

CHILDREN OF DESTINY.

A Novel by William J. Fischer.

Author of "Songs by the Wayside," "Winona and Other Stories," "The Toilet," "The Years Between," etc. etc.

CHAPTER V.

IN THE GRIP OF THE MAELSTROM.

On a fresh, clear November morning, when the trees shook down their crimson-yellow tinted leaves and the winds wandered sadly over the poor, dry earth, the unseen Angel stole slowly and quietly into Grandma Rawlin's room and parted the little thread of life. Hers had been a grand home-coming. Poor, little, old mother! Her last words had come in a whisper: "Mazie—some one is calling—I am—going home. Everything is—so lovely—and—bright." Then her soul trembled through the white gates of eternity.

Some weeks later Mazie and Lawrence sat by the evening fire. The old clock on the wall ticked away pleasantly. It was like a third voice joining in their quiet conversation. Something had been on Lawrence's mind all day. At last he began:

"Mazie, darling, would you like to remain here in Kempton always?"

"It seems strange that you should ask me such a question," answered his wife.

"No, it is not strange. I was only picturing a home elsewhere, that's all."

"Then you are not satisfied here, Lawrence?" she asked, looking up into his large, grey eyes.

"Yes, Mazie, I am satisfied. I like Kempton, but—"

"But what Lawrence?"

"I would like to get away—to go to another place. Perhaps I could do better."

Mazie did not know that her husband had had words with Arthur at the mill that very morning. Ever since his marriage Arthur had hated Lawrence with a deadly hatred. He never passed him by without cursing him from the bottom of his jealous heart. Had it not been for this man Mazie's love would have gone out to the mill-owner—unobstructed, glorious and free. Lawrence, too, could not help noticing his master's changed attitude toward him and this naturally kept him somewhat ill at ease.

On this particular morning Lawrence had entered the mill ten minutes after the whistle had sounded.

"Never mind starting work this morning, Lescot. I do not need you," Arthur said to him at the door.

"You are evidently forgotten that we start at 7 not at 10," he added, sarcastically.

"I am sorry Mr. Gravenor," he replied.

"I would have been here on time but on the way down I came across an old woman who had fallen and broken her leg. She was all alone and in great pain so I telephoned for an ambulance and remained with her until it came.

"I'll not listen to your 'besides' at all. You've got to go Lescot—that's all." And he snapped his fingers into Lawrence's face.

"Mr. Gravenor? What do you mean? What have I ever done to displease you. I do my work at the mill here honestly and you pay me for it. I cannot therefore understand why you should want to get rid of me. What have I done?"

"More, Lescot, than you dream of," Gravenor answered, vehemently. "I hate to see your face about the place now. It reminds me of—" he bit his lips and the name of the woman he loved stuck to his throat.

Lawrence stood transfixed for a moment wondering what Gravenor's words meant.

"Then you do not intend telling me, Mr. Gravenor, why you discharge me," the young man remarked sadly.

"No, Lescot, you shall never know. Come to the office and I shall hand you your week's wages."

Some minutes later Lawrence Lescot closed the old mill door never to open it again. When he was gone a wicked, disdainful look crept into Arthur's eyes as he remarked: "I could not bear to see his face about here any longer. God knows, I can't help hating him. It is wrong, very wrong, but this jealous, unforgiving heart prompts me to it all. Ah, Mazie, you will yet suffer for all of this—remember!"

Little wonder then that Lawrence felt downcast all day. Gravenor's sentences tortured him. What could the man mean? Was he going mad?

Lawrence ransacked his brain for hours. It was a fruitless search. The voice of conscience within whispered: "You are innocent—innocent." All day long this consoling voice sounded in his ears, even though the mill-owner's cruel words were ever uppermost in him. When evening came his mind was very tired and he felt as if he ought to burden his thoughts to his wife. But, why worry her? Yet as they sat together by the pleasant evening fire a feeling came that he must tell her all.

"You would like to get away from Kempton, Lawrence," she asked again.

"Yes, Mazie, I would like to leave the city for good."

"But why this sudden change? Have you had trouble at the mill? Any words with Mr. Gravenor?"

