

A Question of Age.

(By Katharine Tynan.)

The young people had met at a seaside resort, and had talked and walked and sat out on evenings to hear the band play, and the end of it was that they fell honestly and thoroughly in love with each other.

Jack Power was a journalist who had climbed from descriptive reporting to the sub-editorial chair of a daily newspaper in an important town. He was a clever fellow and certain to get on, people said. He had a university degree and was reading for the bar, in addition to his journalistic work. His friends said he was the sweetest natured fellow in the world. And Madge Banon's friends said the same thing of her.

Madge was a school teacher and very fond of her work. She also had a university degree and was paid fairly well in the schools where she taught; and she had been careful and had put by a little money; as well as keeping herself ever since she had left the parental nest.

"I am very proud of being able to keep myself," she said. "My dear old father is the most generous of men. I simply won't take money from him, for I know he has plenty to do, with the boys only beginning to earn, and the girls to be put to school. I am very proud of it, proud, too, of the little nest egg I have been putting by year after year against a rainy day. I assure you it took some self-denial at first to save anything."

"I wonder what use a nest egg would be against a rainy day," he said laughing at her. "An umbrella would be much more useful."

"I used to feel that it would be so dreadful to have no provision against old age and illness," she said, contemplatively.

"Wouldn't a husband do as well?" he laughed again.

"Ah, but I might never have had a husband."

"Is it so likely, with your eyes?" They were engaged between themselves, but as yet neither Madge's father, Peter Banon, or Jack's father, Tom Power, knew what the young people had been doing. However, there was not likely to be any opposition to the marriage on either side. Madge, looking at Jack, Jack, looking at Madge, was certain that any parent, even the most exacting, must bless such a happy choice. And neither Peter Banon nor Tom Power was exacting; each was so fond of a father that their respective children had the first faint disagreement over their perfection.

"There isn't as handsome an old man nor as kind and friendly and hospitable as the four seas of Ireland as my father," Jack had said, glowing with affectionate pride.

"You haven't seen mine," said Madge, with an air of tolerance.

Madge wrote home her wonderful news to her father; and a little later brought down her fiancé to be inspected by the home ones. There was no mother, Mrs. Banon had died a good many years back, and Madge would often say that her father had been father and mother both to his children.

He was a beautiful old man with eyes as blue as the eyes of a young child, an innocent rosy face, handsome features and a little tansure of dark curls encircling a head otherwise bald. It was pleasant to see him with his children, who adored him. The little home was sweet and fresh, set amid country pastures, with flowers outside and flowery chintz and wall-papers and carpets inside, to say nothing of the faces of the girls, the little house had a garden-like suggestion for Jack Power, who was a young man of imagination. He was delighted that his Madge had grown up amid such fragrant surroundings.

The neighbors came in and inspected Jack Power and approved of him. So did the relations. The young people lived in an atmosphere of goodwill.

The next thing was for Tom Power to approve his son's choice. Jack was an only son, and his father lived on his farm at Gartmore, with his sister Hannah, to take care of him and keep him company.

Madge went on her visit to Gartmore and won golden opinions even from Jack's Aunt Hannah, who was devoted to her nephew and had a low opinion of the young women of the present day. Madge was delighted with Jack's father, who was a towering sort of a man, clean-shaven, with brilliant grey eyes and the close black hair on his big head just flecked with grey.

"I'm seventy-two years of age and I don't look it," said Tom Power one day when they were talking of ages.

"No, indeed you don't," Madge assented warmly, while Miss Hannah Power sniffed indignantly in the corner.

"Hannah thinks I oughtn't to be giving away her age," said Tom Power gleefully. "Isn't it written in the family bible?"

"Father is seventy-two," said Madge, "but he looks older than you. He has lost his hair and most of his teeth."

"And mine are sound as a nut," said Tom Power. "Come outside, Madge, my daughter, and see me throw the weight. I haven't forgotten the trick yet."

Madge duly saw and admired.

Tom Power had been a famous athlete in his day and had not yet lost his prowess, despite his more than seventy years.

It was a great adventure for Tom Power and his sister Hannah to go to the town to see their son and his fiancée. It was so long since they had travelled; but of course they must be friends with the family into which Jack was going to marry, so they embarked on the adventure.

