

AN AFFAIR A TRUE STORY OF SAINTS

By George Barnard

Written for N. C. F. Christmas Supplement

Old Jane had a nice little flower pitch on Kingsway. Nice that is when times were good. But when the war brought a bomb to the church which gave her a material background as well as moral support her business was literally knocked to pieces. It took her regular customers some time to find her when she moved over to another corner. You can't do much advertising when your shop is on a sidewalk.

Old Jane hasn't any foolish pride. She was up against things, and didn't mind telling me. In fact had she not told me there could have been no story because I would never have heard the end of it.

There was another person in the story, and if I were expert at telling a tale of this sort I would be able to bring him in nicely just where he should make his entry. As it is I must just let the story tell itself. The other person is Jimmy Gregson, tall, tough and slim, hailing from Calgary and serving with the Royal Air Force.

NEEDED 'HALF A QUID'

But let me finish about Old Jane. She wanted a spot of money, badly. Not a lot. Just a matter of half a quid, call it a couple of dollars. If you or I were struck for half a quid we'd tap a pal for it or call up the cooers and ask them to send us a bit whatever we might happen to need. But you can't do that when you sell flowers on the sidewalk in London. It's "cash or get out" for the poor, and when it's that way a couple of dollars is real money. If you've got it and the man of you haven't.

Old Jane had been in that sort of fix before. And then she'd pop into the little church in Kingsway and tell Our Lady all about it. And she didn't go any when she was in trouble. First thing in the morning, when she labored up with her basket full of bright flowers from Covent Garden she'd leave the burden at the pitch and creep into the church to say "Good morning," tell Our Lady about the day's prospects (perhaps say a word or two about the old gent who left her with a bill "chilling" (you know, Holy Mother, the one who bought me coffee) and express her grateful thanks for good health ("apart from me of leg as is playin' me up again") and for her ability to put down the money for the flowers.

So when she was in sore need of a couple of dollars she naturally mentioned that, too. There were not so many flowers in her basket that morning. She dumped the basket on the pitch, hobbled into the church, patched up and darkened after the raid damage and knelt in the corner by the candles.

"It's like this, Holy Mother, I'm in a spot of bother agin'. It's that Billy wot I took in when 'is Mum got killed in an air raid. 'E's been an' gone an' tore 'is pants; I can't mend 'em any more, there ain't nothin' to 'old the 'oles together. It'll mean 'arf a quid—you know the price even second-hands 'ave gorn to nowadays. Yer know yer can't buy clo's an' pay the rent in the same week."

OUR LADY KNEW

Apparently Our Lady did know something about this economic difficulty because when Old Jane was closing her pitch for the night a rather merry old gentleman passed her, eye swillings with complete cheerfulness but apparently without any clear idea as to whether he was ordering another drink, wiping off some past indebtedness or backing a potential winner. No remonstrance of Old Jane's would make any difference to the merry-maker's determination to part with his coin, and to Jane it seemed that Our Lady had at any rate tackled half the problem: a fact for which due thanks were returned before Jane started her trudge, at night-fall, to her home across Waterloo Bridge.

It was in the Strand, and getting

Pope Greets Mother Of 2 Jesuits, 2 Nuns

LONDON (NC)—The mother of two Jesuits who were ordained on the same day this year has received a holograph letter from the Holy Father extending his congratulations and his blessing. The letter is written in English to Mrs. Basset and begins "Beloved Daughter. Her sons are the Revs. Bernard and Edmund Basset. Mrs. Basset's two daughters are Sisters of the Sacred Heart, so that all the children are in religion."

pretty dark (but not what you'd call dark in a London flash-out) when Old Jane saw Jimmy Gregson. Of course she didn't know his name. I don't think she ever knew. But he was even in the purple-grey misty darkness of autumn nightfall a fine figure of clean-cut youth. Old Jane once had a little boy who would have been about Jimmy's age had he lived. But he died when he was sixteen. He just cut his finger and poison got into the system. It was all over before anybody knew what was happening. Whenever she saw a fine big fellow around twenty-five she always thought of her Bert. That's how he would have grown.

Just as she saw the Canadian airman a little fellow in khaki had stopped him to ask for a light and the tall Canadian had good-naturedly stopped to produce a lighter. As he took it out there was a tinkle on the sidewalk of the hushed Strand as something dropped and rolled away into the gathering blackness.

SYMPATHY FOR YOUTH

Jimmy Gregson muttered and started looking for whatever he'd dropped, and the little soldier joined in and they were going round in circles while Old Jane waited to see the end of the drama. Soon the soldier started to strike matches as the glow came down to make the quest more difficult.