Mrs. Lescot had expected hearing of trouble from this source ever since her wedding morn. She knew Arthur had loved her deeply and feared that jealousy might drive him to strike a blow which might affect both herself and her husband, as long as the latter was still in his power at the mill.

"Has there been any trouble at the mill, Lawrence?" she asked again, with strange misgivings in her heart.

Lawrence remained silent. What was he to do? Was he to tell Mazie what the mill-owner had said to him? He did not know which course to take. He had never heard anything of Arthur Gravenor's attentions to his wife previous to the marriage. Mazie, thinking it best, had never alluded to it. On many occasions even remembered distinctly having heard her speak kindly of him.

Presently his thoughts changed and strength was given him to overlook the cruel morning's proceedings. He smiled upon his wife's troubled face and answered: "No darling, nothing much happened at the mill—only I have given

up work there. I did not altogether like my job, Mazie. The hours were too long and there was not enough money in it. I know I can do better elsewhere."

"I am so glad that nothing happened between Mr. Gravenor and yourself, dear. If the city does not suit your plans now, why I'll go with you to the other end of the earth. You have my love."

"And I have two strong arms," he interrupted. Surely with such weapons, Mazie, we can brave the fiercest battle."

"And be victors in the end, Lawrence," she added, joyfully. "Now that mother is gone I have no special desire to remain in Kempton. She knew that if she remained she could not help being reminded of a little heart history which she was trying to forget. Gravenor's name would not be forgotten so easily. He had thrust himself into her life when the skies were brightest. With him so very near she feared lest the darkening shadows might come."

For some minutes neither spoke. The mazes of thoughts stole back to that evening when she had sent Arthur a letter begging him to leave her in peace and Lawrence, poor fellow, could not help hearing his master's cruel words. Again he felt like telling Mazie and again his judgment urged him not to do so.

Just then the clock struck the hour of ten, it chimed playing a sweet interlude, pleasing to both.

"Here do you intend going, Lawrence?" Mazie asked.

"I have not yet decided fully, but it will be many miles from here," he replied.

"It will be very hard for me to leave this little cottage. It was always such a cosy nesting-place and my poor mother's presence seems to have made these very rooms sacred. I seem to hear her calling me now, Lawrence. Ah! you don't know how I miss her. I go to her room and find her bed empty. And the two thin hands that used to clasp mine so tenderly—they welcome me no more. Dear mother!"

The poor woman's eyes filled with tears. Lawrence caught her head in his arms and tenderly stroked her hair.

"Do not weep so, Mazie," he murmured, kissing her. "You know there's much for us to do. We are going into a land of brightness to carve our future out of the days that are yet to be. So take my hand and help me to face the rising sun." Thereupon he drew her to his strong, manly bosom in all the ecstasy of love.

One week later Arthur Gravenor, driving down Shelburne Avenue, noticed that the Rawlin's cottage was empty and deserted. Mazie and Lawrence had left Kempton for good. A sudden paleness came to his face as he drove past. He had often regretted his hasty act at the mill on the morning he had dismissed Lawrence so unceremoniously.

"I am sorry they are gone," he whispered to himself. "I am sorry that I shall never look upon Mazie again."

Five years passed—uneventful years for Arthur Gravenor. From sunrise to sunset, year in and year out, he had worked in his office at the mill—worked like a machine, taking little or no pleasure out of life. A great change had come over him. He would hardly have recognized him. He had aged physically and his thin, troubled face showed clearly that he was a disappointed man. It was full of the deep lines of suffering—the little drained rivers which always remain. Life had dealt severely with him. He looked like a man who has already run life's race and lost. He had tried hard to forget Mazie, but he could not. She clung fast to his every day thoughts. He had never pictured going through life without her, and now that she had left Kempton he worried and fretted. Soon it became a disease with him. Before long it poisoned his mind, for Gravenor was a weakling, a prey to many evil influences that harbored no good promises. Finally came the breakdown—the reaction of all these gloomy months of suffering. Then he was obliged to relinquish his duties at the office. Gradually reduced in health and strength, he was now on the verge of a collapse. His nerves were ready to snap and give out at the slightest provocation. At times he became morose and melancholic. Every body noticed the sudden change in his disposition. Stricken down in the prime of life, just when his dreams might have been rosier, Arthur Gravenor, young mill-owner and multi-millionaire, was a broken down man.

