

## A Sure Cure.

BY ADELIA M. HOYT.

"No, Helen, I'll not go to your prayer meeting. I don't mean to go to church any more, nor pray, nor read the Bible. I've lost all faith in such things. There now, I hope you'll let me alone."

Having spoken thus plainly, Elsie Glynn shut her lips tight and opened her book as if she wished to end the conversation. The truth was she wished to avoid the look which she knew was in her friend's eyes.

The room was in the third story of a poor but respectable boarding house. A few pictures on the wall, some books on the table, a small, old-fashioned organ in one corner, these gave to the apartment a home look. Indeed, it was all the home that Elsie Glynn and Helen Hartwell knew. Both were alone in the world, and depended on their own efforts for support.

"Oh, Elsie, surely you do not mean it," Helen exclaimed, her voice divided by pain and reproach.

"Yes, I mean every word of it. I'm not a child," retorted Elsie. "Haven't we been members of the church ever since we've been in the city, and what good has it done us, I'd like to know? No one ever comes to see us but the minister, and little he knows of our real lives. They call themselves brethren, they are pledged to help one another, yet never a hand have they lifted to help us, when just a little influence might have secured us better and more congenial work. Of course there are some good people in the church, because some are born good and some bad, and I can't see that their religion changes them in the least. Yet the Bible says 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' That is why I have lost faith in Christianity."

"It is only too true that our religion doesn't make the difference in us that it should; but, Elsie, if the tree seems to us unfruitful, shall we pull it down or leave it to the Lord of the vineyard? Did you ever look on the other side? Your side, I mean. While you are looking for the Christ in others, who knows but someone is looking for Him in you. Because no one has given you a helping hand, is that any reason you should refuse it to those less fortunate? Forgive me Elsie, dear, but what are you, as a Christian, doing for others?"

"Now, Helen, that's just too bad," exclaimed Elsie, the tears springing to her eyes. "You know if I had a better position, where I could earn more, I would gladly give of my time and money to help the church and the poor. If I were rich as those Derby girls, I would do so much good. But, shut in the office all day with those brainless girls, and away from all society that might improve me, there's just nothing I can do for myself or anybody else."

"You are mistaken," Helen answered, "I am sure the girls you speak of are capable of being helped, and need it, too. Perhaps you are sent there for that very purpose."

"But if I associate with them I shall be lowering instead of improving myself," said Elsie.

"He who with one hand in Christ's reaches the other out to help some one, will never sink lower himself, for Christ will draw them both up. For me the question is, am I doing my part? But, Oh, Elsie, if your faith is wavering, do some service in His name and He will reveal Himself to you."

Elsie made no reply, and presently Helen put on her bonnet and shawl and went out. She had organized a prayer-circle among the girls who sewed with her in the shop, and it was her invitation to join them which had led to the conversation just recorded. After her friend's departure, Elsie tried to read, but it was of no use. Helen's words kept ringing in her ears. "What are you doing for others? Perhaps someone is looking for the Christ in you. The question for me is, Am I doing my part? She rose and went to the organ to try and drown her thoughts. She had learned to sing and play quite young, and the organ, which was all that was left her of her childhood home, had always been her solace. But tonight even the organ kept repeating Helen's words.

As the music died away something like a deep sigh was heard. She rose quickly and flung the door wide open. A figure that had evidently been crouching there sprang up glided down the dark hall toward the stairway. Elsie knew it was Mary Burns, one of the office girls who roomed on the floor above. Her name and face were familiar to her, but that was all. A moment she hesitated, then acting upon a sudden impulse, she followed the retreating shadow up the stairs and knocked at Mary's door. There was no light in the room, save what came from the street lamp without, but this was sufficient to show how bare and cheerless the apartment was.

Mary gave her visitor the one chair in the room, and seating herself on the edge of the bed, said tremulously: "I hope you aren't offended with me, Miss Glynn; I just couldn't help listening."

"You like music, then?" Elsie asked.

