

**THE
YEARS BETWEEN**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649737857

The Years Between by Dr. William J. Fischer

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
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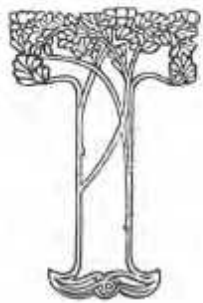
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Yours Very Sincerely
Dr. William J. Fischer.

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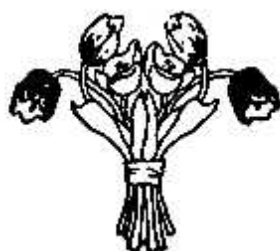


1912

Printed and Published by the Society of
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To
BERNICE ANGELA,
the Author's Little
JUNE ROSE



FEAST OF ST. AGNES, 1911



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Chapter I—One Evening at Stanford.

Stanford was a very busy Canadian city, always bristling with activity and excitement. Travelers at all times had a good word for it, and, go where you might, everybody seemed to know Stanford, and that it was a city of factories, foundries and mills, and that nearly a hundred chimney-shafts pointed heavenward and sent their smoke into the air from dawn until sunset.

Stanford claimed the distinction of manufacturing anything from a button to a huge, powerful engine. The large woolen mills that stood in the heart of the city were the delight of every one, not only in that they gave employment to over six hundred men but because the name of Charles Dudley Mathers, who owned them, had been connected with all that had been just and honorable. In the hearts of the poor, especially, was his name treasured like some holy thing, and no one knew the extent of his charity save his Creator. Thrice he had been elected to the mayor's chair by his fellow citizens and on all occasions he had discharged the

duties of his office faithfully and conscientiously.

But a storm was brewing—a terrible storm—which sooner or later was to devastate his whole career. Business embarrassments had been threatening, and now there were complications in his affairs, and his commercial interests were steadily weakening. He had made several investments in the vain hope of bettering his condition, but alas! all attempts proved futile. Blow followed blow, and each time it smote him with greater force until he was financially crippled. Then came failure—black as a starless night—and forever shut out the sunlight in his day. From that moment Charles Mathers was a changed man, and, when his creditors closed the doors of the Stanford mills, they also closed the portals of his heart against the low, incessant, monotonous murmurs of a world that was cold and empty to him now.

Always of a bright, sunny disposition, he was now dull and apathetic, verging on the melancholic state. In a short time he became only a shadow of his former self. He shunned company and would sit for a whole day at his window and move his lips only to let sigh after sigh escape. His wife, who had always been his inspiration, vainly tried to restore the smile to his pallid face. One could al-

most see him failing—his vitality was fast ebbing low. He contracted a cold which settled upon his lungs. Pneumonia and a protracted convalescence led to phthisis. His weakened tissues could not combat the powerful toxæmia that was raging within. It was a great struggle and finally, after a very long and wearisome illness, the power, that had for years run the Stanford mills, succumbed to the inevitable—and many hearts were sad for the passing.

Six years had elapsed since Mr. Mathers' death when this story opens. Mrs. Mathers had not borne the sadness of the trial very well. She and her child—a boy of twelve—had not been separated a day in all their lives, but the hour of parting was soon to come. Thoughts of that leave-taking were even then tracing the deep lines of suffering on Mrs. Mathers' face as she sat on the veranda with Charles by her side, one evening late in August.

In the West the twilight sat palaced in an array of gorgeous clouds, and the dark pines that bordered the lone, stone driveway stood silhouetted against the red sky, like sextons ringing the death-knell for the dying day. Upon a willow a sparrow was calling for its mate and, within a stone's throw from where the two were sitting, the splashing waters of