### CHILDREN OF DESTINY.

A Novel by William J. Fischer. ther of "Songs by the Wayside," "Winona Other Stories," "The Toiler," "The

Years' Between CHAPTER XVI.

IN TEMPTATION'S WAY. The occupants at Bleur House were delighted over the arrival of Gracia.

The child took kindly to its new home and surroundings, and everybody in the place from Aunt Hawkins to Matt Pensy felt quite an affection for the newly

arrived stranger. For the present the little one was the chief attraction at the Gravenor's.

"She is a perfect little dear," Aunt
Hawkins said to Muriel on the evening
of their arrival. "And such a pretty
name—Gracia! It reminds one of the
birds and flowers and all things beautiful. But what strange fancy possessed Arthur to bring the child home with

The little thing," said Muriel, " was "The little thing," said Muriel, "was without father or mother and the woman who had charge of the child one day complained bitterly to Arthur. She said she did not know what would happen Gracia. The woman was poor and her heart seemed to long for a comfortable home for the little one. So Arthur took pity and adopted her."

"I am glad he did," said the warmhearted Mrs. Hawkins, "The coming of the child, I am sure, will infuse a new life into Bleur House and, let me hope, into Arthur's heart. By the way, Muriel, I think he looks dreadful. Dr. Cascada only in ure results.

Cascada only inquired yesterday as to his condition. I am afraid he will be sur-

prised when he sees him."

"Arthur has not been well at all,
Auntie. The Place O'Pines did not
seem to agree with him and he begged—
fairly begged to return to Kempton.
Going, he spoke of that Mazie Rawlins' affair continually until I rebuked him.

At the island he never again alluded to it, but I could see that there were heavy thoughts on his mind. I am afraid, Auntie, he will never be well again." I, too, feel that the worst will come

I am so glad you are home again. house did seem very lonely. We missed you all so much."

"I am sure the house did seem empty,

Auntie. Do you know the Place O'Pines is a beautiful spot. Kitty and I were delighted with it. Nothing but water, sky, trees, flowers and sunshine. It seems funny leaving such a warm, summery place to find winter reigning here Yes, there has been a goodly amount

of snow and fine sleighing."
For hours Aunt Hawkins listened to Muriel's description of her trip to the

"Midnight—and Arthur not home yet," exclaimed Muriel as she rose from her chair. "Where did he go this even-

Down to the mill," answered Mrs. Hawkins. "The manager wanted to see him on important business. He tele-phoned for him in the early part of the

revening."

The interview with the manager had only lasted a half hour. Affairs at the mill, it was proven, had been in a most satisfactory condition and, when Arthur expressed the wish that the manager advertise as soon as possible that the mill was for sale, the latter hardly knew

what to say.

"Surely you are not in earnest Mr
Gravenor?" he said, overcome with sur-Gravenor?" he said, overcome with sur-prise. "You surely don't want to sell the mill now that profits show such an

enormous increase."
"I meant what I said. The mill must I am not well and intend taking rest. Place that advertisement in the Daily Chronicle to-morrow so that it

will appear in the evening edition."
"This place haunts me," Arthur mused to himself as he turned the key me. The child must be restored to its She shall not suffer any But how am I to go about it? longer. But how am I to go about it?
God—oh, my God! show me the way—
show me the way!"
Like a man, whose soul is lashed by

despair, sobbing, he stumbled down the steps and made for the open street.

A bright moon was shining in the crystal sky above, and through the fallen snow Arthur Gravenor wended his lonely way. Kempton was asleep, nestling sweetly under her snowy blankets. Everything was white—blessed with the beautiful garb of innocence. Arthur could not help thinking of his own soul, now blackened with sin and shame. How he longed that things might have been otherwise! The moment he had set his foot upon that outgoing ship at the Place O'Pines, the stolen child in his trembling arms, his sin had stood before him glaring, accusing him. He could not banish it. It followed him wherever he went like some dread ghost, haunting his restless brain and shadowing life's sky with clouds of dread. For two hours he had sat in his office

chair at the mill attempting to curb his thoughts, but it was useless. It was too late! too late! Upon his soul's shore the waves were piling up the driftwood that spoke of lost hopes, broken hearts

and ruined lives.

