

The Young Queen.

(From the London Times.)

Some of us may have been unaware to what perfection those fruits have been already matured in the virgin soil of Australia, but it was surprising in any quarter it was pleasurable as the work of her sons was revealed to her, and revealed to her at a time when the ties between her and them had been newly consecrated by common effort and by common sacrifice in a righteous cause.—The Times.

Her hand was still on her sword-hilt—the spur was still on her heel— She had not cast her harness of grey wardinted steel; High on her red-splashed charger, beautiful, bold, and browned, Bright-eyed out of the battle, the Young Queen rode to be crowned.

And she came to the Old Queen's presence, in the Hall of Our Thousand Years— In the Hall of the Five Free Nations that are peers among their peers; Royal she gave the greeting, loyal she bowed the head, Crying: Crown me, my Mother! And the Old Queen stood and said:

"How can I crown thee further? I know whose standard flies Where the clean surge takes the Leeuw or the notched Kaiurus rise, Blood of our foes on thy bridal and speech of our friends in thy mouth— How can I crown thee further, O Queen of the Sovereign South?"

"Let the Five Free Nations witness!" But the Young Queen answered swift: "I shall be crown of Our crownings to hold Our crown for a gift. In the days when Our folk were feeble thy sword made sure Our lands— Wherefore We come in power to beg Our crown at thy hands."

And the Old Queen raised and kissed her, and the jealous circlet pearls, Roped with the pearls of the Northland and red with the gold of the West— Lit with her lady's own opals, levin-hearted, alive, And the five-starred Cross above them, for sign of the Nations five.

So it was done in the Presence—in the Hall of Our Thousand Years— In the face of the Five Free Nations that have no peer but their peers; And the Young Queen out of the Southland knelt— ed down at the Old Queen's knee— And asked for a mother's blessing on the excellent years to be.

And the Old Queen stooped in the stillness where the jewelled head drooped low: "Daughter no more, but Sister, and doubly Daughter so— Mother of many princes—and child of the child I bore, What good thing shall I wish thee that I have not wished before?"

"Shall I give thee delight in dominion—rash pride of thy setting forth? Nay, we be women together—we know what that lust is worth. Peace on thy utmost borders and strength on a road untrod? These are dealt or diminished at the secret will of God.

"I have swayed troublous councils—I am wise in terrible things— Father and son and grandson I have known the heart of the Kings. Shall I give thee my sleepless wisdom or the gift of all wisdom above? Ay, we be women together—I give thee thy people's love;

"Tempered, august, abiding, redulant of prayers or vows, Eager in face of peril as thine for thy mother's house— God requite thee, my Sister, through the strenuous years to be, And make thy people to love thee as thou hast loved me!"

—RUDYARD KIPLING.

SLY BIDDY MACHREE.

BY E. E. GARNETT.

"Hi for it, ho for it, hi for it still, Och, and whoo!"

Hi for the little house under the hill."

Many things were troubling his Rev'ence, but sure the world was beautiful with the sheen of sunset over the rowan-trees, and wasn't that Biddy Machree tripping down the hill path? And wouldn't a smile from the like of her lift burdens from Oula Nick himself?

"Arrah," said his Rev'ence, beaming down on the brown head of her curtying there before him, "it's sad things I'm hearing of you, avourneen. From over the hills down to the sea the world's gone that you've no heart at all at all."

"I do be thinkin', yer Riv'ence, how Terence Brady bates his wife."

"Och, your a sly young crature! But there's a cousin of Terence's far removed, a brother of a boy. Do you think he'd have time to beat his wife?"

"Toime's aisy stretched, sorr, where there's a will. What should make it short for—is it Larry Byrne ye're mainin', yer Riv'ence?"

"Sure it's that same Larry, that has his time all under your feet, with the heart and a half of him."

"Today, maybe. Another day?— I do be thinkin' it's runnin' or riskin'."

Whist, Biddy, in your ear, acushla: if you want to prove a boy, watch his mother."

"Eyah! Do ye think it's sure, yer Riv'ence?"

"Faith, do I. True to his ould mother, he's safe for his wife the longest day that comes. And so good even to you, and a bright sun on the wedding, sly Biddy Machree!"

Biddy curtsied low again; and mischief danced in her eyes as she looked after him. Presently, when she turned, there was Larry Byrne coming. He'd a red rose in the strong hand of him.

"They're all over the door watchin' for ye," said Larry, "an' I hadn't the heart not to bring one to see."

"To see what?" asked Biddy, while she tucked the stem in her hair.

bit farm, an' the mither, an' meself, all's waitin' and dreamin'."

"The mither? Mistress Byrne'll be stayin', thin?"

"Av course; ye wouldn't? Biddy—?"

"Sure, ye may say Biddy, but not Biddy Byrne, thanks be; an' so good-day to ye." She went past him beginning a song; and she'd the prettiest voice, that same Biddy, that sang from Tip'rarry to the great sea. It drew Larry helplessly along in the wake of its sweet trills, until with the last note his lips were near the red, red rose. He whispered pleadingly into the heart of it.

