GULFS.

BY ADALINE HORF BERRY.

There is no perfect union; friends may swear
Eternal fellowship, and vow to die
Each for the other; heart-beat may reply
Heart-beat and the fervent lovers share
Supremest weal and hope, or woe and care,
Yet separate fears and longings that defy
All bridging, make the dearest mortal tie
A simple clasping hands of twin-born prayer.

The Framer of the heart alone hath sight
And feeling for our various human moods;
He floods each thought with strong, assuring light,
And on our secret dream His knowledge broods;
From Him nor life nor death can us divide,
With His communion we are satisfied.

Just in Time.

BY MARIE E. WILLIAMS.

She was walking thoughtfully through the strip of woodland which separated Langley school house from the small town of the same name. Six months before, Miss Barton had taken charge of the school, and to-day she was turning over in her mind a problem which perplexed her greatly, though she was not a woman easily discouraged. You would never have gone to Helen Barton with sentimental woes or selfish complaints; but if a great grief had come to you, she is one to whom you would have stretched out appealing hands, sure of sympathy and help.

"I dare say I have done some good," she said aloud. "Most of the children are improving, and the discipline is good; but those four boys, what is the matter with them? Harry Irwin and Charles Stannard are eighteen, nearly men, and Ned Hammond and Roy Lewis at least seventeen. They are all four bright, intelligent lads, and a few months ago I was so proud of them. Now they never know their lessons, nor care to know them. Punishment, rewards, remonstrances, are all the same, and ambition seems dead. What is the cause of this change? It is not a love of amusement, for they never join in the sports of their schoolmates, but stroll off together, and have long conferences, looking either moody or excited. If there were any communists around here, I would say those boys had become infected with their doctrines, for they look like youthful conspirators. Something, a very absorbing something too, fills their minds so thoroughly as not to leave room for anything else."

Miss Barton was so much preoccupied with her own thoughts that she did not notice her steps had strayed from the path until she found herself at the foot of a hill which she knew was not on her homeward road.

"I've actually lost my way," she exclaimed, with a faint smile. "*That* isn't so surprising, though, when I've lost my head puzzling over those wretched boys."

She pushed through brier patches, and floundered through bogs, seeing nowhere a landmark that she recognized. She was not afraid of being lost any length of time in the small woodland; but the walking over uneven and muddy ground was disagreeable, and to be lost *anywhere* brings with it unpleasant sensations. Suddenly the sound of loud voices reached her ears. They were on the other side of a close thicket of young pine trees, and fearing that the speakers might be tramps, Miss Barton determined to reconnoiter before showing herself. As she made her way cautiously through the thicket, the voices rose higher in altercation, and, parting the low branches, she looked out on a small grassy glade, and on a scene which drove the blood from her cheek, and made her gasp for breath. Her four boys were there. Harry Irwin and Charles Stannard were standing opposite each other, with faces inflamed with rage, each holding a large stone. Ned Hammond and Roy Lewis were standing a little on one side, as seconds, or witnesses, to the fight. The ground was strewed with playing cards and they had all evidently been gambling.

"You're a cheat and a liar!" shouted Irwin. "I saw you with my own eyes hide the joker, and then play it! I watched you!"

"You lie!" retorted the other. "You play such a cheatin' game yerself, you're always suspectin' somebody!"

Miss Barton stepped out, but too late; for the stones were thrown, and Harry Irwin went down like a log. In a moment Miss Barton was kneeling beside him. There was an ugly wound above the temple, from which the blood was pouring.

"Water!" she cried. "Fill those dinner buckets of yours at the first water, boys!"

In a few minutes the terrified boys came back with their buckets full. Miss Barton bathed the wound, closing the gaping edges as well as she could, and bound it up with a couple of handkerchiefs; but the boy was still unconscious.

"O, Miss Barton, have I killed him?" groaned the agonized voice of Charles Stannard. "I didn't mean to hurt him, but we were so mad we didn't know what we were doing. He is the best friend I have in the world, and I've murdered him."

"No you have not killed him this time," she answered meaningly, as a deep sigh escaped from the lips of the wounded boy, and he opened his eyes, "but how long it will be before the brand of Cain is on you, I cannot say. Where are you hurt, Harry?" bending over him.

"Miss Barton," he answered feebly, trying to struggle up into a sitting position, "is that you, ma'am? My head feels queer like. I wonder what hurt me?"