Presently he reached the river's bank. The water was not frozen at this partic ular spot, but was quite deep. The stream was still as death. For a moment he stared into the depths that reflected the midnight skies. An almost uncontrollable desire took possession of his soul—a desire took possession of his soul—a desire to put an end to all his suffering and misery. He paused for a moment. Then his feet slipped down the embankment and he was ready to throw himself into the cold water, when lo! he seemed to hear his mother's warning voice calling out to him through the " Arthur! Arthur! Remember

was sold. Thus the property drifted out of the hands of the Gravenors, and a substantial amount was placed to their redit in their already generous bank

"I am glad the mill is sold," Muriel "I am glad the mill is soid, Muriet remarked to Aunt Hawkins. "In his present state Authur could never have managed it satisfactorily. Besides, Dr. Cascada thinks it a move in the right direction. He feels that Arthur should not have any business worries to con-tend with. Perhaps his mind will now ecome rested."

New Year's Eve arrived in due time-

New Year's Eve arrived in due time—that ble-sed time, when souls expand in the fullness of newly found joy and the mind feels refreshed to know that a new era of happiness is about to dawn upon poor, suffering humanity! What satisfaction to feel that the heart is about to throw off its soiled garments like a child—the trials, cares and sufferings of the days that are gone, to emerge in a second sufferings of the days that are gone, to emerge in the days that are gone, to emerge in a second sufferings of the days that are gone, to emerge in the days that are gone and the days that are gone are gone as the days that are gone as the gone as the days that are gone as the days that are gone as the gone child—the trials, cares and sunerings of the days that are gone—to emerge in a garment of dazzling brightness and beauty upon which Hope has set many a sparkling jewel and Love many a silken bow! What satisfaction to feel that one's eyes are again set upon the New Year—blessed future that harbors many

a golden dream, many a cherished sacri-fice and many a noble happiness!

It was to be an evening of special interest to the occupants of Bleur House. Fully a hundred guests had House. Fully a hundred guests had been invited to enjoy the warm-hearted hospitality of the Gravenors. All day Muriel and Kitty had been busy festooning the halls and rooms with holly and mistletoe. Matt Pensy, too, that genial-hearted soul, had given them full con-

hearted soul, nau given trol of the conservatory.

"You may have all the flowers an' plants you wish, Muriel," he said to the girl early in the day. "Now who coul refuse you with your kindway o' askin' Where's Gracia, the darlin'?"

"Here she comes," cried Muriel.
"Gracia! Gracia!" "I'm tummin' mama," came the child-

ish voice.

Presently the little one, all bundled ap, hurried over to Muriel. Then catching hold of the latter's apron strings she played "hide and seek" with Matt. "Ah, you little lump o' sweetness," the gardener exclaimed. "Now I see

A burst of laughter came from the child's lips, clear and sweet, as the song

"Ou tant tatch me, untle," called the little one as she stumbled down the narrow snow path.

A few steps and Matt Pensy held

Gracia in his arms, kissing her cheeks enderly.
"There now Muriel, I'll take Gracia

into the conservatory with me. It's nice an' warm in there for the little thing." "Dood-bye, mama—dood-bye!"
Then the little plump hand stole to
the child's lips and she waved a parting

By evening everything was in readiness for the New Year's party and, in her heart, Muriel hoped that the meet-ing of old friends and the rehearsing of scenes of yore would surely help to gladden her brother's heart. By 8 o'clock the guests began to arrive and when another hour had passed, the rooms echoed with the sound of merry voices. Only the most intimate friends of the Gravenors were there—men and women whose prestige counted for much in the various social circles of Kempton. A few of the friends of Muriel's parents, now white with the years, also came to help gladden the rooms wherein they had sat and celebrated many a time in mused to himself as he turned the key in the old mild door, some hours later after the manager had left. "I seem to see Lawrence and Mazie Lescot's faces wherever I go. Ever since I left the Place O'Pines I can hear their voices accusing me of crime and God knows I am guilty enough. Why did I steal Gracia? It was cruel, heartless to rob that woman of her child. I must make

children in the long, moist grass.

