

CURED BY THE GREAT PHYSICIAN.

BY HOPE LEDYARD.

"Why, Ned, that doesn't look natural. Aren't you well?"

Ned Willets lifted his heavy eyes to his friend's face; for it was Mr. Hines, Ned's Sunday-school teacher, who had come in at that gate and found Ned sitting so forlornly at the hitching post. "I'm well enough, sir; it's father. He's well—he ain't sick, sir—but he's worse."

Mr. Hines knew what a hard drinker Ned's father was and understood what the boy meant.

"Ned," he said gently, "Jesus can cure that sickness."

"I know that," answered the boy wearily; "but father doesn't want to be cured."

Mr. Hines thought a moment and then taking out his little Testament, he opened to the ninth chapter of Matthew and read the second verse. "See, Ned, it says 'They brought to Him a man, sick'—it doesn't say the man wanted to come, but they (his friends) brought him. Suppose we take your father to Jesus?"

"O Mr. Willets! if papa only would stop. Mother says he'll lose his place Saturday night if he don't, and this is Tuesday."

"Ned, I've spoken to your father, and so has the minister, and I am sure your mother has talked to him; but perhaps we have not pushed close up to the dear Master with this sick man and asked Him to heal him. Let us pray together, Ned. Come right down to my shop; it's always quiet there till nine o'clock."

Ned got up feeling comforted already, and after kneeling with his kind friend in the dim, dark smithy, and listening to his prayer, which seemed to have just such power as his great strong arm, the boy went home feeling as if things must change for the better. He no longer sat and fretted, but, running into the kitchen, played with Tim and little Bessie, singing now and then, as if he could not forget it.

"Take it to the Lord in prayer."

Mrs. Willets went from one piece of work to another in a tired, discouraged way. At last Ned's brightness seemed to burthen her, so she said sharply: "You're bright enough now; but you'll need to get to work, boy as you are, the way things are going on."

"Oh! but they're not going so, mother. Father'll be better soon."

"What do you mean, Ned? Have the temperance people really got hold of him?"

"No; some one a great deal better even than them, mother. Mr. Hines and I have just been taking him to Jesus. I wish you could just have heard Mr. Hines tell Jesus about father. He says the Lord lets us take folks that don't want to go to Him."

Mrs. Willets had stopped her work and, taking Tim in her lap, began to rock quietly. "I'm ashamed to say I don't pray any more," she said half to herself.

Ned came close to her side and whispered coaxingly: "But you will now, mother. Mr. Hines says that when Jesus was on earth some friends brought a man to Him to be healed maybe he didn't care about getting well, he was that sick; but his friends just pushed and pushed till they got close to Jesus, and then when He saw that they believed He didn't stop for the man to believe but made him well at once! And Mr. Hines says He is that same Jesus now; so we've taken father, and I can't help feeling right sure that things will be better. Just as 'pose father should come home to dinner! I do believe he will!"

The boy's faith made his mother think it might be just possible that her husband should come home instead of going to the liquor-store. "If he should come I'd like to have things looking better than this," she said; and cheered by Ned's voice as he sang to little Bessie.

"Take it to the Lord in prayer."

she hunted up some eggs and made a nice custard, boiled some coffee, and had just laid a clean cloth on the table when in walked Mr. Willets!

The children's pleasure at the sight of him touched the man. "Ned said you'd come," cried Bessie joyfully, "and so we've got custard and coffee; we an't had anything but oatmeal mush this week."

Sam Willets colored; he knew it was his fault the children had no better food.

"It's a shame, Bessie, to feed a little girl like you on mush. Papa'll bring you home a bit of meat to-night."

Ned longed to ask how it happened that his father had passed the liquor-store but

he knew better than to do so. "If he don't know who has kept him straight to-day, we do, mother," the boy said, as he helped his mother with her work after dinner. "I'm going to run down to Mr. Hines and see if he can't come in a minute or two, just so's you can hear him tell Jesus about father. Why, mother, I'most saw Jesus!"

