## 2 CHILDREN OF DESTINY.

A Novel by William J. Fischer.

hor of ""Songs by the Wayside," "Winona Other Stories," "The Toiler," "The Years' Between," etc. etc.

CHAPTER XXVIII. A RIFT OF SUNSHINE.

A week later Jerome reached Kemp-ton. The journey home had been a long and wearisome trip. Yet as he stepped off the train at the depot and caught the twinkle of Gracia's eyes in the crowd his heart gave a thrill of delight. toil.

"I am so glad Jerome to see you back," Gracia said gladly, her checks coloring slightly. "It did seem so very lonely since you went. Often I thought that you would never return to me. I fancied myself all alone, dear, but that "I the term sounded the morning hour. They brought soothing music to his heart and carried his thoughts to that trusted friend of the cloister—Sister Benita. And while they ran over the roofs of the eity a thought came to him, a bright helpful thought. 'I, too, have missed you sweet.'

"I have it at last," he muttered, " Jerome said, looking into her joyful eyes. "I do not know what I would do shall go to Sister Benita and tell her the eyes. "I do not know what I would do without you. Your strong unselfish love seems to fill a void in life that is vast and cheerless. Without you I would miss all the gladness and brightness and Story of Mad Nance's death and show her the document. She was at the Place O'Pines with her brother at the time the Lescot child was stolen. Surely she would remember some of the circum-stances. Perhaps Arthur told her all sunshine. about it. In any case I shall go to her She seems to be the only person to whom

"But where is Dick ?" asked the girl, mewhat surprised. " Did he not come with you?' I could relate my experie

Yes, part of the way. He remained over at Trantor to see an aged uncle of his. He will reach home the day after to-morrow.

"How did you enjoy yourself, dear? Did the Place O'Pines surpass your exin ten minutes. ong pectations ?" Jerome could not help thinking of his "Yes, I am in no hurry." "Very well then. I shall tell Sister.

meeting with Mad Nance, but brushed the thought aside, and replied: "Yes, I was more than pleased with the place. Ten minutes later Sister Benita en "So you have come back to us again, It is a beautiful country — charming climate, delightful scenery and pleasant Jerome," she remarked. "I am sure o heart is glad in Kempton to-day." company all the time. People are coming and going continually. Whom do you think I had the pleasure of meet-

ing there, Gracia ?' I hardly know. I suppose in the forthcoming ceremony. as happy as a child." rich duke or duchess."

"Ah no, come down a little lower on the social scale, please. You surely could not picture me associating with the nobility

her last evening and her happiness seemed complete. Aunt Hawkins to can hardly wait for your home-coming Why not? My Jerome, I think, is qualified to dine with kings and Sister. Remember, you are expected to taste some of Gracia's wedding cake." "But all jokes aside, I did meet the

<sup>16</sup> But all jokes aside, i did meet the Duke of Kenyon. He startled all Europe some months ago by openly de-nouncing and exposing the follies of the smart set. Yes, and a rather fine fellow he is too. Singe excentionally well is " I shall be there. Reverend Mothe s very good to grant such an extraordin ary request. It will do my heart good to see the old home again and wander through the well-remembered rooms smart set. Tes, and a rather metric well, is he is too. Sings exceptionally well, is an expert at the rife and can say his 'ha-penny-damn' as well as any one. The Duke of Kenyon, however, is not the which are peopled with pleasant memo which are peopled with pleasant inclusion ies. It seems a lifetime since the doors of Bleur House closed behind me. But tell me, how did you like the Place O'Pines? Is it not a rare and delightperson I had in mind." ful spot ?

"Well, whom else did you meet Some one great in politics?" No.

"In music ?"

No.

"In art ?"

"I might have guessed it." "Listen, I had the pleasure of evening with the great Lachance."