Arthur sat at his table in his room upstairs looking over the day's mail. He was desirous of doing this before be-taking himself to the rooms below, now riotous with laughter. He did not fancy all this display just then. music and the busy voices stealing from the hall below irritated him. He wished himself thousands of miles away from all such scenes of gaiety. In his heart he such seenes of gatety. In his heart he was wondering what the New Year would bring Mazie. Certainly not happiness, heart-satisfaction or peace. Ah, no—despair! A despair, dark as a moonless, starless night. And as he sat there his heart trembled now that the New Year stood on the threshold, her golden cup filled with promises to the

Suddenly a child's voice sounded in the hall outside and in a moment Graci entered, a playful smile upon her lovely

"Poor, little wayside-rose! gift of heaven!" he murmured as he stroked her long, silken curls tenderly, "fresh blossoming rose with all its leafy hopes yet unfolded! What right had I to pluck you? I know that a certain garden beyond the sea is lonely now that you are no longer there. But you will return some day-some day, child

He took the little one in his arms and held her to his breast, in a fatherly and

loving way.

Arthur had devised a plan whereby he might restore the child to that break-ing mother-heart at the Place O' Pines, and that at the earliest opportunity. For a few moments his eyes wandered over a letter, referring to several business details. Presently the child moved about excitedly, calling: "Mama — mama! dere's mama."

Arthur looked and noticed that Gracia vas pointing to a picture on the desk

in front of him. your God, and what becomes of those who wilfully take their life into their own hands! Remember! Remember!

He sprang from the river's edge suddealy frightened by the terrible deed picture into the fire. Then somewhat

which he had thought of committing. This was the second time in his life he had been saved from utter ruin.
Gladly he turned his face toward the city and hurried in the direction of Bleur House.

CHAPTER XVII.
THE HEART SPEAKS TOO LATE.
One week later the large lumber mill one week later the large strength of the desk. He picked them up excitedly the desk. He picked them up excitedly the last letters, but this was not his hand-writing. He opened it, and several newspaper-clippings fell to the desk. He picked them up excitedly the last letters.

as his eyes scanned the strange little note accompanying them—

"The secret is my very own," the letter read. "It shall never be revealed. Depend upon it! The detectives are foiled. We are safe.

MAD NANCE." Arthur was surprised that Mad Nane should have discovered his identity. He did not know, however, that she had

He did not know, however, that she had read his name upon his purse the evening he visited her.

"What does this all mean?" he gasped, his face showing a death-like pallor. The child had in the meantime fallen asleep in his arms. Again his eyes stole to the newspaper clippings. Two referred to the supposed murder in the Lescot cottage and the fruitless searches of the detectives; the other to Mazie's tragic death. tragic death.

tragic death.

Eagerly his eyes wandered over the printed lines. They described Mazie's homecoming, the finding of the little cross, the calling of the neighbors to the seene of the murder, the long dreary day and the finding of the woman's body next morning, with the sleeping son clinging to her breast.

"It's terrible!—terrible!" he moaned.

"Great God—be merciful. This is punishment enough. Mazie is dead!
Oh, it cannot be!"

For a brief moment he raised his

Oh, it cannot be!"

For a brief moment he raised his hands and covered his eyes as if to shut out the appalling vision. Then he looked upon Gracia, happy child sleeping awards in his arms. ing sweetly in his arms.
"Too late! too late!" he sobbed as his

head sank upon the desk.