"Mavourneen, what's come to ye?"

"Sinse," answered my lady, and stepped to a safer distance and tossed her head. The rose trembled.

"Wait," besought Larry, "till I fasten it."

But she shook it to his feet and laughed in the face of him.

"Take it to yer mither," she said.

Upon her doorstep, sniffing the perfume of the red blossoms about her lintel and the cool breaths that whiffed over from the far great sea, the mither sat knitting. There was a peat fire dying inside after toasting oat-cakes for supper, and it puffed faintheartedly, like Larry's pipe. What ailed the boy? Sure, it wasn't his way to sit glum. The mither smiled, and cunningly set herself to tickle the heart of him.

"Is it rare Biddy Machree we'll be talkin' av, ma bouchal?"

"It's yerself," said Larry, with a frown that cleared as he turned to her. "Do ye moind the toime when I was a bit shaver an' we was vary poor?"

"Whist, now," and the tenderness made her voice sweet as Biddy's own, "what ails ye?"

"There was always a pratie for me," Larry went softly on, "an' ye'd always had yourn aforetime. 'Twas long after that I spicioned what ye'd had aforetime."

"Och thin, wasn't it all for meself, Larry dear? If ye grew wake like, ye great giant av a bhoy, could ye be takin' sich care av me since?"

"Do ye moind the toime I come from the fair stumblin' and staggerin', an' ye run out to help me up the path? Ye sung a bit tune that I mightn't see ye were affrighted sore; but in the dark, whin I waked—"

"What contrariness to be moindin' the one day that ye give me the hurt! Whist, now! sure it's meself that'll be stumblin' staggerin' soon wid ould age, and well I know the strong arm that'll be helpin' me up the path."

"Yis," said Larry, "sure I'll kape it handy; but ould age'll be long afearad, I'm thinkin', av yer sunny ways, an' the heart av ye, an' the eyes av ye."

"An' I'll not moind," slyly "if there's a rare young beauty on the ither arm."

"Ye'll have both arms," said Larry.

Then the mither looked at him and dropped her knitting.

"But ye're not sure, ma bouchal?"

"Sure."

"Whist now, whist!"

When the moon stole out of the great sea and looked past the roses, the giant boy's head leaned on the kerchief 'cross the mither's breast; and she rocked and crooned softly just as in that old time when he was a bit shaver and ate his pratie alone because she had taken hers aforetime.

A brave fair that next, and who so sweet and rare in all the length of it as Biddy Machree? She came down the street with handsome Mick Daly travelling close beside, and the sun poured gold on her brown hair and in her eyes as if it, too, loved her. Suddenly, demure reproach covered the brightness of her face, for there was Larry Byrne meeting her at the corner.

"Will ye give in?" she whispered, and waited near his shoulder.

"Niver!" said Larry. But her glance had made mush of the heart of him, and he went away with his hat pulled low.

There came another day when he met her coming down the hill path, singing, singing sweet old Irish words that melt into the sweet old Irish tune, and birds hush to hear. He set his lips hard, and stepped aside into the grass to leave her way free; but beside him she suddenly broke off the song, reached her hands to his breast, and hid her face there.

"Biddy!" cried Larry, and closed his arms round her with the sweep of a storm. Biddy!"

"Now will ye give in?"

He pushed her from him and stood trembling.

"Sure, she'd be quite continted," said Biddy, "boardin' 'round," and looked up at him.

"What's come to ye?" asked the poor giant boy, with a sob in his throat; "has the devil possissed ye?"

"Ask his Riv'ence," laughed Biddy, and went by with a bit curtsy. His Rev'ence was coming down the hill and smiling on the two of them. But meeting Larry's eyes, he began to question. Then he chuckled.


"The sly crature," he said; "look how she's runnin' now with an eye over her shoulder, half frightened of the trick she's put on you, but watching if you'll come, Larry, man—"

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But Larry was in pursuit. That one word, trick, let a flood of joyous light upon his wounds. His call was a clarion's pean.

"Biddy asthore, acushla, mavourneen!" But she was suddenly deaf, that same Biddy, and fleet-footed, and she led him a fine chase. 'Twas 'way down under the white-thorn by the crossroads that he finally caught her and kissed her.

"I'll tell yere mither on ye!" panted the witch, and laughed softly against the thumping of his heart.

"Will ye give in?" mimicked Larry.

"Niver," she cried.

Radiant, hand in hand, they went to the door under the roses; and while Larry gathered buds for her bodice, sly Biddy Machree took the mither aside.

"I'll tell ye somethin'," softly; and, in the sweet Irish eyes of the two, smiles fought with tears—"somethin' ye don't know."

"Sure, it's meself knows how he loves ye," whispered the mither, and kissed her. But Biddy shook her head and laughed.

"There's another woman in the heart of him," she said, "an' I'm nather runnin, nor riskin'."—The Outlook.

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