"O, Harry!" cried Charles Stannard. "Thank God! I didn't kill you! I'm so sorry, old fellow! Won't you forgive me?"

"I remember now," smiling feebly. "I guess I was to blame too, Charlie."

"Do you think you can walk home with help?" Miss Barton asked anxiously. "That wound must be attended to immediately."

"I guess so, ma'am," trying to rise. "Charlie, help me, old fellow, I feel awful weak."

As they raised him, Miss Barton's eyes fell on the scattered cards on the ground, many of them spotted with blood. She uttered a little cry, covered her face with her hands, and stood trembling in every limb, the boys gazing in astonishment at this weakness in their brave, self-possessed little teacher. One of them, in a shame-faced way, attempted to gather up the scattered cards.

"Don't touch them," she cried, with strong emotion. "Leave them where they are! To-morrow, after school, we will come to this spot, and I will tell you a story. I pray God it may touch your hearts; that it may draw you back from the verge of the terrible precipice on which you stand. Now help Harry home, and I will follow."

She saw the boy safely at his own gate, and then in deep thought made her way to her own lodgings. She understood now the cause of the inexplicable change in her boys, but she wondered how they had contracted the vice of incipient gambling. Their parents were Christian people, who realized the hidden dangers which lie in cards, and yet, with all their care, the habit of playing had been carried on in their midst, and now was almost crowned by the crime of murder:

"Am I in time," thought Miss Barton, "to impress their young minds with their danger? It will be hard, oh, how hard, for me to go back to the dreadful past—to live over again those days of agony which I strive to forget; but for their sakes it must be! I must shrink from no shame, no humiliation, in telling my story, but think only that it may be their salvation."

The boys and their teacher were at the appointed place the following evening. Even Harry Irwin was there, looking very pale and with a bandage over his forehead, but his curiosity, and perhaps a nobler feeling, made him join his companions. All the boys noticed again the irrepressible shudder which passed through Miss Barton's frame when her eyes fell on the blood-spotted cards, and she looked sick and faint; but she resolutely turned from them and began her story.

"I was not always a poor teacher," she said. "I was born in a beautiful home, and surrounded by every luxury. My father was a pleasant, genial man, much liked by every one, but with little strength of character. He had inherited his fortune, and was of an indolent, easy-going temperament—one of those characters that cannot resist temptation. I cannot tell you when the thirst for gambling first came upon him, for it was gradual, beginning with the social card parties which were general at the South. My mother and I noticed that from a genial, good-tempered man, he had become silent and moody, often spending the whole night from home, and returning under the influence of liquor. O boys!" cried Miss Barton with a sob, "how I hate to tell you these things of my dear father, —for dear he was in spite of all!

"Soon, however, we began to realize our misfortune. Carriage and horses were the first sacrifice made to the demon of cards, and then by degrees the plantation and landed property followed. Our city home remained, but in a year or so the only shelter left us was a small, uncomfortable cottage which had belonged to my mother's estate. We began to want the common necessaries of life, and my father had sold our jewels, and every decent article of furniture, for means to gratify his terrible passion. He seldom won at cards, I have heard, and his losses used to madden him, but did not check his downward career. At last illness came to our wretched home. My little brother Carlton was taken very sick, and we had neither medicine nor proper nourishment for him. My father had been absent for three days, but we knew pretty well where he was, for he would hang around the gambling saloons upon a chance of getting a dollar or two from some old acquaintance, who would throw it to him with contemptuous pity. He had fallen to this.

"'My dear boy must have medicine,' said poor mother, weeping.

"She opened a drawer, and from it took out a small case.

"'It was my father's last gift,' she said, opening it, and showing me a handsome diamond ring. 'I hid it away until the last extremity, and surely there can be none greater than this. Take it to Mr. Murray, Helen. He is an honest jeweler, and get him to give you a fair sum for it. Tell him our situation—as much as you can without blaming your father.'

"Poor, darling, patient mother! Not once did she blame him to me.

"I was going out of the door as my father entered it. He had evidently been drinking, for his steps were unsteady and his eyes red. I tried to pass him, but his glance fell on the case I held in my hand.

"'What have you there, Helen,' he cried, seizing my arm, 'and where are you going in such haste?'

"Without answering I struggled to get loose; but he wrenched the case from my hand and opened it.