A moment later he rose, laid the sleeping Gracia upon his bed and dried his ing Gracia upon his bed and dried his tears. Then, aimlessly, he wandered out of the room. The sound of music and the chattering voices again filled his ears. This time they found in his

heart a new sorrow.

What was he to do? Was he to join his friends below now that a fresh crushing blow had almost smitten him? He paused a moment at the staircase.

"For Muriel's sake, I'll go," he whispered. "I shall keep my

A moment later he stepped into the place of mirth and, for a while at least tried to smother his heart's feelings.

### CHAPTER XVIII. THE PLACE OF MIRTH.

Arthur moved nervously through th brilliantly-lighted drawing room, shaking hands on all sides as he went. He tried to return the smiles showered upon him, but his were forced. How could it be otherwise? Now that the distressing news of Mazie's tragic death was still so fresh in his mind he was sorely troubled. He could not help thinking he was responsible for it all, and his conscience repeated its accusations. His friends seemed glad to see him, yet they could not help noticing that his health had failed perceptibly.

Dr. Cascada and Mrs. Hawkins were

seated in the far corner engaged

seated in the far corner engaged in earnest conversation.

"Ah, there comes Atrhur," exclaimed the genial doctor. "I have not seen him for a few days."

"Yes, the poor fellow is to be pitied," observed Mrs. Hawkins. "What do you think of him? There are more reasons than one why I should like to know. So mank higher dector!"

than one why I should like to know. Speak plainly, doctor!"
"To be plain with you then, Mrs.
Hawkins, I think Arthur will never be well again. His mental symptoms are growing worse. He is now beginning to have fixed delusions, and I think you

"It will now take very little to turn his mind-poor fellow! Presently Arthur and Muriel met The latter looked charming in a silken ace gown of rare design, a red ros fastened carelessly in her hair.

"You look stunning to-night my sweet," Arthur said as he laid his hand weet," Arthur said as ne natural apon her drooping shoulders.
"Of course, you recognize my new "Of course, you recognize my new remarked proudly. "I am gown," she remarked proudly. "I am glad you like it. Is not this a charming

evening, brother? Look at all the merry guests assembled here—and all our good friends too." Arthur's eyes stole around the room "It is all very delightful," he said.

He was on the verge of telling his sister of Mazie's death, but something held him back.

"No, she must not know the truth," he whispered to himself

At that moment a matronly looking woman came over to Muriel and whispered something into her ears and departed.

"Mrs. Castles." Muriel remarked

"Mrs. Castles, Muriei remarked, "came over, Arthur and expressed the wish that you sing something. She says many of the guests will be delighted." "Ah, sister, do not ask me to sing," ne pleaded.

"Please sing, do Arthur—just a little bit of something to satisfy them." Arthur Gravenor was known to the city as the possessor of a fine tenor voice. He had often been heard on the concert platform, but recently his name had appeared on the programmes.

'Very well, Muriel, I shall sing for

them. It seems so long since I sang, hardly know how it will go." "What shall it be, Arthur?"

"Let's try "The Heart Bowed Down rom "The Bohemian Girl." The words seemed to suit Arthur's state of mind, and he knew he could do the song full justice. Instantly the words echoed through his brain :

"The heart bow'd down by weight of woe,
To weakest hopes will cling;
To thought and impulse while they flow,
That can no comfort bring—
With flowe exciting seenes will blend
Oer pleasure's pathway thrown
But Memory is the only friend
That gree can call its own—"

# Then he repeated loudly-

"But Memory is the only friend That grief can call its own Pretty words Muriel, aren't they

"Pretty words Muriel, aren't they?
Shall I sing the song?"
"Let us choose something livelier.
The words and music are so sad."
"Very well. What shall it be?"
Muriel hesitated a moment.
"Let me see," she said. "Ah yes, I have it. Sing Liza Lehman's "At the Making of the Hay." It is full of life and feeling and seems to suit your voice admirably." dmirably."

