now, little one, if Daddy would promise to give to you anything you wish, what would you ask for?'

A great light shone in the child's eyes. All of her apathy seemed to vanish, and she clapped her hands in glee:

'Oh! oh! I just want Martha. Only old Martha!'

'Old Martha?' asked the doctor, looking at the man.

'That is the nurse Marjorie has had since she was born. She has grown feeble and childish and began to implant into the child's impressionable mind things that were unwise. I sent her away.'

'Mr. Allingham,' said the doctor rising, 'your child needs no medicine. A change of climate might do more harm than good. Bring back old Martha if you wish to see the child get well.'

But John Allingham was stubborn. Instead of Martha, he bought an automobile, and took the child for daily rides around the country. But even that failed to arouse her interest or curiosity.

'I'd rather have Black Boy ride me about, Daddy,' she sighed, 'cause he reminds me so much of Martha. He's getting old, like her, too. Will you be sending him away, soon?' The man's heart melted, and as he held his baby in tight embrace, he promised she should have both Martha and Black Boy, as long as they should live. That very day Martha came back, and Marjorie was quick to regain her health and strength, but she was careful never again to mention her mother's religion. Martha did the best she could with the aid of a little catechism, and prayerfully awaited an opportunity for the child to receive better instruction. This chance came, about a year later, when Mr. Allingham was called to England, on the death of a relation, and while there decided to tour the Continent. During this period, Martha and her young charge visited a relation of Marjorie's mother, and she was placed with the Sisters, to enjoy the only year of real Catholic training she ever received. It was during this time, that she was confirmed and received her first Holy Communion.'

Marjorie grew to be a beautiful, lovable maiden. When she was seventeen, her father took sick with a fatal though lingering illness, and the girl redoubled her prayers for the conversion of her parent, but it seemed nothing could banish the prejudice he held for

the Catholic religion. His daughter, with desperate earnestness, pleaded with him to see the priest, but he remained unmoved. The man had been confined to his bed over a year, and was fast approaching the end, when a little book, *The Life of St. Rita, the Wonder Worker*, fell into Marjorie's hands. Greatly interested, she and old Martha prayed with renewed fervor, begging that saint to intercede for the conversion of her beloved parent, promising in return to devote the balance of her life to missionary work.

Coming into his room one morning, Marjorie was shocked to note the change in her father's face. Surely death was hovering very close! Falling upon her knees, she buried her face in his pillow.

'Daddy dear, I could stand to give you up, if I knew you were going to God and mother, but I can't, oh! I just can't, let you go away as you are.'

'Marjorie, darling, I have been thinking that the religion that makes such women as you and your dear mother is a better one than I have ever known. Marjorie, I want to go to your mother. I, too, want to be a Catholic like her.'

It was so good, Marjorie could hardly believe her ears, but she dropped to her knees and offered a prayer of thanksgiving to God and St. Rita for the wonderful change in her father.

'I'm going to send for the priest at once, Daddy dear. Oh! you've made me so glad. So happy!'

Marjorie could not wait for the priest to come and make her father's conversion assured. She raced down to the garage, only to learn that the car was being repaired and would not be done for several days. She dared not delay, so calling Martha, she told her.

'I'll have to saddle Black Boy and go for the priest for father. Watch him closely while I am gone, and pray, pray that I may not be too late.'

'Twas a wonderful race that Black Boy and the girl ran that day! The old horse glanced in surprise at his mistress, at the first touch of the whip, then seeming to understand that matters of great importance were at stake, he answered gladly, and over the road they dashed, mile after mile, 'till they had covered the distance to the nearest city and stopped at the presbytery door. Well, the end is soon told. John Allingham died that afternoon, soon after being baptised and receiving the Sacraments, and the old horse was a great hero.

After the death of old Martha, almost a year later, Marjorie gave all of her worldly possessions to charity and entered the convent, but before going, she placed Black Boy in the care of a faithful servant, with a sufficient amount of money to keep the old horse in comfort the rest of his days.

As we drew up to the priest's modest little home, Father Schaefer alighted and held out his hand.

'Thank you very much, Mr. Williams. I enjoyed the ride immensely, and it has saved me a full hour's time.'

'Father,' I answered earnestly, 'the pleasure has been all mine, for Mr. Allingham and my father had a mutual interest in many business deals, and his daughter, known in the religious world as Sister Mary Agnes, teaches in the Academy where my little daughters are being educated. So you see, dear Father, I shall soon take great pleasure in retelling the story of "Black Boy's Last Run!"'—*Catholic Columbian*.

What a lot of odd jobs in a house go without being done for the want of a few good common

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