It was all idyllic at first. Peter Banon drove Tom Power over the farm in his little pony-cart, the two heads very close together, for Hannah Power made herself at home with the girls, winning their confidence—for at first they had been a bit afraid of the handsome, astute spinster—by her admiration of the beautiful old-fashioned house and furniture, and the excellent order in which it was kept.

For two whole days there was nothing but harmony. Madge who had her holidays was in the seventh heaven, nothing missing from her happiness but the presence of Jack, who had to be at the office of his paper all the week, but was coming down for Saturday and Sunday. Madge loved to see the two old men together and to hear them talking of this and that person or event they remembered.

But on the evening of the second day there was a rift in the lute. Some neighboring boys had come in to supper at the hospitable house. While they waited for the meal, the boys amused themselves by various athletic feats, amid the applause of the pretty, black-haired, rosy-cheeked Banon girls.

Tom Power and Peter Banon were sitting under an apple tree on which the blossoms were just turning to little apples. They were smoking the pipe of peace, looking on tranquilly at the happiness of the young people.

Presently one of the boys approached Tom Power with a request. His prowess was remembered all over Ireland, although it was a good many years since he had made any public appearance. Would he show them what he could do, so that they might tell the tale to their friends and neighbors?

They did not expect very much from the veteran, but after a modest disclaimer on Tom Power's part—"sure he was too old to do anything now, wouldn't he be only making an onadrawn of himself?"—the old man consented.

The young fellows stood around averted while Tom Power showed them some of the feats which had made him famous. He had kept himself in training, and at seventy-two he could still give points to the lads. The air rang with applause as he retired to his seat under the apple tree with a beaming countenance, and only very slightly winded.

"You're a great man entirely," said Peter Banon with heartfelt admiration.

"It isn't too bad for an old man like me," Tom Power said, modestly. "Is it old you're calling yourself?"

Peter Banon said, "Sure you're young. Wait till you're my age."

"Why, we're of an age, man. The girl was telling me you were seventy-two last March. I was seventy-two in February. I'm an older man than you by a month."

"I don't believe it. 'Tis given to me that I'm the halest man of my age in the County Tipperary; but I couldn't do what you've done."

"Small blame to you. I do a bit with the hammer and the pole every day. It keeps the limbs supple."

"If you're seventy-two, then I'm eighty-two," said Peter Banon doggedly.

It was the cloud no bigger than a man's hand which foreboded a storm. For two days they argued the question of their ages with an increasing acrimoniousness. The third day they almost came to blows; and Peter Banon, who had never closed his door against a neighbor during all his kindly years of life, had actually suggested to Tom Power that there was a certain train very convenient for travelling to the County Waterford which left the Junction at four o'clock in the afternoon. If Mr. Power wished to travel by it, he was at his disposal.

Mr. Power was very much obliged to Mr. Banon; but he would not trouble Mr. Banon to send him to the station. Thank God, he had good legs under him and could walk the two miles without inconvenience. The remark was another offence to Peter Banon, who was a sufferer from the gout.

They bade each other farewell with the most frozen politeness. Poor Madge was almost equally disturbed and unhappy. Miss Hannah Power, having done her best to make the two old men see sense, packed up her fine stiff silk and her good old muslins and laces with philosophy. She thought very little of the understanding of the other sex, and the acknowledged that for her part she was not surprised. She did not suppose the breach would ever be healed—men were so pig-headed. And for her part, whether Tom liked it or not, she was going to accept Mr. Banon's offer and drive to the Junction. Indeed, she didn't know how she was going to get the luggage there else.

"But it is terrible, terrible," said Madge, weeping. "To think of Jack's father and mine parting on bad terms! What will Jack say? And it is so difficult to appease father once he has taken offence."

"Indeed it's just the same way with Tom," said Miss Power, standing by and watching Madge while she packed for her. "Tis as likely as not they'll never speak to each other again. There, my dear, don't be crying over my moire antique. That particular shade of puce spoils so easily."

"I suppose I shall have to wait until Jack comes down," Madge had said, to herself, with a feeling of comfort in the midst of all the trouble at the thought of Jack. Jack would soon set things to rights. The whole business was foolish. She kept hoping till the hall door closed heavily behind Tom Power, that the principals in the quarrel would recognize the folly of it themselves and shake hands at last, with a laugh.

A little later and Peter Banon, with one old-fashioned courtesy, was handing Miss Power into the covered car, tucking her in carefully with the rug, as though no shadow had come between the houses.