Arthur hardly felt equal to the task

The song was so lively and cheerful and he could not reconcile his present feel-ings to the words. However, he de-cided to try.

Muriel seated herself at the piano

and Arthur stood at her side and faced the audience. Suddenly the voices around ceased and Arthur's strong, nanly tenor sounded through the roo full of tenderness and sympathy-

When the whip-poor-wills are calling, And the apple blooms are falling.

And the apple blooms are falling.

With a tender hint forestailing.

Summer's blush upon the grass;

Water the little stars are keeping

Watch above the meadows sleeping

And the Jack-o-lantern's peeping.

I will meet my bonnie lass!

Fal-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la;

I will meet my bonnie lass;

Fal-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la lumet my bonnie lass;

When Arthur had finished his song he was greeted with rounds of applause. His rich voice had shown off to good advantage and he had put the necessary

vantage and ne had put the necessary dash and spirit into his enunciation.

"I can hardly understand how I finished the song," he mused within himself. "It seems cruel to sing such a song when my heart is weighed down by sorrow. I am sure they must have detacted it in my rates." tected it in my voice."

To satisfy himself he turned to Muriel

when she rose from the piano and asked: "How was it, sister?"
"Beautifully sang, my dear. To me it seemed as if Prescati was singing. It was all so artistic—so clear and beauti-ful and the words came with such feel-

"It seems strange," Arthur thought, that I should have interpreted the song properly. The harvest fields with their ragrance and song were far away. M iragrance and song were far away. My thoughts were elsewhere. They stole into a little cottage miles from here where silence reigned. There I saw a woman's face—Mazie's—cold in death, look up at me from a bed of roses. Oh!

t was terrible—terrible! It was terrible—terrible!"

That night when all the excitement had subsided and the last guest had wandered home, Arthur seated himself at his desk. His mind seemed busy, his forehead wrinkled and he stared into

space. Suddenly he wrote hurried lines to Mad Nance. "I wonder what became of Mazie "I wonder what became of Mazie Rawlins' boy?" he asked himself. "The little fellow must be cared for. He shall not be left alone in the world. I am writing Mad Nance. I hope she will be able to give me news of him."

When he had finished writing his eyes stole to the bed, but Gracia was not there. Kitty had placed her in her crib sometime previously and now the little one was dreaming of fairy princes.

"The poor, little motherless darling," he moaned, "and all through me!"

Then his head sank upon the desk and

The book, "and all through me!"
Then his head sank upon the desk and he sobbed like a child. Genuine sorrow for the wrong he had done had stolen into his heart and found a welcome.

## CHAPTER XIX.

DEATH THE DELIVERER.

One day Arthur wrote a letter spending considerable time over it. "I think that will do," was all he said as he sealed the envelope. Then he address

To Miss Gracia Gravenor To be opened On her Twentieth Birthday.

"She is only a child now," he mused "but some day she will grow into a woman." When the letter was safely housed in a little iron casket in the family vault Arthur gave a sigh of re-lief. "Thank God it is written. I feel somewhat easier now," he said thought-

During the weeks that followed the news of Mazie Lescot's demise Arthur suffered keenly the slow, gnawing pain of a disturbed and tortured mind. His appetite failed. He spent sleepless nights and worried incessantly. In a short time he was only a shadow of his ormer self. Murielclung to the faint est hope until the last, and then her heart sank. Of a mild, quiet nature, Arthur now experienced regular periods of mental excitement.

It was during one of these attacks, in the midst of a cold night in February that Arthur left his room. The wind piled up the snow in drifts and the air was cold and stormy. Roused out of his sleep he had imagined that some evil spirits were after him, driving him to is death. He could stand the haunt ing voices no longer, and he jumped out of bed, threw his heavy dressing-gown of bed, threw his heavy dressing-gown over his shoulders and went bare-footed into the cold, wintry street. Two hours later Matt Pensy and Muriel found him sitting on one of the garden benches almost frozen. Several days later he was taken down with a severe illness The young millionaire was never to rise from his bed again. Pneumonia of a very virulent type set in and, though the patient passed the crisis successfully, a heart complication put an end to the life that flickered so feebly.