Many a young life had spent its energies before the altars of Love. Arthur Gravenor was a rapt devotee at the same shrine, but his heart and mind had been poisoned by a jealousy which consumed with deadly fires. He felt that he had suffered a great, a grievous wrong and that Heaven was on his side. He was in the terrible clutch of the undertow. He was too weak to raise himself out of the mire, and had his eyes sought the clear, blue skies and the loving guidance of the Master above him, Love's sternness might indeed have been sweet for him. But now, alas! he must reap the harvest of all his misguided energies and fight the fearful grip of the maelstrom—to win. To win? Ah, yes—but alas! it was too late. His face was set, his muscles were stiff and his strength was gone. He might fight the maelstrom, but only to be thrown limp and helpless on the sandy shore.

The occupants of Bleur House were greatly concerned about their master's health.

"I often wonder why such a visitation should have come upon Arthur," Mrs. Hawkins remarked to Muriel one day.

"He always was such a bright, fine young fellow, full of ambition and endurance of the right sort. But he is going down fast and something will have to be done very soon."

"The cause of the whole trouble, auntie" said Muriel "was that girl—Mazie Rawlin; not that any blame should be attached to her, but then you know my brother fairly idolized her and dreamt of making her his wife. Disappointment however was to be his cruel morning's proceedings. He smiled upon his wife's troubled face and answered: "No darling, nothing much happened at the mill—only I have given

The door-bell sounded. A few moments later Dr. Cascada, the attending physician of the Gravenors, entered. He was a well-dressed pleasant-looking little man in the seventies.

"Good morning, Mrs. Rawlin—Muriel!" he said cheerily as he shook hands with the two women. "This is a delightful morning, quite breezy and invigorating. How is Arthur getting on?"

"We were speaking of him," Muriel answered, "when you entered. He seems no better. He sleeps little and eats barely anything at all. He will probably be down in a few minutes. What do you think his doctor?"

"He is a confirmed neurasthenic and has a delusion or two of the unfaithfulness of a certain Mazie who has wronged him."

"Ah, that's not a delusion at all, doctor," interrupted Mrs. Hawkins, peering through her eye-glasses. "It's a gospel truth. You see Arthur loved Mazie Rawlin. She never encouraged him and, when later she married another, his heart was broken."

"I see—I see," cried the doctor, thoughtfully. "That news to me. Though all he has been telling about Mazie is true. However this matter has had such an influence upon his mind that he cannot think of anything else. By the way I dropped in as I passed this morning to offer a suggestion. How would it be to take Arthur to the seashore? I think he would improve much faster removed from his present surroundings."

"That's a good idea, doctor," interrupted Muriel. "Auntie and I have just been wondering what could be done. So you see you have helped us greatly to solve the problem." Where had we better take him, doctor?"

"If I had my choice Muriel," he answered, "I think I would go to the Place O' Pines. It is a pretty spot, summer all the year round and hundreds of pleasant guests always there."

"But that is so very far from here, doctor," rejoined Mrs. Hawkins. "Do you think Arthur could stand the journey?"

"It is quite a distance from here," the doctor said, "but then the trip should not be too much for him. Half of it is by rail, the other half by water. It's a glorious trip. Nature looks her loveliest there. The Place O' Pines is a heaven of hills and roses."

"To be sure, it will just be perfectly delightful to send him to such a place," Muriel exclaimed, joyfully.

"Tossed him, did you say?" questioned the doctor. "Ah, that would be a serious mistake. No, he must not go alone. Some one will have to accompany him. How about yourself, Muriel?"

"I would be delighted to go," answered the girl.

"Your wish shall be gratified," said Mrs. Hawkins. "You will be good company for Arthur and I think you can manage him the best. You shall also send Kitty along. She will be a help to both of you."

"And when do you think we should leave, doctor?" questioned Muriel.

"As soon as possible."

Just then there were sounds of footsteps on the stairs.

"It is Arthur," remarked Muriel. "I shall send him in at once. Remember that you get him to sign the contract for a trip to the Place O' Pines," she continued smilingly as she glided out of the room.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PLACE O' PINES.