"'By Jove!' he exclaimed. 'So your mother has had this hid all this time! Foolish woman! Why, it might have redeemed—it will redeem our fortunes.'

"'Give it back to me, father,' I implored. 'It is to buy medicine for poor little Carlton. He is ill; he will die, if nothing is done for him. For God's sake father, give it back to me.'

"He laughed. Will I ever forget that drunken, idiotic laugh?

"'Medicine!' he cried. 'Why, Carlton shall have doctor's medicine, and every luxury money can buy him. This,' holding up the case, 'will make us rich, rich! Go back to your mother; tell her I have only borrowed her ring for a few hours. Our days of poverty are over, my girl, over for ever, and ever!'

"As he hurried out, with one cry of 'Mother! Mother!' I sank on the floor with despair in my heart. She found me there, and without a word she understood.

"'I see how it is, my poor child,' she groaned. 'He has taken the ring. There is nothing more for us to do. Nothing but to trust in Him who doth not willingly afflict His children. If this life were all, my Helen, then might we utterly despair; but it is the shadow of a dream. A bad dream for us, my dear, a terrible nightmare; but, thank God, we will waken from it in the light of His blessed morning.'

"About daylight my brother died, and my mother closed his eyes without tear or moan.

"'Try and find your father, Helen,' she said sweetly. 'He loved his boy in spite of all and he ought to be here.'

"I knew where to find him. At another time the idea of entering a gambling-den would have been horrible to me; but I was stunned by grief, and thought of nothing but getting my father to return with me. The proprietor of the saloon, whom I knew by sight, was descending the steps. He looked surprised at seeing me, and raised his hat respectfully.

"'Yes, Miss,' he said, in answer to my question, 'your pa's up there. He had some money, and some Texas fellars cleaned him out an hour ago and went off. I've been trying to get him home, but he sets there alone at the table, a-fingering the cards, and calculatin' what he *might* have won. He's plum crazy, I'm thinkin'. Hope you'll get him off without a fuss.'

"The appearance of the room I entered will be with me to the day of my death. My father was the sole occupant. He sat at a table strewed with empty bottles and cards which he was taking up and throwing down, muttering to himself. I walked up to him, and laid my hand on his shoulder.

"'Come home, father,' I said, 'Carlton is dead, and mother has sent for you.'

He looked up at me strangely.

"'Ah, he didn't get the medicine!' he said. 'Dead, is he, my little boy, my only little boy? Well, we must all die.'

"I did not notice his hands were groping among the cards, but suddenly from under them he drew a small pistol. Before I could stir or cry out there was a flash, a sharp report. I saw the dreadful cards spotted with blood—like those —and my father's head had fallen forward face downwards among them. Oh, I can tell you no more of that awful time! It is like death itself to recall it. But remember, all of you, he was insane when he took his life."

She paused, and tears were in the eyes of the boys when they heard her convulsive sobs.

"My mother died a few months afterwards. Her last words to me were: 'Ah, love, the dream is over, and I see the morning!'

"My dear boys, you understand now why I brought you to a spot where cards made one of you almost a murderer—to tell you the story of one whom cards made a suicide. Shall the opening of these wounds be in vain? Will you not promise me that with the help of God you will never again touch a card, and that with all your strength you will try and save others from using them?"

Four voices said solemnly, "I promise."

And through her tears Helen Barton looked up reverently, and said, "Thanks be to God, I was in time!"

ALL FOR THE BEST.

A Thanksgiving Story.

BY MRS. BELL V. CHISHOLM.

"Who was that I heard talkin' to you just now?" asked Mr. Cary, as he entered the kitchen door.

"Miss Jordan," replied his wife. "She wants us to drop in to help eat turkey, this evenin'. Mr. Hatfield and the new minister, and their wives, are to be there. We are to stop on the way home from meetin'."

"How does she know that we are goin' to meetin'? I am sure it is not Sunday," returned Mr. Cary.

"Why, William, you know this is Thanksgivin'," urged Mrs. Cary.

"I am thinkin' it is mighty little we've got to give thanks for," returned the old man with a sigh.

"Never distrust Providence, William. Seed-time and harvest he has promised, and we have his word for his care even unto hoary hairs. Man, man, don't take on so. He is the same God that told the children of Israel to go forward, and did he fail to open them a way?" and Mrs. Cary left the pudding she was stirring, and crossed over to the corner, where her husband had drawn the old arm-chair.