All the occupants of Bleur House spent some time with the dying man on that leat and day.

spent some time with the dying man on that last sadday. Matt Pensy and Kitty were heart broken. The priest called in the early morning, and, gentle man of God, helped to direct the trembling soul along the thorny paths, in the joy-ous dawn of eternal life. On his deathbed Arthur Cravenor made his peace with God.

When the priest left the dying man the latter called Muriel to his bed-side.

"Go to the vault," the directed feebly, and bring me the little casket. I have in a moment Muriel returned.

"Open it, sister, please!"

She did as requested.
"There you will find my last will and

testament," he proceded in the feeblest whisper. Speaking seemed an effort. It made him very breathless. "And

here," picking up a sealed envelope, "is a letter addressed to Gracia. Read it to her on her twentieth birthday: Don't forget sister, dear, it is very important. Be good to Gracia for my sake. Mnriel, I die happy. Forgive me all the crosses I have placed upon your shoulders. Death will be very sweet when it comes, for I know God has forgiven my offences, and they were many."

many."
When the end came peacefully and quietly. Arthur stretched out his wasted thin hand and had a smile and a kind word of parting for Muriel and Aunt Hawkins who, broken-hearted and sob-bing, had watched at his bedside all day

long.

He closed his eyes for a moment.

He closed his eyes for a moment. Then they opened widely.

"The child," he gasped. "Gracia! Where—is—she?—Let—me—kiss—her—again—before—I—go."

Muriel, weeping bitterly, lifted Gracia to him. The child's lips met his for an instant, and he smiled the smile

of peace.
"My—little—wayside—rose—good bye!" the thin voice gasped.
Then the struggle was over. The great deliverer had come.

## CHAPTER XX.

GRACIA GRAVENOR. GRACIA GRAVENOR.

Sixteen years passed. Gracia Gravenor was now a charming young girl of nineteen and sole possessor of the Gravenor wealth. She and Aunt Hawkins had Bleur House all to themselves. Muriel, feeling that she had a vocation, had entered a convent ten years after her brother's death, having waited patiently until Gracia had grown into girlhood. Gracia and Muriel, now known to the world as Sister Benita, met frequently. St. Agatha's—the home of known to the world as sister Bellin, including frequently. St. Agatha's—the home of the community which Muriel had joined was only five blocks from Bleur House. was only five blocks from Bleur House. To the young girl the nun really was a second mother. In fact she was the only mother Gracia had ever known. When the heart felt heavy and needed directing it was to St. Agatha's she went, and she generally felt the better for her visit.

for her visit.

One morning Gracia and Aunt Hawkins loitered carelessly in the flower
garden. The latter looked very old with the weight of her three score years and ten, and her face showed the same graceful, pleasant smile. Her shoulders were bent and she tottered as she walked, but the trusty cane in her trembling hand helped her along the well-kept garden walk.

It was one of spring's most tranquil days. The air was warm and the sun-beams wandered from their mother's lap in the skies like happy-hearted children, blithe and gay. The trees were loaded with snowy white blossoms and the grass was pushing green through the wet earth. There was activity on all sides. The awakening had come, heralded by gentle, whispering breezes. Mother Earth was busy at her loom

Mother Earth was busy at her loom weaving tapestries of green, and white and yellow and gold for the palaces of the king—the summer that even then was speeding across the eastern hills.