"Really ? An evening with the illus trious Frenchman ? Why, all Paris nay Europe, is wild over his canvasses Why, all Paris saw a reproduction of one of his latest

pictures in one of the art journals. I think it is called "Shadowland"—a wonderful forest scene of trees and moondoubtfully. "Trust me, Mr. Chelsea ?" questioned the nun, her face whitening. "Certainly, But what does all this mean ?" "I would like to tell you something. light. Ah, yes, I remember it. Do you must tell it to someone

An, yes, I remember II. Do you know that very picture was executed at the Place O'Pines. I saw the original. Lachance painted it in one of the pine-woods. He has been staying at the island for several months. His physician recommended a rest, and yet the noted artist is "killing time" by paint-ing beautiful and wonderful pictures. Before leaving he presented me with a Before leaving he presence in  $e^{-1}$  a very pretty little landscape in oil—a very pretty bit of work. I know you will like it, By the way there is another surprise in that there was trouble brewing. "Speak, Mr. Chelsea," she said unable to wait any longer, " and tell me all ! Trust me. What you are about to say

"Oh, do tell me, please Jerome, sinc this is the hour of surprises." "Lachance will be passing through

to wait any that you are about to say Trust me. What you are about to say will remain a secret forever. Surely you bring no bad news of the good chile Gracia ?" she asked frightened. Kempton in a month or so before leav-ing for Paris and he has kindly promised "Not exactly," she repeated. " Tell me Mr. Chelkea-tell me all !" "I wish I had never seen the Plac spend a few days with us." With us? You mean with your

THE CATHOLIC RECORD

The confession of Mad Nance kept him awake nearly all night. He tried to was Mazie Rawlins. Oh God ! I see awake nearly all night. He tried to shut out the sound of her haunting voice, but he could not. It haunted him as through it all. I am afraid the story is only too true." "But what motive could your

some horrible crime, awful and soul-crushing. What was he to do? He felt brother have child ?" in stealing " Arthur was once madly in love with

but Gracia was not to know. At day-break he rose from his bed and walked Mazie, but she spurned his advances and married Lawrence Lescot, a poor break he rose from his bed and walked over to the open window. He was very tired. The morning air seemed to re-vive him. The birds were beginning to stir in the trees and the streets were about the abinois to each the server mill-hand. The blow was too much for him. His mind became affected and he never recovered. The Lescots left Kempton after their marriage. Pro-vidence, however, seemed to have diralready beginning to echo the song of ected that Arthur was to meet Mazie again at the Place O'Pines. They must have met, yet my poor brother breathed Presently the bells of St. Agatha' not a word

not a word." The tears came to Sister Benita's eyes and she wept bitterly. "Gracia then, is Mazie Lescot's child," she mur-mured. "I feel sure of it now." She merced for a for She paused for a few moments while her thoughts wandered back over the past to that last day which she and

her brother had spent together at the Place O'Pines. How that day loomed up before her now ? "I am afraid it is all too true, Mr. thels

elsea," she repeated sadly. Before Mad Nance died, Jerome r

marked, " she confessed the crime t Dick and myself and bade me take down her sentences word for word. Here i That morning at 10 Jerome Chelsea stood at the door of St. Agatha's. "Sister Benita is now at class," the portress answered him, " but she will be document. She signed her name before she died. Read it aloud, Sister.' Jerome handed her the strange doet

nent. "I cannot read it Mr. Chelsea," sh

Can you wait :

" It is the most beautiful place I hav

Jerome shifted about uneasily in his

that it was not.

said in tears. " Please read it for me." Slowly and distinctly Jerome read every every sentence. "This strange man came to me at the cottage one night wearing a red wig," he continued ner-"Ously. " A red wig ?" interrupted Siste

Benita. Benita. "I can now recall this very article. I remember finding it on his table next morning. He told me it be-"You mean Gracia ?" "Yes. The poor girl felt very lonely during your absence. She is so affec-tionate. Her whole life is wrapped up in the forthcoming ceremony. She is onged to one of the actors at th Olympic." He then read of Mad Nance's en

trance into the Lescot cottage, he stealing the child and carrying it to "I do hope she may ever remain so, bright singing bird that she is. I saw the bend of the river, where Mr. Grave or met her and administered chloroform. Sister Benita raised her eyes and said: "I remember distinctly Arthur's entrance into the boat the evening we left the island. He carried the little child in his arms. He told me he had adopted it and was going to take it back to Kempton with him. I thought hothing of the matter at the time as brother was a man of moods, and fel that it was best to satisfy his whi Arthur had been acting strangely for weeks. I remember distinctly smelling chloroform on the little one the night he brought it to us on the steamer. drew his attention to the fact, but h eplied that the child had had ever seen. Yet I wish that my foot had never stepped upon its ground." "What do you mean?" Sister Benita and a strong smelling liniment had been rubbed on its chest. God forgive hin Arthur could not have known what h