Mr. Hines was not very busy, and closed his forge a half hour earlier than usual to step in and encourage Mrs. Willets; she was ready enough to kneel with him, and felt, like Ned, that Jesus was indeed near. As they rose from their knees Mr. Willets opened the door, a brown paper parcel in his hands, showing the meat had not been forgotten.

"Good evening, Mr. Hines. Been having a prayer with your Sunday-school boy?"

"It was for a sick man, papa," put in little Bessie.

"Was it, dear? Well, I hope he'll get well, I've brought home a steak for tea, wife, and I hope Mr. Hines can wait and eat a bit."

You may be sure Mr. Hines did wait and spend a long evening too, for he did not want Sam to feel dull and lonesome, and before he left Sam asked him to pray once more, little Bessie saying earnestly: "Don't 'on forget the sick man." The little girl did not know that her own father was sick unto death, fast bound in chains; but he himself was beginning to feel a longing to be well.

"It's been a mighty pleasant day, wife," he said as they shut up the house. "I wondered at noon-time what kept me from Tim Sharpe's store, but when I saw our Bessie so glad over a little custard I vowed I'd keep away a bit more. But I know well I've vowed before and never kept it."

"Sam, it was your own boy's prayers that kept you, and I believe they'll help you keep any vow you make to-night." And then Mrs. Willets told of the prayers.

"Praying for me! Taking me to Jesus when I never cared to go! Mary, if the Lord has heard my boy's prayer He shall hear mine." And Sam Willets knelt down.

Ned did not hear anything of this for a long time, but day after day went by and father kept his place, came home to every meal and made his wife and children happy, and at last one Sunday morning he opened the big Bible and said: "Ned, I guess we'll all pray together after this." And then Ned felt sure that Jesus had indeed cured his sick father.—*Youth's Temperance Banner.*

MELISSA'S NEIGHBOR.

BY JULIA A. TIRRELL.

It was not the first time those girls had heard the story of the Good Samaritan, but somehow it made a new impression that Sabbath, as Miss Lyons applied its lessons. As they went from the class all felt a desire to benefit others.

All! No; Melissa Pearson thought she was more like the wounded, deserted man. Not that she had been robbed but she was hungry for love—though nobody would have suspected it.

Three of the girls walking homeward together talked the lesson over.

"I've thought of something splendid," exclaimed Carrie Waite. "There's Melissa Pearson right in our class, you know. They say her folks are awful poor. Couldn't we carry them something! There's my last winter's hat, and I know I can pick up a lot of things."

"Yes chimed in Matty Thomas, "and I'll carry a basket of food. Let's go right away—say to-morrow, after school. What can you take, Laura?"

Laura hesitated and blushed. Finally she said, "I'm not sure that your way would be best, girls. A great many people are sensitive about such matters."

"Oh, well," Carrie's lips curled scornfully, "of course you needn't help if you don't want to. I thought Miss Lyons had make us all feel like helping the poor."

With this parting thrust, Carrie stopped at her own door, unheeding the tears that sprang to Laura's eyes.

Meanwhile Melissa was saying to her mother at home:—

"No! I never want to go inside that church again! The girls will turn away and pretend not to see me, just because I can't dress as well as they. O mother, you don't know how proud they all are!"

Very unwisely, Mrs. Pearson answered: "Yes, I do, I know all about 'em. The women are just the same. Nobody cares for poor folks."

It was true that Mrs. Pearson and her daughter had but few friends, but it was not true that people avoided them on account of poverty. They had brooded over real or fancied neglects till they had grown bitter and disagreeable, and really they had more false pride than all the people they called proud. They needed help, but not of the kind Carrie and Matty supposed.

It was not strange that when the girls, each armed with a big basket, appeared next day, Mrs. Pearson treated them coolly.

"No, we don't want your things," she said. "I'm thankful to say I can always get hasty-pudding and milk enough for my family, even though bread and butter do run short. Clothes? No thank you, I've got old things enough around now. We ain't beggars yet."