"Like it? I love it!" answered Mary, almost passionately.

"Can you play or sing?" was her visitor's next question.

"Oh, I sing a very little that I picked up, that's all," Mary answered in a regretful tone.

A long pause followed, broken at last by Elsie, who asked abruptly, "Why do you live up here? These rooms are not nearly as pleasant as those on the third floor."

"No, but they are cheaper."

"But you earn the same wages I do."

"Yes, but—and Mary hesitated. Then something in Elsie's manner, together with a longing for human sympathy, caused Mary to open her heart.

There was a cripple brother at the hospital, and all his sister's spare earnings went for his support. As Elsie listened, Mary seemed suddenly exalted by her unselfish, self-sacrificing life, while her own self-centered, fault-finding self seemed to grow smaller and smaller. Her conscience smote her for past neglect, and she longed to make amends. By kind words and gentle questions she showed her sympathetic interest, and Mary's heart was cheered and drawn toward her.

When Elsie rose to go she put both arms around Mary and kissed her good night, saying as she did so, "Don't stay up here by yourself. Come down and sit with us when you are lonely, and if you wish I will teach you to play and sing."

"Oh, will you," cried Mary, in rapture. "I would do anything for you if you would," and catching Elsie's hand she kissed it, exclaiming, "You are an angel."

It proved that Mary Burns was an apt pupil, and possessed a voice of more than ordinary power. By and by other of the office girls were invited to join them.

It is strange what a universal power there is in music. It awakens and inspires those to whom nature and literature are meaningless. Elsie soon learned that some of the girls were giving up their dances and doubtful company, for the evenings spent in her room. She taught them hymns and simple songs. Sometimes they brought their work and Elsie and Helen were able to give them much help, both by example in their own dress and by timely suggestions. Sometimes Helen would read aloud to them while they worked or rested from sewing. Thus the time passed, until one evening Elsie proposed that they join Helen and her friends in their prayer service. It was a grand meeting in which many of the visitors took an active part, some to reconsecrate themselves to the Lord's service, some to confess their faith in Him for the first time, and still others asked to be prayed for.

Mary Burns was among the first to speak. She said that she had been a Christian for a long time, but of late it seemed as if God had forsaken her, and no one cared what became of her. She knew that Miss Glynn was a church member, and yet she seemed as indifferent as the rest until one evening she, Elsie, had come to her, and had been so kind to them all ever since. And now, she meant never to doubt another Christian, but just strive to do her part and trust the Lord.

Elsie was crying when Mary finished, and Helen guessed the reason. As the two friends walked home together, Elsie said with tears in her eyes, "To think that Mary was looking for the Christ-spirit in me! How little I dreamed of it! And, Oh, Helen, I want to take back those dreadful words I said that night. I have learned much since then."

"The Holy Spirit is a great teacher, and he has been teaching you," replied her companion.—Ex.

## The Old Tower.

The younger members of Mr. Webb's family rejoiced exceedingly when he bought Brook Farm.

"Just to think," exclaimed Della, "of our spending all the summer in the country, instead of three or four weeks only, as we used to do."

"There'll be a chance for you," laughed her brother, teasingly; the place overlooks the lake, you know; you can learn to row and swim."

Della reddened. An angry reply rose to her lips, but she repressed it. If Harry saw that she was vexed he would but tease her the more. But it was mean of him, she thought. "I can't help being so afraid of the water."

On morning in June, after their installation in their country home, Della, Harry and their cousin Ralph, who had come to spend a month with them, set out to inspect the place. After visiting the barns, the flower garden, where were blooming many varieties of roses, with pinks, sweet-williams and other old-fashioned flowers, and the orchards, they came to a little strip of woodland where they found an abundance of wild strawberries.

"I wish that we had a pail to gather some," said Della.

"Let's make cups of some of these large leaves; we'll fill them, and sit down under that clump of willows to eat them," suggested Harry.

His companions agreed, and they were soon at work picking the bright red fruit.