"What do you mean?" Sister Benita asked, somewhat surprised. "What has happened? You speak strangely, Mr. Chelsea. I felt that your trip had been a delightful one. Pray, do not tell me that it was not." was doing." When Jerome finished reading the document he asked : " Then, Sister, do you really think that this stolen child

"I am sure of it. It cannot be other

chair. Then he looked at Sister Benita "Can I trust you, Sister ?" he asked vise. I carried her all the way from th Place O'Pines seventeen years ago, and have watched her grow into womanhood. Gracia ! Gracia !" she wept sadly. "At last the shadows brighten. We always last the shadows brighten. We arway called you nobody's child but now come mother's heart we know that some mother's hear was broken when you were taken away. "But listen," interposed Jerome. Mad Nance in her confession calls the A strange feeling crept into Sister child Constance and you call the sam Benita's heart. She waited for his words with bated breath like one standchild Gracia. This seems very strange

ing on the brink of a precipice. His sentences had brought a new terror to her soul. She could tell from his looks Not at all. I am sure Arthur changed the child's name purposely." "So Mazie Lescot, the child's mothe

is dead," murmured the grief-stricken nun. Poor thing ! her end was tragic. I wonder what has become of the other child ?" " I did not hear."

Instantly Sister Benita's thoughts stole to the mysterious letter which her brother had entrusted to her on his deathbed.

" Do you know, Mr. Chelsea, now that you have exchanged confidences with O'Pines," the artist muttered. " Come, come Mr. Chelsea unburden I shall confide I shall confide in you. I have in my session a letter addressed to Gracia. the thoughts that seem to weigh you down. You will feel better afterwards. I know it all concerns Gracia and you." possession a letter addit to me on his My brother handed it to me on his deathbed and begged me to read it to her on her twentieth birthday. I have Jerome regained his courage, and the words came fast. He described the often wondered what the contents are, but only a few more days and then we shall know all. On the evening of visit to the pine-woods, the discovery of the blood trickling down the rocks, the Gracie's birthday, the night previous to the wedding, I shall have the letter opened and read."

CHAPTER XXX. OLD LETTERS.

The night of Gracia's birthday arrived. All day lo g preparations had been in progress for the wedding on the of loveliness and happiness as she went flitting from room to room in her plain white gown, on some errand of useful-ness. A large red rose glowed in her hair and another on her breast. Matt Pensy, decked in his Sunday her was some errand source and sourc

best, was a very about Bleur House. very conspicuous figure

about Bleur House. "I am sorry to see Gracia go," he said to Sister Benita as the latter was admiring the floral decorations in the dining room. "The place will be empty without her. She was life itself—music an' song all the blessed day. Jerome Chelsea has much to be grateful for. Gracia is not one o' them wall-flowers that a breath of wind will blow away. And she's no' mad with the society craze either an' the pink-tea notions an' such She can like. Thank heaven for that! paint an' sing an' play an' work with the best of them. But Aunt Hawkins

an' I will be very lonely in this large house when she is gone." A tear trickled down the old man's heek and a look of sadness came into

his eyes. "Ah no," answered Sister Benita "You shall not be left alone here. Listen! Gracia is not going to leave Bleur House. This will be her home. Besides, another member will be added to your household to-morrow.'

"Oh, I am so glad the young people are not goin' to leave us. With Jerome here it will be livelier than ever. He's a fine man, Jerome is—a regular, all-aroun' gentleman. He brought me this vest all the way from the Place O' Pines, an' I think it was kind o' decent o' him.

"By the way, Matt, do you know," the nun asked, drifting unto another theme "what time of day it is?" Matt's fingers stole to his watch.

"It's exactly eight," he replied. Just then the door bell sounded. "I am sure it is the Cardinal."

"The Cardinal?" said Matt doubtfully "Well, well! I think I had better go

"You must not be afraid of His Emin-He is only a plain, humble old nan.'

Presently Aunt Hawkins came over n her crutches-rheumatism had almost made her a cripple—and whispered to Sister Benita: "The Cardinal is waiting in the drawing-room, dear." "Pardon me, Matt. His Eminence is

raiting." The Cardinal greeted Sister Benita

"Have you brought the little box containing the letter?" he asked of he

kindly. "Yes, Your Eminence. Here it is," she said, "just as my brother gave it me, and here is the key." "I suppose it will fit the lock."