"Wot 'ave yer lost, sonny?" asked Old Jane kindly after a bit, not that she had any hope of finding it, but she felt she ought to show some sympathy for a youngster who had left his home a long way behind.

"What I've lost, Mam, the airman drawled, "is a ring. And my name will be mad if I don't find it. And how I'm going to find it in the dark beats me. Listen."

Jimmy Gregson spliced the story of the ring. It had nothing to do with him really and that made it all the worse. A buddy of his had given it to him in Calgary, knowing he was bound to head for London some time. His buddy was sending it to a girl in London he'd met on a vacation trip. It was going to mean a lot to those two. The girl had kind of cooled off because the buddy back home had been a slow-starting sort of guy, and now the fellow in Calgary had cabled to tell this dame that he (Jimmy Gregson) was bringing the ring, and she'd be certain to think this hayseed back home had had another think about things if the ring didn't turn up.

That was the drift of it and although Old Jane didn't quite get the subtleties of the argument she could see that some human happiness was at stake. She could see, too, that this big young Canadian (the sort of lad her boy would have grown to be) was in a hot spot.

BUMPING ALL AROUND

They looked around quite a lot and some more passers-by began to take part in the hunt, bumping into each other in the dark and mostly not knowing who was in charge of the search and what the prize was, when Old Jane took the Canadian aside and said, "Tell 'em yer've found it. If someone picks up that ring 'e'll walk off with it and ye'll hear no more about it."

That sounded like good advice to Jimmy, so he yelled "O K, boys. Thanks a lot. I've got it."

"Now look 'ee 'ere," said the old lady. "Ye'll never find that ring in this 'back-out," and that seemed true because while the search was in progress night had fallen, with a high fog screening the stars. The faint light of dimmed torches stabbed the darkness here and there, buses rolled by like faint ghosts.

"The only time to find that ring," said Old Jane, "is in the mornin'. Yer've got to get some sleep, so just trot along to the hut run by the C. W. L. ladies at Westminster if yer've nowhere else to go. I'll be passin' this way at dawn on me way to markit and if yer come along to the little church up the top o' Kingsway around nine o'clock—yer'll reckonise me by me flower basket, yer'll 'ave yer ring back mebbe."

TAKING NO CHANCES

That's how they left it. And they said good-night with a cheery "Watch your step, Mam" from Jimmy and a muttered, half-stuffed "Good-bess yer" from the old lady to the man who was so much like her Bert would have been.

Old Jane was taking no chances with the sunrise. Before five

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WIDMER'S WINES

"in the best of taste"

CAP THE CLIMAX

for holiday feasting!



DINE WITH WINE

The correct wine service is essential for the enjoyment of the food by keeping alert the sense of taste and the functions of digestion. Only an appetizer before the meal and a dry wine during it are customary for the modest dinner. Sweet wines, with the exception of Sherry, are never served during dinner. Effervescent and dry wines should be served chilled, red wines and sweet wines at normal room temperature or slightly below.

THE CORRECT WIDMER WINE SERVICE

A listing of the wines and foods that, by all laws of gastronomy and taste, should always go together.

WIDMER'S WINE	SERVE IT WITH
Claret	The Roast, the Entree, the Roast Turkey, Chicken or Duck (Veal with Stewing Game), Cold Meats or Salads Through a Family Dinner.
Widmer's Merlot (A Very Mild Red Rhone Wine, Most Soft and Delicate of Red Wines, Very Much Appreciated by Connoisseurs of Fine Table Wines)	With the Roast, With the Entree; Especially Good with all Roast Game.
Burgundy (Effervescent)	With Boiled Potatoes (When Oysters or Melon) With the Fish and Chicken, With Cold Meats, With Desserts. At a Family Dinner, At Luncheon.
Widmer's White (A Very Mild Rhone Wine)	With Boiled Potatoes (When Oysters or Melon) With the Fish and Chicken, With Cold Meats, With Desserts. At a Family Dinner, At Luncheon.
Sauterne (Chablis)	As an Appetizer in Place of Cocktails, Especially with Soup.
Brand "E" Fortified Wine (Sherry, Madeira)	With Dessert, As a Liqueur after Dessert, With Light Refreshments.
Port, Muscatel	With the Dessert.
Brand "F" Fortified Wine	Straight Through the Dinner, May be Served Properly Throughout Entire Dinner and is Practically the Only Wine that Permits Such Latitude.
Tokay, Angelica, Sweet Catawba	
White Cold Effervescent, Light and Exhilarating, A Gay and Merry Wine, Most Popular Dinner and Social Wine.	

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