He stood there with his cap off till the covered car had turned a corner of the avenue and was out of sight. Then he came slowly back to the house.

As he entered the hall he came face to face with Madge, and glared at her red eyes and her air of disorder.

"That is the last of the Powers," he said vindictively. "Mind, I won't have that man's son coming about the place. If he has the poor spirit to want to come just you keep him away; for I can't answer for how I might behave to him."

"Let me hear no more of this folly between you and Power," he said passing her by.

The end of it was that Madge departed from her father's house within twenty-four hours of the departure of the Powers. She had had a scene with her father which hurt her dreadfully, for she had always been a little dearer, a little more devoted to him than her sisters. But she was angry with him. He would insist on regarding her engagement as a thing to be lightly put aside, because of the folly of two old men, she said to herself bitterly.

Jack, who had been looking forward with delight to his week-end, had already heard of the quarrel from his Aunt Hannah. He came to meet Madge at the station in response to her telegram and took her away to a quiet place before they talked over matters. It was a green garden much affected by children and their nurses in the mornings, but in the afternoons usually left to the birds.

The air was delicious with the scent of the new-mown hay, of the lilac and hawthorn just going out of bloom, of the syringa and elder beginning to blow.

When they had taken possession of their favorite seat, which was hidden away delightfully in a little maze of clipped hedges, to her great surprise and somewhat to her annoyance he began to laugh, quietly at first, and then more and more uproariously.

"You don't understand the seriousness of it," Madge protested. "My dear old man is so obstinate once he gets an idea into his head. You should have just seen your father's back, as he stalked off to walk over the bogland to the Junction. It was obstinacy itself."

"I can imagine it. As soon as he got home he sent me his ultimatum. All was to be over between you and me, darling."

Again he laughed softly. She did not know whether to be cheered up or annoyed by the way he was taking it. But suddenly he became serious.

"My poor little darling," he said, "it has been grieving you. You are quite pale. And I was a wretch to laugh. Only I see my way so clearly out of it."

"Tell me."

"Well, in the first place you have just to go straight home. The day was Thursday, I shall be with you on Saturday as I promised. And I will bring my father with me. He will bring my father with me. He will only to hunt up a baptismal certificate. As it happens my grandfather was born in Dublin, my grand-mother came up to town for his birth since doctors and nurses were scarce commodities then in the neighborhood of Sheil Bawn. You see I know my dear old governor as well as you know yours. One can always make him do the handsome thing by proving to him that the other party has been hopelessly in the wrong. His magnanimity is sheer Quixotism."

"But how are you going to do it?"

"I had a hand to keep it from you, but I won't let you suffer suspense."

I thought it out in the small hours after the receipt of Aunt Hannah's letter in which she told me about the whole ruction. You've no idea what a Complete Letter-Writer Aunt Hannah is."

Again he burst into a laugh, as he told her his way out, and her eyes danced and sparkled. For a moment at least she had no misgivings. She had time for plenty during the three hours' journey to the Junction; but she put them away from her. Jack had been so certain of his father, and she knew that hers was not to be outdone in generosity. So she waited and hoped.

Her father came to meet her at the Junction, and she thought she detected in his manner a great relief at her return as well as a certain contrition for his harshness with her. Nothing was said between them about the cause of the quarrel, but he kept sending her wistful glances, and he was, if anything more tender to her than usual.

The time that had to elapse between her return and the hour when Jack might be expected to make his appearance on Saturday was a time of unaccountable nervousness for poor Madge. She was glad when at last the hour came. Anything was better than waiting and being afraid; and the thought of seeing Jack was in itself a cheerful thing.

She had noticed her father out along the bog-road by which the travelers would come. It was better than waiting at home. At last there was the whistle of the train, and a few minutes later Madge's heart leaped up, and then fluttered in terror, as she saw the two figures she expected to meet them.

She wished there had been a corner round which they might have come suddenly. But these were, far away and little at first, growing taller as they came nearer.

They had almost met before Peter Banon recognized who was coming. Madge felt rather than saw him stiffen suddenly. His face became very red. Then—

He could happen, Tom Power waved a scrap of paper in the air.

"I was wrong, friend Peter, I was wrong," he said, "I've come to put myself in the right. Shake hands man."

Peter Banon took the heartily hand a bit shyly, his face clearing wonderfully.

"Here's a scrap of paper this wonderful boy of mine found," Tom Power went on. "Just look at it. I was born on the 29th of February in a Leap Year. Why by rights I won't be seventy-two for three and a half years."