"I hope so. I have never tried it." "Then this letter has never left the asket since your brother placed i there." "No, Your Eminence.'

In a moment the key turned in the lock and the lid flew open. "Ah, here is the precious envelope.

exclaimed the Cardinal. "It does seem strange, Sister, that Arthur should have addressed it to Gracia and command you to read it to her on her twentieth birthday. When had I best read the letter?'

'After a little while, Your Eminence. I think dinner will be ready shortly Ah yes, there is the bell."

The two left the room, Sister Benita eading the way. In the hall the Cardinal met Gracia and Jerome.

At dinner a feeling of rare good cheer prevailed. The Cardinal was in his eleprevailed. ment and his fine, witty sayings kept everyone in good humor. Poor Matt Pensy laughed so heartily that he could scarcely perform his duties at the table. Aunt Hawkins confessed that she had not heard such genuine laughter for many a day. Sister Benita tried hard to throw a cloak over her feelings and Even the old Cardinal brushed aside a "I am sorry my dear children," he said succeeded. She could not help think-ing of her dead brother. How she that he mich sudd life and explain in person all the strange mystery. Her thoughts stole to Mad Nance and her startling confession and she grew faint. Jerome, with Gracia at his side, felt that he was the richest man in all the world. He chatted brisk ly and his face beamed with smiles. To-morrow was to bring him the realizato Kempton to spend his days with you. tion of all his fondest hopes; to-morrow he was to take Gracia to himself as wife. How his heart longed for the Terrace, London. hour in which he could call her his forever! For weeks he had waited for the ed Jerome, his face reddening with sur-prise," the very place where I spent my boyhood days. Sidney Chelsea was my day. He had something to live for after all, something beautiful and precious that no one would ever dare to take from him. After dinner all withdrew to the adopted father. Great heavens!"

man to whom she has given her love will honor it as the most sacred gift that life can give him, that he will remain true to his promises and that remain true to his promises and that God will bless both with an abundance of graces which make for perfection in this life and in the next. I have another matter to refer to and no tim seems more opportune that the present. Sister Benita has handed me this casket

which I hold in my hands. It was entrusted to her by her brother on his deathbed. When Arthur Gravenor was dying he commissioned her to open the casket and read the enclosed letter to you, Gracia, on your twentieth birthday. That day has now arrived and to-night your benefactor's desire shall be ful-

filled, here in the presence of your friends. May God grant that it will bring into your lives added happiness!" Gracia stirred in her chair like a frightened being. Her cheeks were

Poor thing!" thought Jerome, noticing her evident uneasiness. "In have told her boforehand of this." " Leshould The Cardinal unlocked the casket and took therefrom the mysterious letter. "See," His Eminence exclaimed, " the

letter is addressed thus : "To Miss Gracia Gravenor

To be opened on her twentieth birthday. Gracia's heart throbbed visibly, her eyes fastened on the Cardinal's wrinkled,

Slowly the Cardinal opened the envel-

pe and read in trembling voice : " Dear Gracia,- On this your twentieth birthday Arthur Gravenor's voice speaks to you from the grave. It has a crime to confess. Undoubtedly, dear child, you have been wondering who your parents were, what became of them and how you ever drifted into the Gravenor household. I knew your parents well. They both lived in Kempton at one time. Your mother, Mazie Rawlins, was the only girl I ever

Lescot-your father-my heart was torn in two. My soul ached for revenge and, when five years later in company with my sister, Muriel, I visited the Place O' Pines, I again met your mother. She was a widow then, your father having been drowned at sea. Again I asked her to marry me. She refused, and again I swore that I would make her suffer. But it was madness and jealousy that drove me to it. In a far from same state

of mind I visited a low character, Mad Nance by name—" Sister Benita lowered her eyes. Her face grew ashen white. By this time Gracia had risen to her feet looking inthis timeto the Cardinal's kindly face and ing breathlessly for every word. Jer-ome stood at her side manfully, his face filled with an expression of pity that

filled with an explosion of the second secon paid her a large sum of money and ordered her to go to Mazie Lescot's house and steal her little daughter who was about three years old. That very night lieft the Place O'Pines and carried the stolen child to Kempton with me. Gracia—forgive me! That child was

Gracia—forgive me! That child was you. Your real name was Constance, For various reasons I thought it best to change it." Gracia's head dropped into Jerome's

strong arms. The surprise had been too much for her and her heart was heavy with anguish. The Cardinal paused thoughtfully a few moments and, notic-ing that Gracia had recovered, he con-

inued reading-"When I returned to Kempton I re "When I returned to Kempton I re-cognized the gravity of the crime I had committed. My remorse of conscience was great. I sought you to restore you to your mother, but it was too late. You were supposed to have been the victim of foul play. Your mother worried so that she died a day or two from the plays are committed." after the crime was committed.'