"I have tried to serve him for forty years, Rachel, and it is a little tryin' to be left homeless when my hair is gray and my eyes dim," he replied.

"It is written, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,'" she said softly.

"And yet, Rachel, the home we have worked so hard to pay for, will be knocked down to the highest bidder to-morrow. The roof over our heads shelters us to-night for the last time. With a cold, stormy winter at hand, we will be cast helpless out in the snow. I can see nothin' before us but the poor-house," he answered bitterly.

"It seems hard, William, but the Lord will provide if we trust Him," sobbed the poor, tired woman.

"I'm a thinkin' we've been all wrong in bringing up our children. If we had been satisfied for them to begin where we did, instead of where we left off, the farm need never have been mortgaged."

"We did it all for the best, father—we meant to do our duty, and if we made a mistake, God knows all about it."

"Ungrateful children is the sorest punishment that can be visited upon indulgent parents. I hoped, when our children were small, that they would care for us in our old days; but, instead of supporting us, they are burdens on our worn-out strength. The girls can sit and see their mother wearin' out her strength for them, and Robert—would to God we had buried him in his innocent childhood!"

The mother sighed heavily, and then she replied sadly: "If Robert would only do right, I would be willing to begin life anew. It seems to me his reformation would give us both a new lease of life."

"But I have given him up. There is no rest for us, but in the grave. His destruction is only a matter of time. When I think of the bright promise of his early years, I almost curse the college that taught him the use of intoxicating drinks!" exclaimed the father, earnestly.

"It was evil associates, William, not the book-learning, that ruined our boy. Who knows but God may save him yet? He does not forget the prayers we have put up for him."

"I reckon not, but it is hard to save a confirmed drunkard," returned the father.

"Not too hard for the grace of God. With Him all things are possible. It is hard to give up everything for no fault of our own, but God rules, and it must be all for the best."

The old man shook his head with a weary sigh, and his good wife, the partner of all his joys and sorrows, drew her chair closer to him, took his cold hands in her own, and deep silence fell upon the gray-haired couple.

The aged parents were not aware that their conversation reached other ears than their own. Tears sprang to the eyes of two of their listeners, and Alice and Katie Cary, in whispered comments, agreed that mother's time to rest had come at last. Robert, stretched lazily on the old-fashioned sofa, could not fail to catch the sound of the voices in the adjoining apartment, and thought the girls never thought of taking him into their confidence, he resolved that, in spite of his father's distrust, he would help answer his mother's prayers.

He knew the farm had been mortgaged to keep him at college, and he had promised to see it lifted; but, instead of paying it off, he had been yearly adding to its interest. A sense of his ingratitude almost overwhelmed him, and, to hide his emotion, he took his hat and and hurried from the room.

"He is off to town now, to spend the day in adding sorrow to the overflowing cup poor father and mother are compelled to drink," sighed Alice.

Robert caught her words, and paused for Katie's reply.

"If he is doomed to a drunkard's grave, the sooner he fills it the better for us all," she returned, in a hard voice.

Robert waited for no more, but rushed madly across the medow, and crossing the little brook at its bottom, sought refuge among the rocks in the wood beyond, where he allowed great sobs of remorse to shake his strong frame. Feeling his own inability to break the fetters that bound him, he humbly carried his burden to the One who is ever ready to help; and when he returned in the gathering dusk, he was ready to gladden the heavy hearts in the desolate home, with the joyful tidings of the victory he had won.

"We have something for which to give thanks yet," cried the father, in tears. "Here I have been doubting God's love and kindness even while he was preparing my heart's desire for my thanksgiving song."

The next week they moved into a poor, inconvenient tenement house, but the tender care the children lavished upon them, made this the happiest winter of their lives.

Robert succeeded in obtaining steady work, though not such as he would have chosen, but he was wise enough to understand that if he wished to accomplish anything, he must begin at the bottom and work his way up. The girls relieved the mother of the greater part of the household work—meanwhile adding a little to the general fund by their busy needles.

When spring came Robert obtained a position as under-teacher in the academy, and Alice, leaving Katie to care for the old folks, found her music had at last served a good purpose, and daily she bravely submitted to the wearisome monotony of a music-teacher.