The lavish hand of beneficent Nature had indeed endowed the Place O' Pines with quaint, picturesque beauty. It was a pleasant place to summer in—away from all the dust and smoke and feverish excitement of the ambitious city. The song of the lark never lingered in its pleasant, well-kept avenues. All was peace and quiet. Tired humanity came longing for rest, and rest was given them under the stately pines and quiet, tranquillity stars.

Over half a century the Place O' Pines had been one of the most fashionable summer resorts in the country. All the year round the five large hotels were filled with pleasure-seeking guests. People came and went continually.

The cold snows of winter never visited the Place O' Pines. There the summer lingered all the year through, throwing her gladsome, eternal smile upon lake and river, mountain and meadow. The air was alive with soft, and merriment of their voices, floating on the wings of the breezes, brought many a weary one a message of hope and joy and love. Flowers, too, of every variety bloomed everywhere—breathers of delicate perfumes for sighing hearts.

The Place O' Pines was rather a large tract of land, comprising several hundred acres. It derived its name from the several groups of pine forests. Outside of the city proper one came across a rural piece of country as was possible, and yet its rugged splendor was intensely pleasing to the aesthetic eye. Here Nature existed unmoled, glorious and free, just as God had fashioned her. The pine forests, rich in game, were a special delight to many of the guests. The city itself stood on the very edge of the lake. It was a place of magnificent homes, fine parks and well-kept streets and lawns. Nearly all the houses were of white cement and stood in fine contrast against the rich, dark-green background of primeval trees. There were three of the beach—that delightful, glistening stretch of several miles—where the morning and at sundown. In the early miles, and as far as eye could reach, quivered and trembled that mighty green expanse of water—the sea, restless and terrible.

Arthur Gravenor could not have approached the Place O' Pines on a more auspicious day than that first day of December. He was fairly enraptured with the view which greeted his eyes from the deck of the steamer. The sunlight lay upon the pleasant white city like the blessing of heaven. In the distance the soft grey hills lifted their faces to the clouds, and still farther off shone the dark, brooding pine-forests, mighty but lonely looking.

"This is glorious!" exclaimed Muriel. "I seem to think we are about to step into the very portals of heaven."

"It must be a fine spot to rest in," remarked Arthur, somewhat wearily. "I hope I shall feel improved when I leave the place."

"Doctor Cascada's a dandy," exclaimed Kitty as her eyes took in the surroundings. "Yes sir—see that little bundle of nerves is a dandy for having directed us here. I think he knows a thing or two. The morning I left I met him up town and he seemed surprised to see me."

"Well—well Kitty, are you alive yet?" he asked. "You know, he had not seen me since I had the rheumatism. 'Alive yet?' I cried. 'Well, yes, doctor, bless my heart. You see I did not take that last dose of medicine you gave me at the hospital. When the rheumatism touched my heart—and that's the reason I am here to-day.' Well I wish you could have seen him laugh. His face got so red I got scared. I thought sure he'd have a stroke."

"I am surprised, Kitty," Muriel said reproachfully "that you should speak so to the doctor. He is so precise, you know."

"Ah sure, Miss Muriel, that's nothing. Why Doctor Cascada knows me very well. Besides, he knows my mother and he knew my mother's mother and my mother's mother's mother and my mother's—"

"Stop, stop Kitty!" Muriel interrupted laughing, "if you continue you'll have the poor little doctor as old as the hills. You'll have him coming across the pond shaking hands with Noah in the ark."

The steamer was pulling into shore where groups of men and women and children stood waiting for friends and relatives. The orchestra on deck was playing lively music, full of melody and enthusiasm. The singing, haunting air fairly set Muriel's responsive heart a-thrill. She could not help feeling glad, for soon she was to set foot upon the Place O' Pines—cherished spot that had been the burden of many a dream. Yet now and then a strange feeling crept into her heart about her brother. She could not help worrying about him and she prayed that God might restore the smile to his face and the bright, buoyant spirit to his heart.

For a moment Arthur stood still listening to the music. His eyes had a vacant stare in them and his thoughts seemed to be wandering down the well-trodden, grassy lanes of other days.