As the story proceeded there was not dry eye in the room. Gracia wept tterly. It was the first time her heart earn that Jerome is only a brother by bitterly. adoption to Constance. When Lawr-ence Lescot commanded the El Dorado, had ever felt the pang of real suffering.

ed. I hope and trust that the young has not found a wife for me thank God she has found my long lost sister!" Turning he embraced Gracia and kissed her. For some minutes the two

wept tears of gladness. Sister Benita came across the r and tearfully whispered something it to their ears. "I am glad for both of you," was all she could say. Then she left the room. Aunt Hawkins followed her. In the mind of the latter a new light had

NOVEMBER 14, 1908.

eve wit

the bee

tre to en

sw sin the ble ha

Gracia and Jerome had accepted the strange decree of fate with strong and ourageous hearts.

Matt Pensy, overcome with emotion could not help shaking hands with them saying: "It does my old heart good to know that you ha' found each other afte havin' been parted these many years. Presently the Cardinal rose. "I believe, my dear children," he said smillingly "that I did not finish the read.

ing of the letter which has brought suc a sudden change into your hopeful, young lives. I might therefore add that the deceased Arthur Gravenor has proven himself a noble benefactor to you both by willing each one hundred thousand dollars. So you see Mr. Gravenor has made amends and I hope dear children, you will not withheld

your forgivenes Sister Benita sat in the library, so ing as if her heart would break.

"You must not weep so, dear," At Hawkins said, entering the room. Of room. Out few days ago the latter had for sealed envelope in the vault, bearing the Place O' Pines post mark. The the Place O' date showed that it must have lair there for years. The strange happen-ings of but a few moments ago had at nce drawn her thoughts to the lette "Sister, look at this letter please," she said nervously. "I found it in the vasit yesterday. Matt and I were doing some

eleaning." Sister Benita raised her eyes excited-Sister Benita raised her eyes excited-ly. "Let me see, Auntie. It bears the Place O' Pines post-mark. I must examine it closely. It was posted the year after Arthur and I visited the island. I cannot think. My senses reel. I believe, Auntie," she said some minutes later, "that I had this very letter in my hands years ago. It arriv-ed after Arthur's death I remember. I had not the heart to open it then and oved and when she married Lawrence had not the heart to open it then an

read it. Where did you find it? "In Arthur's old letter box." "Just where I placed it years ago. I wonder whose letter it was?"

"Read it dear! It seems providential that I should have thought of it now.

Sister Benita opened the envelope. Her eyes took on a joyful look as sh

ead the contents. "The wedding-bells shall ring Auntie he cried with joy. "Come, let us hurry to the drawing-room !" "Please, Your Eminence-read this

letter," Sister Benita spoke excitedly as she approached the Cardinal. "Aunt wkins has unearthed a golden jewel There was consternation written of Gracia and Jerome's faces. It had been busy time of surprises and they hardly knew what to expect now. Sister Benita was experiencing one of the

Benna was experiencing one of the greatest joys in life. The Cardinal's eyes scanned the strange letter. A smile stole to his face and he read, in tones of gladness: "The Place O' Pines,

August 13, 18-

Dear Mr. Gravenor, - Months have passed since the arrival of your letter of inquiry concerning Mrs. Lescot's other Jerome. A very severe siege of

illness has prevented my writing you until now. It would have been very good of you to have taken charge of Constance's brother, but I am afraid plan is not practicable. Immediately after Mrs. Lescot's death the boy was taken to England by one Sidney Chel-sea, who was holidaying at the Place O Pines at the time of the tragedy. Since then I have never seen or heard of the boy. You will no doubt be surprised to

a woman, who was a stranger to every one on board, died rather suddenly. On

her death-bed she begged the captain to

"No, I mean us. Surely you are not forgetting Gracia that the Cardinal is going to figure conspicuously in a very important ceremony next week." Gracia lowered her eyes for a moment and answered with a smile : " Indeed I am not forgetting, dear, but really this " Indeed I us" is very confusing to say the least. Yes, a week from to-day-

All the floral tributes are destined to

"Come, dear," Jerome interrupted

somewhat, abrupily, "there's a car. It is too far to walk to Bleur House. Be

sides I am very tired. Come, let's harry! You can finish the description of

that dress, sweet, when we are seated.

