

GILFS.

BY ADALINE HOFF BERRY.

There is no perfect union; friends may
 swear
 Eternal fellowship, and vow to die
 Back for the other; heart-beat may
 reply
 Heart-beat and the fervent lovers share
 Supreme 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 frowner of the heart alone hath sight
 And feeling for our various human
 needs;
 He floods each thought with strong,
 assuring light,
 And on our secret dream His knowledge
 sheds
 From His own life no death can divide,
 With His communion we are satisfied.

Just in Time.

BY MARIE B. WILLIAMS.

She was laughing 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 senti-
 mental woes or selfish complaints; but if
 a great grief had come to you, she is the
 one to whom you should have stretched out
 suppliant 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 lesson or 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
 sit in the sports of their schoolmates,
 still stroll off together, and have long
 conferences, looking either moody or ex-
 cited. 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 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 ex-
 claimed, with a faint smile. "That isn't
 so surprising, though, when I've lost my
 head puzzling over those wretched boys."
 She pushed through briar patches,
 and floundered through bogs, seeing no-
 where 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 al-
 leration, and, parting the low branches,
 she looked out on a small grassy glade,
 and on a scene which drew 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 gam-
 bling.

"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 cheating game yourself, you're
 always suspecting somebody!"

Miss Barton stepped out, but too late,
 for the stones were thrown, and Harry
 Irwin went down like a log. In a mo-
 ment Miss Barton was kneeling beside
 him. "What's the matter?" she asked, look-
 ing at the agonized face 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
 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 posi-
 tion, "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 im-
 mediately."

"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 gam-
 bling. Their parents were Christian peo-
 ple, who realized the hidden dangers
 which lie in cards, and yet, with all their
 care, the habit of playing had been car-
 ried on in their midst, and now was al-
 most 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 humiliation, no humiliation, in tell-
 ing 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 com-
 panions. 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 for-
 tune, and was of 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 gen-
 eral, 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 was a small, uncom-
 fortable cottage which had belonged to
 my mother's estate. We began to want
 the common necessities of life, and my
 father had sold our jewels, and every de-
 cent article of furniture, for means to
 gratify his terrible passion. He sold his
 good horse, and his beautiful dog, and
 his fine garden, and his beautiful house,
 and he sold his soul to the devil for the
 power to play cards."

"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. 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, absent for
 three days, but we knew pretty well where
 he was, for he would hang around the
 gambling saloons upon a chance of get-
 ting a dollar or two from some old ac-
 quaintance, who would throw it to him
 with contemptuous pity. He had fallen to
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 said poor mother, weeping. "She opened a
 drawer, and from it took out a small case."

she said sweetly. "He loved his boy in
 spite of all he and he ought to be here."

"I knew where to find him. At an-
 other time the idea of entering a gam-
 bling den would have been horrible to me;
 but I was stunned by grief, and thought
 of nothing but getting my father to re-
 turn with me. The proprietor of the sa-
 loon, whom I knew by sight, was de-
 scending the steps. He looked surprised
 at seeing me, and raised his hat respect-
 fully."

"Yes, Miss," he said, in answer to my
 question, "your pa's up there. He had
 some money, and some Texas fellows
 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,
 fidgeting the cards, and calculating
 what he might have won. He's plain
 crazy, I'm thinkin'. Hope you'll get him
 off without a fuss."

"The appearance of the room I en-
 tered will be with me to the day of my
 death. My father was the sole occu-
 pant. He sat at a table strewn 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 he 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."

"Did not notice his hands were grop-
 ing among the cards, but suddenly from
 under the check at its bottom, sought re-
 fuge among the rocks in the wood be-
 yond, where he allowed great sobs of re-
 morse to shake his strong frame. Feeling
 his own inability to break the fetters that
 bound him, he humbly carried his bur-
 den 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," cried the father, in tears.
 "Here I have been doubting God's love
 and kindness ever while he was prepar-
 ing my heart's desire for my thanksgiv-
 ing song."

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

Robert succeeded in obtaining steady
 work, though not such as he would have
 chosen, but he was wise enough to un-
 derstand that if he wished to accom-
 plish anything, he must begin at the bot-
 tom, and work his way up. The girls re-
 lieved the mother of the greater part of
 the household work—meanwhile adding a
 little to the general fund by their busy
 needles.

Win spring came Robert obtained a
 position as under-teacher in the acad-
 emy, 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.

Then Katie secured her first time
 in the dining parlor—no one except
 her sister knew of the patient work
 that was destined to add Katie's name
 to the long list of talented artists. After
 the girls understood that Robert was
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weary sigh, and his good wife, the part-
 ner 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 parlor, 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 ingrati-
 tude almost overwhelmed him, and, to
 hide his emotion, he took his hat 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 com-
 pelled to drink," sighed Alice.

"Robert cannot be so wicked, and, pa-
 used for Katie's reply.

"If he is doomed to a drunkard's
 grave, the sooner he fills it the better
 for us all