"Ah," tis a glorious morning, Gracia," remarked the aged Aunt, "a morning worth living for. My thoughts are stealing to the poets who revel over God's own out-of-doors, when spring-time glows on valley, mountain and meadow. Listen! sweet lines are on my lips my lips-

"Warble me now, for joy of lilac-time, Sort me, O tongue and lips, for Nature's sake, at sweet life's sake—and death's the same as life Souvenirs of earliest summer—bird's eggs and t first berries;

first berries;
Gather the welcome signs (as children, with pebbles, on stringing shells;)
Put in April and May—the hylas croaking in the

vapor, Spiritual, airy insects, humming on gossamer

Shimmer of waters with fish in them—the ceru-Shimmer of waters with fish in them—the ceru-tean above; All that is jocund and sparkling—the brooks run-

ning.
The maple woods, the crisp Februray days and the sugar-making: the sugar-making;
The robin, where he hops, bright-eyed, brown-breasted,
With imusical clear call at sunrise, and again at among the trees of the apple-orchard Or fitting among the trees of the apple building the nest of his mate; The melted snow of March—the willow forth its yellow-green sprouts: For Spring-time is here!"

"What a beautiful description," tiful description," re-"so picturesque and marked Gracia, Wordsworthian."

"Wordsworth was a great poet but do surpass him."

Aunt Hawkins was a great lover of the poets. She read them assiduously

and memorized easily.

They walked on a few steps arm in arm, chatting briskly, for joy was in their hearts.

Presently through the bushes a voice sounded distinctly. The women stood still and listened eagerly—

"I went a-hunting on the pla

"It is Matt," whispered Gracia. "The poor old soul is always jolly. Come, let us see what he is doing!" And together they went in the direc-Presently they met the gay old gardener face to face.

"The top o' the morning to you both!" e said heartily. "That was a fine song you sang just a moment ago," remarked Aunt Hawkins

smilingly. "Ah, yes, yes—no' bad at all, Aun ie," he laughed loudly. "Do you know me old schoolmaster taught me that over in the old log school-house when I was a wee sprig o' a lad. Ah! 'twas glorious—the sound o' his voice an' the fiddle in between! How the whole countryside sat around him those cool, quiet evenin's! But it's glad I am to see you out this fine mornin'

"What are you doing, Matt?" aske Mrs. Hawkins.
"Workin' about me flower-beds. See "Workin' about me flower-beds. See! the violets are already stickin' up their blue heads," he exclaimed as he pointed to a bed of them nearby.

"Are they not lovely," observed Gracia. "By the way, Matt, when did you rise this morning?"

"Oh, quite early darlin'. I was up with the hirds just ag the sup ween

with the birds just as the sun was "No, child. You can stickin' his head over the garden wall. your parents were dead."

I suppose it might ha' been about four by the clock."
"So early?" Gracia asked. "I think

"So early?" Gracia asked. "I think you are killing yourself. You are getting old, and you should sleep until sev. n."
"Goodness, child!" he interrupted, sleep till seven when the birds are callin an' the sunbeams are out o' bed an' the winds are knockin' at me windows? No, no! I cannot do it. I like to be out in the open in those early hours an' feel the wet grass squeak under me boots. When the dawn breaks then God seems to be around. It is all so quiet an' I often think I hear His footsteps on the grass. Some day, Mrs. so quiet an' I often think I hear His foot-steps on the grass. Some day, Mrs, Hawkins," he added sadly, "He will be comin' for us, but I do hope He will let me see summer in me garden once more. After that I don't care when the call

comes. Matt Pensy will be glad to go
—home."

"You should not speak so gloomily;"
said Gracia. "We do not want to lose

you yet."

"But won't you sit down on the bench here?" the gardener asked kindly. "am sure, Mrs. Hawkins, you are tire standin'.'

standin'."
The two sat down upon the bench and Matt continued: "By the way it was just a mornin' like this when Muriel—God bless her—came to this very spot fifteen years ago to bid me good-byc. She looked so pretty that mornin' as she sat there on the beach—just like a she sat there on the besch has like opener soul gazin' through the gates o heaven. And O ! how I hated that she should leave the old home forever! I touched me heart sorely. She told me she had come out to take a long last look at the garden before leavin' for the conat the garden before leaving for the convent. There were tears in her eyes an' she wept like a child. But she was happy an' willin' to make the sacrifice. She said God needed her elsewhere—the little saint! She was too good for

the world."