CHAPTER XXIX.

of-'

following of the stream to its destina-tion and the finding of Mad Nance in a "You shall become my wife," he in-terrupted. "Thank God for the gift of dying condition. "But what has Mad Nance to do with so sweet a guiding star !"

either Gracia or yourself ?" "All the arrangements for the cere-mony have been made. The night beun. "More than you dream. I feel very fore the wedding I shall have a birthday sorry to have to say it." "Continue, Mr. Chelsea," the nur

of my own. I shall have a birthday of my own. I shall be twenty then, Sister Benita is coming home for the two days. It will be glorious. We can hardly wait to see her in the old place. pleaded.

Thereupon in words charged with in-tense feeling Jerome referred to the hardly wait to see her in the old place. Aunt Hawkins, too, is beside herself for very joy. She has been anxious, plauning for weeks. I hardly know what I would do without her. Even poor Matt Pensy has been busy and ex-ceedingly kind. He yows that not a single outside flower shall be used in dying woman's confession. " My dead brother's name was men-tioned by this woman as that of her tempter ?" shricked Sister Benita, oversingle outside flower shall be used in decorating the house and the cathedral.

"Yes, she spoke clearly, and there was no mistaking it." "How long since the crime was con

mitted ?' " Seventeen years ago."

come from the conservatory. Oh, my dear, I have a thousand and one things "What was the nature of the crime ?" "A three-year-old child was stolen to tell you. This morning Madame Landers called and fitted my trousseau. by this woman and your brother paid It is just a perfect gem-a lovely crea-tion of white silk with yards and yards er well for it.'

The nun's hands stole to her throb-

bing temples. "Seventeen years ago — seventeen years ago," she repeated. "The very year Arthur and I visited the Place O'Pines

Did she give the child's name ?" 'Yes-Lescot. The child's mother's me was Mazie."

I am sure it must be exquisite. she cried gaily with a "Mazie Lescot?" groaned Sister Benita. "Is it possible ! And was she at the Place O'Pines ?" certain air of pride. "Why a queen has seldom worn a prettier or a costlier one."

Yes, she was a widow. Her husband was drowned at sea. She sold roses for a living and they called her the Rose-and care. So dry your tears, child Queen.

THE UNRAVELLING OF THE TANGLE. " Mazie Lescot, the widow of Lawr-Jerome did not sleep much that even There was so much for him to think

ence Lescot, "repeated Sister Benita thoughtfully. "And she was the Rose-Queen! I knew her well at one time. She lived at Kempton. Her name then and in his heart he wished that he had never seen the Place O'Pines.

Does Gracia know anything of asked the

Mad Nance's confession?" "I did not, Sister. I thought it best not to tell her. It would only help to sadden her life." "I am going to ask a favor of you, Mr

Tam going to ask a favor of you, Mr Chelsea. Will you let me take charge of this document for the present? The Cardinal will be here this afternoon and I would like to tell him all about these sudden, startling developments. He has always been the intimate friend of the

"Certainly, Sister. You are quite welcome to it." When Jerome rose to go Sister Benita

sid: "Now do not worry Mr. Chelsea. Brighter days are yet in store for you." "I shall not worry. I am easier now that I have told you all. It feels good to know that Grania lives in total income good to know that Gracia lives in total ignor-ance of the terrible truth."

That afternoon Sister Benita and the Cardinal had a quiet chat lasting an hour. The nun had felt terribly ups The news of her brother's implication in the crime bruised her sensitive con science.