"Unto that valley of dreams, Beyond the mountains of heart's despair, Those shores of blossom and wing Over the mountains of waiting, Above the hills of spring."

It seemed hard for him to break away from those sad thoughts which after all were filled with nothing but haunting memories for him. Yet he loved her—this poor, dead, sorrowful past. She had entered so largely into his narrow life that he could never divorce her from himself. The noble, living, promising present stood before him—smiling like an angel that she was—begging and beckoning him into fairer regions, but, no, he loved the old ways, the old lanes the best. His feet were so used to the pressure of the cruel thorn, that she, with all her golden promise-cups filled to the brim, could never lure him away. He lived not for the days that were yet to be. He only lived for the days that were no more.

"Come, Arthur," cried Muriel. "See! We have at last reached shore. The passengers are leaving the steamer." A roused somewhat suddenly from his musings, Arthur raised his startled eyes to his sister.

"I had forgotten we were so near the Place O' Pines," he said. "My thoughts were back in Kempton."

"Ah, brother mine, you must not think of Kempton any more. Try to forget all about the outside world while we are here. Arthur, was you to go back to Kempton, well and strong. So, for the present, we shall have nothing to worry about."

"I'll try very hard, sister, but do you think the wrongs that were done me will ever be righted by a just Providence? Do you think that—"

"Now Arthur, please stop—for my sake, and. You must not wander into that strain any more. You know all those things are purely imaginary—idle children of the brain and—"

"Ah, but they are not imaginary," he pleaded. "They are real."

"Arthur, I implore, I beseech you, speak no more of it," she entreated, taking him by the arm. "You are just torturing yourself and besides, if you want to get better you will have to throw the past aside like you would an old garment. It pains me deeply to hear you dwell upon these things continually."

"I am sorry, Muriel. I shall try harder, but you know when these thoughts come I cannot resist. They pounce upon my weary brain like a pack of wolves, and fear—fear almost drives me mad. But I shall try."

"Thank you, Arthur," she spoke kindly. "Come, Kitty we disembark now."

Kitty opened her eyes widely. She had been thinking of the thousands and thousands of miles that separated her from Silas, and her heart trembled. Then turning abruptly she took Arthur by the other arm and in a moment the three were moving towards the gang-plank.

There was a frantic rush on the steamer, everybody seemingly wanting to reach shore first. When the path was not so crowded Kitty gave a sigh of relief. A few minutes later they stood on shore, glad that the long journey was at an end. Arthur immediately summoned a cab.

"Look, Muriel!" Kitty exclaimed dryly. "There goes Miss Oates, the veteran old maid," pointing to a very tall, lean-looking individual in blue and white who was just then passing a few feet in front of her. "What brings her down here?"

Miss Oates was the richest woman in Kempton. She had acquired an immense fortune through fraud and dishonesty, having cheated her poor sister out of thousands, which her father had bequeathed to her, by a mere fair in the will. And everyone in Kempton hated her for it.

"I wonder what brings Miss Oates to Place O' Pines?" Kitty questioned again.

"Love, Kitty," answered Muriel. "I only heard a few days before leaving

that she was to be married shortly to an outsider and that she was to travel thousands of miles to meet him."

"There comes a peculiar looking mortal," remarked Arthur, "the stout little man yonder with an open smile on his red face. See! he is lifting his hat to Miss Oates. Now they are shaking hands. Listen!"

"Good morning, Miss Oates! I am so glad you came," the fat little man exclaimed smilingly.

"Oh, Maurice," she gasped, "to think that I should come these many miles for you."

The three listeners who had overheard the conversation, exchanged glances hurriedly.

"The love-sick goose!" laughed Kitty. "She's worse than an eighteen year old."

"I am sure that Miss Oates' intended remarked Muriel. "I heard that his first name was Maurice."

"The wretch!" muttered Kitty, "to think that her poor sister is starving in a hovel in Kempton and she parading here in silks and laces! Maurice! that 'Oates' has needed a thrashing! this long time—and I feel as if I could give her her deserts."

It was another of Kitty's little witticisms and Muriel and Arthur could not restrain their laughter.

"Just then the cab drove up."

"Where'll I take you, sir?" the colored cabbie asked politely.

"To the Clarendon, please," answered Arthur.