"When did you see her last?" ques

"When did you see her last?" questioned Aunt Hawkins.

"Oh, I was just over at St. Agatha's a few days ago. I brought her some roses for the chapel an' she seemed so pleased. An' how sweet she looked in her neat white an' black habit, so good and innocent-like! She was busy paintin' some wonderful picture. By Jiminy! I tell you Sister Benita is one o' the smartest women in the world."

smartest women in the world."
"Well done, Matt. You spoke the
truth," remarked Gracia. "Sister
Benita is just a perfect dear." Gracia
really meant what she said. To her the
nun was the embodiment of all goodness

and perfection.
"The flowers are thirsty," Matt said get.dy, "an' I guess I'll have to give them some fresh water!" And pail in hand, he wandered down the garden path, singing loudly-

## "I went a-hunting on the plains BIE The plains o' Timbuctoo—"

When the last word had died away Gracia busied herself with her pencil. "What are you going to sketch, dear?" Aunt Hawkins asked as she

opened a copy of Tennyson on her lan. opened a copy of Tennyson on her lap.

"I want to paint a picture of the garden," she answered. "It is such a pretty spot in the springtime, with the bright blue sky showing above the cedars and hemlocks."

"The picture will not be complete without Matt, Gracia. He is the soul

f the place."
"Certainly Auntie, Matt must not be

forgotten. I shall sketch him when he returns. I would like to catch him bending over the flowers. He looks so thoughtful—just as if the little things were whispering some message to him."
Gracia had developed into a promising young artist. The most exacting art connoisseurs praised her work. During the past six months she had been During the past six months she had been studying with Jerome Chelsea—the noted young European artist of wide repute, who had come to Kempton but a year before. Pupil and teacher were fast friends. A strong, mutual liking seemed to have drawn toget er the bonds of a noble friendship.—The burner with bench were silent—Greeta burn with

bench were silent—Gracia, busy with pencil and paper, and Mrs. Hawkins, deeply interested in her book.

"There now, the sketch is completed," Gracia exclaimed with a certain air of satisfaction as she held the paper to her eyes. "I just happened to catch Matt as I wanted him."

"It's beautiful, beautiful, child!" observed the aged woman. "There's Matt, just as real as life, stooping over the flower-beds, the tall bushes and part of the straggling fence behind, and, in the

distance, the spreading cedars and the flecks of sky. Still farther off I see the belfry of St. Agatha's. It is beautiful, child. I can hardly wait until I see the water-color."

Matt passed, spade in hand, to begin hand, to be his work in another part of the garden-"Come here, Matt," Gracia called girlishly. " and see what I have done.

The old gardener came over, blushing faintly.

"Well, well, me girl, so you're takin' to drawin' pictures o' this old pile o' bones," he laughed tenderly. "When the picture's done tenderly. "will find a home on one of 'm sure it will find a home on one of them big galleries in Paris. The dear old garden! I know I shall miss the place when I am gone. I have spent the gladdest years o' my life here an' me gladdest years o' my life here an' me heart aches when I think o' the hour o' partin. But here's to you, girl o' me heart, may your love for the beautiful things o' this grand, old earth continue, an' may God bless you!"

With these words MattPensy wandered

off, a light of gladness shining in his clear eyes.

A tolling bell, afar off, sent a shudder

through the quiet, morning air.
"I don't like the sound of that bell," Gracia said sadly. "It makes me feel ill at ease. It reminds me of the morning we

laid Arthur to rest," Mrs. Hawkins remarked, a few tears gathering in her eyes,
"Poor uncle! I cannot remember

him at all," murmured Gracia.
old was I when he died."
"Just three, dear." "Oh, I was too young then to remember. By the way, auntie, I have often wondered what mama and papa looked like. Did you ever see them?"

"No, child. You came to us when