"You must not worry, child, over Arthur's misdeeds," the Cardinal spoke kindly. "You know as well as I that in his state of mind he was hardly responsible. Besides he has atoned for it. Look what a fine girl Gracia is today, full of hope and ambition and all

and care. So dry your tears, child! I shall call at Bleur House and relieve you of the trying ordeal of reading your brother's mysterious letter to Gracia." "Thanks, Your Eminence, you are ex-ceedingly kind," Sister Benita said drying her tears.

mind. The room swam before his eyes. Then Gracia's voice roused him from his drawing room. When all were comfort-ably seated the Cardinal rose from his chair somewhat nervously and motioned

sudden stupor. "Finish the letter, Your Eminence, Sister Benita to his side. The nu obeyed. His Eminence whispered something and she hurriedly left the please," gasped Jerome almost wildly. The Cardinal continued. The letter room. Gracia wondered what all the strange proceedings could mean. She was unearthing strange developments and, loud and clear, came the old man's leaned over to Jerome and remarked, somewhat inquisitively: "I wonder touching voice: "Upon receiving the news of Jerome's adoption I wired Sir somewhat inquisitively: "I wonder what the Cardinal is going to do? He Sidney Chelsea and in time received a seems very nervous-poor, old man! See how his fingers tremble. He will reply that the report was true. He had adopted Jerome Lescot, changing his name to Chelsea." never adjust his glasses. What do you

held her fast.

with emotion.

sister and brother?'

think he is going to do, Jerome?' "Probably speak a few words of advice and encouragement to us," Jerome

replied, purposely concealing the real "But why did Sister Benita leave the

room so hurriedly? Besides, she looked dreadfully pale. Oh, there she comes carrying something in her hands."

Sister Benita entered the room, the ittle casket in her hands. Nervously little she placed it on the table and resumed her seat directly opposite Gracia. The Cardinal's eyes surveyed the room. They rested pitifully for a moment on Gracia. Then he began, notwithstand-Then he began, notwithstand-

ing his years, in a firm, clear voice-My dear children, on the eve of your intended marriage, let me speak a few words to you. I am glad to be with

truth in time." you this evening and I congratulate most heartily the young lady whose birthday is being so fittingly celebrat-"It is better so," said Jerome. "I am glad this evening has brought an unex-pected treasure into my life. If Love

" that the letter so far has not contained a cheery word, but it has to be read." her orphaned The child, Jerome, lived with the Then straightening himself he con-Lescots two years before Constance was tinued reading; "You had an only brother, Gracia. His name was Jeromo You had an only born. After your mother's death 1 enquired about him. 1 thought of bringing him

Very few about the Place O' Pines ever heard the story. I happened to be a passenger on the steamer when the passenger on the woman died.

I sometimes feel sorry for the part I out learned from a friend in England took in the crime. Then my conscience grows hard and it is easy to forget. that he had been adopted by a certain wealthy Sidney Chelsen, a retired wid-ower, living at 15 Mariton House NANCE DROWLER

"This letter explains itself," the Car-"15 Marlton House Terrace?" shriektinal continued. "To-morrow's wedding bells will be merry ones indeed.' Jerome drew Gracia to his breast and implanted upon her lips a tender kiss been kind and love is all "God has

the sweeter now," he said gladly, his A thousand thoughts pierced Jerome' eyes gazing into the golden heart of the

THE END.

## MARRIAGE.

"Marry in haste and repent at leisure" is a proverb that is founded on long experience. It is the common sense of the ages crowded into one sentence. Hasty, ill-considered marriages are rarely happy. Young men and young women should give considerable thought to the serious question of marri-

"Great God!" Jerome sobbed. "Then age. In the Catholic Church marriage we are sister and brother!" The news was too much for Gracia. is a lasting contract. It can not be broken. It endures till death. How She reeled and staggered and would very necessary then that young people should be careful in a matter that may fallen to the ground but Jerome nake or mar their future. And the way "Poor children!" the Cardinal whisto be careful in this matter is to be prayerful-to beg of God the grace to pered to himself, his voice overcome

e guided aright in their choice. Cath-After some minutes Gracia regained olics should put their future in the consciousness. "Have I been dream-ing?" she moaned, looking into Jerome's honest face. "Is it true that we are ands of God, and pray to him for en-Any consideration of ch leaves God out of the "Yes, dear," he replied in trembling voice. "It is only too true." "But what a blessing my dear child-ren," cheeringly spoke the Cardinal, "that you should have discovered the thet is the." eckoning is likely to prove disastrous. But there are some people who on this question act like the girl who thought he gave marriage careful consideration because she "went to two fortune tell ers, and a clairvoyant, and looked in "went to two fortune tell-

sign-book, and dreamed on a lock of his hair, and went to an astrologer and to a medium, and they all told her to go ahead."—Sacred Heart Review.