Peter Banon's face dimpled humorously. "Why, sure you are no more than a quarter of my age," he said. And this time it was he who extended the hearty hand of friendship.

The little breeze after all served but to hasten the wedding-day of the happy couple.

They might be falling but about something else," Jack said, "to be better put ourselves beyond the reach of their ultimatum. My persuasion might fail another time. If he wasn't the simplest of men I'd never have persuaded him that it was his duty to heal the breach. Do you know, darling, he is so delighted at your Leap Year explanation that he gives him better than a brother."

"While mine church-as all day ever the simplicity of yours."

"They are a dear old couple of innocents," said Jack Power.

After all Peter Banon was not to be outdone in magnanimity. At his daughter's wedding breakfast he proposed the health of Mr. Power.

"You all know what he is, neighbors," he said. "A man I'm proud to be connected with. Look at him sitting there. He is as old a man as I am, and a better man, aye, a better man than I could ever hope to be."

Amid the torrent of "No! No! No!" excited by this latter remark, which Tom Power led vigorously, the bridegroom whispered to the bride.

"It is being borne in on me," he said, "that they weren't half as simple as we thought them. It's my belief that they were both very glad to get out of an impossible quarrel, and that they were laughing in their sleeves at us for our clumsy device for bringing them together."

"Your clumsy device," said the bride ungratefully.

Frank E. Donovan

REAL ESTATE BROKER

Office: Alliance Building

107 St. James St., Room 42.
Telephones Main 2091-3836. Montreal

Time Proves All Things

One roof may look much the same as another when put on, but a few years' wear will show up the weak spots.

"Our Work Survives" the test of time.

GEO. W. REED & CO., Ltd. MONTREAL.

TRULY A STRUGGLING MISSION

In The Diocese of Northampton.
FAKENHAM, NORFOLK, ENGLAND.

This Mission of St. Anthony of Padua was started by me nearly three years ago by command of the late Bishop of Northampton.

I had then, and I have now, No Church, no Presbytery, no Doan's Grant, no Endowment (except Hope).

I am still obliged to say Mass and give Benediction in a mean upper room. Yet, such as it is, this is the sole outpost of Catholicism in a division of the County of Norfolk measuring 35 x 20 miles.

The weekly offerings of the congregation are necessarily small. We must have outside help for the present, or haul down the Flag.

The generosity of the Catholic Public has enabled us to secure a valuable site for Church and Presbytery. We have money in hand towards the cost of building, but the Bishop will not allow us to go into debt.

I am most grateful to those who have helped us, and trust they will continue their charity.

To those who have not helped I would say—"For the sake of the Cause give something, if only a little". It is easier and more pleasant to give than to beg. Speed the glad hour when I need no longer plead for a permanent Home for the Blessed Sacrament.

FATHER H. W. GRAY,
Catholic Mission, Fakenham, Norfolk, Eng'd.

P. S.—I will gratefully and promptly acknowledge the smallest donation, and send with my acknowledgment a beautiful picture of the Sacred Heart and St. Anthony.

(EPISCOPAL AUTHORIZATION)

Dear Father Grey,
You have duly accounted for the alms which you have received, and you have placed them securely in the names of Diocesan Trustees. Your efforts have gone far towards providing what is necessary for the establishment of a permanent Mission at Fakenham. I authorize you to continue to solicit alms for this object until, in my judgment, it has been fully attained.

Yours faithfully in Christ,
F. W. KEATING,
Bishop of Northampton.

Protestants' Plight.

Although England is always spoken of, nowadays, as a Protestant country, there are very many of her leading Protestant denominations which, instead of gaining as the Catholic Church in England is doing, are steadily losing members.

The British Congregationalists have almost held their own, but not quite. Their membership is 459,663 for 1907, a loss of 275. While the Sunday school teachers have increased by 1,589, the pupils have fallen off by 9,090.

The Wesleyan Methodists show the same loss, the membership of 625, 256 being 2,200 fewer than in the previous year, while the pupils are fewer by nearly 10,000.

Five smaller Methodist denominations show a total loss of 8,515 pupils and a small loss in members. A single one the Primitive Methodists, report a gain of 1,500 members, but they lose 1,203 Sunday school pupils.

In Wales the largest denomination is the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Connection, which is Presbyterian in government. Its membership is given as 187,768, a loss of 1,396.