"Very well. We'll be there in ten minutes, sir" said the cabbie as he closed the door.

Then the horses' hoofs sounded on the pavement and the cab went spinning down the avenue of pines.

TO BE CONTINUED

THE FATE OF MARIE NI COINNEALAN.

NEALAN.

"The Posy-bright" was given as name to her by a poet who sang her beauty, and, in truth and deed, well worthy she was to be given such a name. It was said of her that she was the most beautiful woman ever seen among the folks of that country in which she had her dwelling. And, although this same maid of many a one, little deservings of so great a reputation, like enough it was true for Marie ni Coinnealan. There were two song makers who fashioned ranns about her; and one relates how her cheek was like the hue of the apple-blossom in May, opened newly under morning dews; and the others, no white behind, will have it that such was the brightness and fire of her blue eyes that men's souls, in the last spark of life would light again their flame from her glance. But, indeed, this was not so; rather, she slew them through fatal loving; for she was high above all, like a lark in the air, or a blossom on a topmost bough, or a star in the blossom of heaven.

Her own people set great store upon her. She had a sister—fair enough, she not being by—and three tall brothers, brave and young. These had upon them the care of farm and dairy; and "their fill of work," as it is said in such tending. The mother Saibh ni Garach (long before Maire the daughter was a woman grown), had been struck with a sickness—God bless the hearers!—she they who spoke upon the matter. She had lain bed-ridden for many a year, as for the man of the house, his whole desire was in drink. The sister, then, and the brothers worked; Maire sat by her mother silent, or else singing very softly to herself; brooding, it would seem, upon her own beauty, as a flower might do—singing heart's content into the poor woman yonder, who never stepped outside the four posts of the bed. "That is lady's work," said the others. Our Maire is not fit for else."

She was always clad in fine costly clothes, without soil or speck. When they were worn, Bride, the young sister, took them, making no demur. She had been reared to this; always giving best and highest up to that sister for whom men of learning and poetry made the melodious songs; for whom many a young lad, and many a person of standing pined and left his hearth lonely and without a wife in his company there.

Was it not like that with Anthony MacGowan? There had been a match made for him with little Ellis ni Conaachy, a bit of a girl, brown as a nut, and all as sweet within, it will be allowed. Anthony was well satisfied until his bad luck brought him one day to the fair in Bailenahoun. He was driving three cows down the street there cracking his stick behind them, his dog at his heel. A high wind came suddenly and whipt the hat off him and carried it into a cart by the way. Who should be sitting there, waiting her father's pleasure to turn home, but Maire ni Coinnealan? She smiled, and stole the man's hat out of him. "Sorrow's cure to me, but 'tis myself was in the hurry about making the marriage," said Anthony MacGowan to himself.

He went after his beasts, but to the first man who came making a bargain with him he said: "Maybe you could give me an account of that young woman yonder, honest person? What's the name upon her people and where will she be dwelling?"

The other turned his head, and saw Maire ni Coinnealan sitting in her father's care. Likely, the girl was not thinking about one or other of them. Her elbow was upon her knee, her chin in the hollow of her palm—white as a snowflake was that small hand. And there the wind came jealously about her and blew the ringlets in a gold mist across her countenance, as if it would fain hide her beauty from them all. That person who had been questioned sighed. Well he knew the fair woman yonder. Then his anger rose, and he said to Anthony MacGowan: "What concern to yourself she may be, or where her place of dwelling, and you to be marrying Diarmuid O'Conaachy's little girl?" And with that he turned his back upon Anthony, all his bargaining gone out of his head.

Nevertheless that other man got the knowledge which was lacking from him. It was no more than a couple of days after this that he came up the hill of the

dwelling-place of Maire ni Coinnealan. He brought his sister with him, but her heart was not in the work. "God save all here!" he said entering in. The sister following in the track of his feet, said not a word.

"Tagg, the girl's father, was smoking his pipe in the chimney corner. 'Take your seat good people, and let us know your business,' he said to them. Anthony took his seat and looked at the floor; the sister's eyes went right and left, and saw that hean without a ditch, nor hank of onions even. 'A poor exchange for the fine fortune to come with Ellis ni Conaachy!' said she in her own mind. "It is not like that a fortune will come out of this house."