Though Katie spent much of her time time in the dingy garret—no one except her sister knew of the patient work that was destined to add Kate Cary's name to the long list of talented artists. After the girls understood that Robert was really to be trusted, he was taken into their secret, and the conspirators enjoyed many happy moments hiding away from the old people's sharp eyes.

The long hot summer had been succeeded by the golden autumn, and Thanksgiving had returned to gladden the closing year. In the Cary home nothing had been said about the feast that they always had been wont to enjoy on this happy day. At the church door Robert was waiting with old Bet and Dolly, when the other members of the family came out. He proposed a short drive through the glowing woods, but merely went by a winding route to the dear old farm-house, where they found the same conveniences they had left a year before. Everything was in perfect order, and a fat turkey smoked at the head of a well-filled table. To add to the bewilderment of the white-haired couple, a new deed for the farm lay on the father's plate: "To our dear parents," was its only explanation, but the father and mother were not long in coming to the knowledge that their self-denying children had been saving their hard-earned wages for this precious gift. The man who had purchased the dear old homestead for less than a fourth of its value, had entered into obligations with Robert to transfer the deed as soon as he could repay the money invested with simple interest. Katie's picture had brought a handsome price, and this, added to Robert and Alice's savings, redeemed the farm and the team that their father loved next to his children, besides purchasing a new easy-chair for each of the parents. Robert and his assistants had worked hard to change the old-fashioned, heavy furniture before the service closed in the old church. The old folks were too glad to express their feelings, but they fully agreed, while the tears coursed down their cheeks, that this was the best Thanksgiving that they ever enjoyed.—*Exchange.*

A Madman at Large!

He is a well-known citizen, and his nearest and dearest friends do not suspect his insanity. How do we happen to know about it? Listen: his appetite is gone, he is low-spirited, he don't sleep well, he has night-sweats, he is annoyed by a hacking cough. These symptoms are the forerunner of consumption and death, and yet he neglects them. Is it any wonder that we call him a madman? If you are his friend tell him to get a bottle of Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery without delay. It will cure him if he takes it in time. It will not miraculously create new lungs when the old ones are nearly gone, but it will restore diseased ones to a healthy condition. Tell him about it, and warn him that in his case delay means death.

The vicissitudes of climate are trying to most constitutions, especially to people having impure blood. For all such (and they constitute the majority), the best safeguard is Ayer's Sarsaparilla, the use of which cleanses the blood and strengthens and invigorates the system.

— A Port Alleghany (Pa.) man who was tilted out of a sleeping-car berth by a jolt of the train, exclaimed in an unconscious way, "Don't—don't—I'll get up and start the fire."

Buried Evidence.

A locomotive ran through a bridge on the Kansas Pacific Railway, across Kiowa Creek, several years ago, sinking into mud at the bottom, and has never since been heard from, though repeated efforts have been made by digging and boring to recover so valuable a piece of property. The bottom is quicksand, but quicksands have limits, and it seems singular that the longest boring-rod has failed to find any trace of the sunken engine. By-and-by the silent, mysterious operation of the processes by which nature works may drain the quicksand, and harden it into rock, and then, long after the Kansas Pacific Road has been forgotten, and the Kiowa Creek has vanished from the map, some future scientist will discover a curious piece of mechanism, undoubtedly the work of human hands, lying under so many hundred feet of sandstone, and will use the fact as a basis for calculating how many millions of years old the human race must be.—*Boston Transcript.*

The Church Pest.

Exactly so. He is out with his pastor, is he? That is a way he has. It is his normal condition to be out with his pastor. We have known of his conflicts with three or four pastors. He is immensely fond of them at first—fairly swallowed them whole—but as soon as a man crosses him, or as soon as he, in his infinite conceit, fancies that he has been slighted, then he makes terms with the devil and goes to fighting the preacher. It is a sort of glory with him; it makes him feel very grand and important to have a quarrel with his pastor. He actually enjoys the notoriety of the thing, and then he has the malignity to push his contest to the bitter end. We loathe the spirit of such a man. He is the parent of discord and the leader in destruction. Why does not the little band combine and put the monster out? It ought to be done.—*Baltimore Baptist.*

— The real test of the genuineness of an inward affection as it appears in our consciousness, is the course of action to which it leads. If it does not lead one to act rightly, it is not of much value. What men practically do is a very sure index to the character of their feelings.

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