The total loss in membership of the Nonconformist denominations is about 14,000 and that in Sunday schools is more than 35,000. Indeed, one of the best ecclesiastical statisticians in Great Britain puts the loss in members in England and Wales at 17,454.

One cause of this ebb is the sloughing off of the excess members who joined the churches during the excitement of the Welsh revival.

Catholic Sailors' Club

ALL SAILORS WELCOME
Concert Every Wednesday Evening

All Local Talent invited. The finest in the City pay us a visit.

MASS at 9.30 a.m. on Sunday.

Sacred Concert on Sunday evening.

Open week days from 9 a. m. to 10 p. m.

On Sundays from 1 p. m. to 10 p. m.

St. Peter & Common Sts.

NORTHERN Assurance Co'y

OF LONDON, Eng.

"Strong as the Strongest."

INCOME AND FUNDS, 1906

Capital and Accumulated Funds....\$47,410,000

Annual Revenue.....\$8,805,000

Deposited with Dominion Government for security of policy holders.\$398,580

Head Offices—London and Aberdeen

Branch Office for Canada
88 Notre Dame Street West, Montreal

ROBERT W. TYRE, Manager for Canada.

MONTREAL CITY AGENTS

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

ARTHUR BROWNING, FRED. G. REID,
228 Broad of Trade, 30 St. John St.
Tel. Main 1745. Tel. Main 1222

WILLIAM CAIRNS, 33 St. Nicholas St.
Tel. Main 869.

CHAR. A. BURNS, JOHN MACLEAN,
88 Notre Dame St. W., 88 Notre Dame St. W.
Tel. Main 1539. Tel. Main 1539

FRENCH DEPARTMENT

N. BOYER, GEO. H. THIBAUT,
88 Notre Dame St. W., True Witness Bldg.
Tel. Main 1539. Tel. Main 5072

Established 1864.

C. O'BRIEN,

House, Sign and Decorative Painter

PLAIN AND DECORATIVE PAPER-HANGER

Whitewashing and Tinting. Orders promptly attended to. Terms moderate.

Residence, 75 Avenue du Parc, 647 Dorchester street, east of Bleury street, Montreal.

Bell Telephone, 4p 205

SPECIAL OFFER

During the Month of September, 1908, or until our stock is exhausted.

FREE: Along with the regular premium we will give One Class Fruit Bowl on Stand to every one returning more than 3 Dozen 6 lb. empty XXX Self-Raising Flour Bags, and for less than 3 Dozen 6lb. Bags one medallion (picture.)

Brodie & Harvie

14 and 16 Bleury St., Montreal

Have You Suspected Your Kidneys as the Cause of Your Trouble

If you have backache, swelling of the feet and ankles, frequent or suppressed urine, painful sensation when urinating, specks floating before the eyes, great thirst, brick-dust deposit in the urine, or anything wrong with the urinary organs, then your kidneys are affected.

It is really not difficult to cure kidney trouble in its first stages. All you have to do is give Doan's Kidney Pills a trial.

They are the most effective remedy to be had for all kidney and urinary troubles.

Mrs. Alfred LeBlanc, Black Cape, Que., writes:—I feel it my duty to say a word about your Doan's Kidney Pills. I suffered dreadful pain across my back so bad I could not stoop or bend. After having used two boxes I feel now most completely cured thanks to your pills. I highly recommend Doan's Kidney Pills.

Price 50 cents per box or 3 boxes \$1.25, at all dealers, or sent direct on receipt of price by The Doan Kidney Pill Co., Toronto, Ont.

Two Catholic Astronomers.

Two out of the five eminent astronomers elected at the recent meeting in London of the Council of the Royal Astronomical Society as Foreign Associates of that distinguished body were Catholics. One was the Papal Astronomer and Director of the Vatican Observatory, Rev. John C. Hagen, S.J., who was long connected with the observatory of Georgetown University of the Jesuits, Washington, D.C., and much appreciated among the scientists of the United States and Canada. The other Catholic honored by the London Society was Prof. Johannes Franz Hartmann, of the Potsdam Astrophysical Observatory.

Snowy White Linen

in every home, comes from the use of

Surprise

A Pure Hard Soap

Makes white goods whiter, Colored goods brighter.

See for Yourself.

Remember the name

Surprise



an's
Label)
Pure
ITED, TORONTO