A little later when they were comfortably seated under the willows eating strawberries, Ralph said: "I wonder

what that high stone structure over there is." Della and Harry looked in the direction in which he was pointing.

"Oh," said Harry, "that's the old tower."

"The old tower," repeated Ralph.

"It was built during the war times," explained Harry.

"Father knows lots of stories about it," said Della.

"You have heard of our cousin, Captain Bell, haven't you? He was captured by the enemy, but he escaped, and hid himself up in the top of that tower. He was there ever so long, without a thing to eat."

"Have you ever been up there?" asked her cousin. There must be a fine view from the little windows at the top."

"Gracious, no!" exclaimed Della, with a shudder. "There is a winding stairway to the top. We looked up it once, but it's so dreadfully dark, and there are so many cob-webs and spiders!"

Harry laughed. "Della's as afraid of the dark as she is of the water."

"You've not been up there, yourself, Harry Webb," said Della, hotly. "And anyway, a boy of fifteen years old, and going to a military school is not supposed to mind things that girls do."

Harry laughed good humoredly, and Ralph said kindly: "Never mind, Della, you are not the only girl who is afraid of the dark."

"It's not so much the dark, as the horrid spiders and things," said Della.

"Let you and me go over there now, and go up it," suggested Ralph to Harry. But Della remembered that her mother had bidden them be at home promptly at one for luncheon. She reminded the boys of it.

"Then we had better go at once," said Ralph, looking at his watch, "it is ten minutes to one, now."

The days passed delightfully for the three young people. There were long rambles, and drives by the lakeside and long shady roads. For the boys there were boating and bathing. Della did not share these last-named pleasures.

"You don't know how much you miss," said her cousin, "let me teach you to row."

"I get a good deal more pleasure in sitting on the shore and watching you and Harry set out, and in looking for you to come back," returned Della. She could not overcome her fear of the water.

They had not yet explored the tower. Each time that it had been proposed to do so, Della managed to postpone it. She could not muster sufficient courage to ascend that dark stairway, with its draperies of cob-webs and spiders, and she knew that if the boys explored the tower without her, Harry would never cease to tease her about it.

One day at luncheon Mr. Webb announced that he had been called to the city on business.

"And I want you to go with me, my dear," he said, addressing his wife.

"I don't see how I can go," returned Mrs. Webb. "This is the cook's afternoon and evening out. There will be no one in the house."

"Why," exclaimed Ralph, "why can't we take care of the house?"

"Why, of course we can," said Della.

"What about your supper?" asked the mother.

"I can manage it easily," said Della.

"I should hope that you could," said her father. "Anyway, your mother is going."

When Mr. and Mrs. Webb had gone, Ralph suggested: "Let's spend the afternoon on the east veranda; we haven't opened the new magazines yet."

"And," added Harry, "have an early supper and go out on the water."

The plan was carried out. When they were starting for the lake Ralph said, "You'd better come with us, Della. Try to overcome your fear of the water. You miss so much pleasure."

"Perhaps so," answered Della, "but I prefer to watch you two set out, and to look for you to return. I'll sit on the shore till you come back."

Della ensconced herself comfortably on a rock with a book. She became engrossed in the story she was reading and she did not heed the passage of time, nor did she notice that the sky was becoming gradually darkened by clouds. Heavy splashes of rain in her face made her look up. Then she saw the dark sky. "Oh," she exclaimed, "there is going to be a storm."

She looked out on the lake. There was no sign of her brother and cousin. "They ought to be back," she murmured. The rain began to fall faster and heavier. "I'd better run up home."

When she reached the house she lit the lamps in the hall and sitting room. "It won't be so lonesome with lights," she thought. But indeed, it soon became so dark that a light was necessary. The rain increased in violence. Della, on going to the window that overlooked the lake, could not see the faintest gleam of water—it was obscured by fog. How would the boys find their way back?

Della began to feel frightened. If only the house were nearer the lake, so that the lights might serve as a guide to them. But it was too far away for the rays from the