There was the brother meantime speaking for himself. "I am wishful of wedding with your young Maire," said he. Tagg O'Coinnealan liked that sort of talk. It made him proud to be the father of such a daughter.

"There will be many a one of your wish in this country and beyond it," he said to him. "But sure, how do you stand for land and money, good man?" Then the man who was breaking faith with little Ellis gave account of himself and, no doubt but he was a well-to-do person. Tagg, the father, though he was looking for a fine settlement for his daughter, would have been well content to take him. He said: "We will be thinking about the matter. But now, I will bid the girl out from her mother's sick bed, where she will be tending the poor woman."

Maire came with soft step, quiet and bright as a sunbeam. She looked at Anthony MacGowan out of her deep eyes. She did not smile upon him now. She stood in the middle of the floor, in that dark shadowy place; and she said in her low voice, "Little to my mind is your coming here and little the cause of your coming. The sister, by Anthony's side, drew in her breath. The man's cheek turned scarlet red. He spoke, and his face was drooping to his breast.

"What for will you be speaking in this fashion to me?" she said.

Maire answer Maire: "Go to Ellis ni Conaachy, and ask her what for?" Then Anthony knew that as he had fared hither, so he might fare forth; and that such was all coming to him on the head of his journey. He rose up in his standing, without another word. The sister said, "God reward you, girl." The pair went out of the house together.

"Quick work," said the father, not satisfied. "And that was a man of great wealth, I will be telling you." It was nothing to him about little Ellis yonder.

The daughter had a soft cunning of her own. "It would become us to be raking the ownings of another woman," said she, "and it being said of us that we had our choice of suitors." And she put her arms about his neck, and whispered in his ear some sweet little secret which was between them.

After that, and not long after, either came the contention of the poets—which is remembered among the cottier people until this day. There was the "Man of the Cooinies," one Shemus O'Gallagher, who used to be at every gathering in the world barony, because he had such soft, sorrowful singing that it came upon hearts like dew of evening it came upon hearts like dew of evening it came upon hearts like dew of evening him, stood up that wild lad from the shore westward, Eoghan O'Maille, and "the loudness of the sea ever in his voice, and he powerful and high going, like the waves of the Old Sea," say the folks who tell the tale.

It was drawing near to Christmas then, and there had been a day's winnowing upon the hill over against the dwelling place of Maire ni Coinnealan. Bride, the young sister, had been working with the women, in the high wind on the hill, all the day long; but when darkness of night drew on they gave over toil and came within the barn and made merry with dancing and singing. Marie ni Coinnealan should be in their company then, without doubt, for no gathering was right without her. And she was dancing in her fine attire, which she always wore, when the two song-makers among the throng, began to praise her, and against the other. There is the rann of him who used to be fashioning cooinies:—

There is a fairy-hill over Bailenahoun,
And the sky-woman in her dwelling upon it,
O'choone—more spells in a word of her mouth,
Than in the store of Finavara, the King of the Shee.

A hundred times, and nine times over the fair hat
You desired her;
A hundred times and nine times over she was crossed
And consoled;
In the name of the Seven are strongest in the house
Of God,
In the name of great Mary, against which there is no power.

"There is no heart, here or yonder, could deny love
to her!
O white love, O darling, O curled and branching
cult of pure gold;
You will be bringing me to my burying within a year
and a day,
(And welcome at that!) I get not my share of the world!"

Come all ye, O women of the Cooining and cause
your fill for me,
Unless it be for me to wed her, the Flower of the
maiden,
Better to me the black clay, upon my eyes
Than to see her wed with another, and my self in my
loneliness."

And when he had made this song they say how he stepped aside, leaning on his neighbor, as if the weakness of death were already coming upon him. "Sure and certain out it will be for you, after that fine rann!" said those about him, ready with comfort. But the fair maid herself, yonder, listening mutely, gives him no sign of favor, whatever be the thoughts of her heart within.

Then, in his turn, began that other, from the shore westward. And he sang where he stood, barely within the house, on the right hand of the door, and his face to the wall:

There is a Man in the West,
Sickness of love upon him,
If there come not curing,
It will be the madness will be upon him.