And the two girls, confused and discouraged, carried back their heavy baskets, not feeling sure but they were priest and Levite, after all.

Half an hour later Laura Chase stood at Mrs. Pearson's door. The woman glanced at her suspiciously. She felt no doubt that some fresh insult was intended, though there was no basket in sight.

"Is Melissa at home?" asked Laura timidly.

"No."

"Will she be in soon?"

"I don't know."

There was a silence of more than a minute, in which Mrs. Pearson looked defiantly at Laura, and Laura almost decided to give up her mission.

"Please may I come in and wait?"

"If you want to."

Not a very cordial permission, but Laura entered.

She soon made friends with the toddler of two years, and at last Mrs. Pearson herself seemed to understand that Laura had not come as an enemy, and talked quite freely. She told how hard she had worked since her husband's death to keep the family, but had with all sympathy.

"Why," said she, "the last time I went to meeting not a single person shook hands with me, and it's been an age since anybody called."

Laura smiled. It did not seem strange that callers should be few if they were always treated as she had been. But she did not say this. She only replied,—

"I'm sure my mother would like to come and see you; and you must have hurried out of meeting before anybody could reach you, for the minister shakes hands with every one."

Just then Melissa came in. Laura greeted her warmly.

"I've come to invite you to my birthday party next Friday. Don't shake your head! you must come. And there's going to be a Sunday-school concert and I told Miss Lyons you had a beautiful voice, and you're to sing a solo to my accompaniment. Clothes? Your meeting dress is good enough; but if you really want it different, come to my house to-morrow. The dress-maker shall fix the over-kirt like mine, and we'll wear ribbons just alike. Won't it be splendid!" and she paused, breathless.

Melissa had never been called demonstrative, but now her voice was choked with tears.

"O Laura, can you forgive me? I've thought so wrongly of you, and of all the rest. But you do care for me after all!"

And Mrs. Pearson explained: "We've lived in this place three years, and I've seen a member of the church all this time; but you're the first one who has spoken to us like that."

Melissa's "neighbor" had come at last! The girls soon discovered that Melissa possessed a loving heart as well as a fine voice; and the grown people began to wonder why they had never known Mrs. Pearson better. They found her a woman of talent and a great help in all social undertakings. "A real lady, even though she does take in work," as one said.

Mother and daughter had no more occasion to complain of neglect. But while people are wondering how the change came about, Melissa thanks God every day for Laura.

Nothing wonderful about all this, you say? Neither was there anything wonder-

ful in the simple act of giving a cup of water to a thirsty disciple, but our Saviour said of the giver, "He shall in no wise lose his reward."—*Zion's News.*

A LITTLE FOX.

"There comes Bessie Edgerwood," said Laura, hastily throwing aside her work, and, to my astonishment, not running to the door to welcome her friend, but sweeping with one quick movement the last new magazine into the table drawer, and hiding a delightful new volume under the baby's embroidered blanket.

Presently Miss Edgerwood was announced. She entered, a sparkling brunette, all smiles and grace; her gay talk was charming, her manners were sprightly, and her call was a breezy interlude in the afternoon's sewing. I was puzzled to know why Laura had hidden her books, and wondered if the lady was a kleptomaniac, when, as she rose to leave, she said:

"O, Laura, do forgive me; I am the most thoughtless creature in the world. I meant fully to have brought your books home to-day, but I forgot all about them. Have you anything new?"

As she spoke, she tumbled over the leaves of a volume of poems in the way which would make the salesman in a bookstore shiver with dread. Laura did not answer her question, and soon, seeing no more books were produced for her inspection, the caller departed.

"Aunt, you no doubt thought my behavior strange," said my niece, "but I dread to lend a book I care for to Bessie. It comes home after a period of months, tossed, stained, loosened in the binding, and not fit to be handled by a fastidious person. Dick says I ought to tell her plainly that I hate to lend her a book, prizing books too, as I do, but I haven't the moral courage."

"A little fox," said I, "and it spoils the vines of a pleasant friendship. What a pity."

"Yes, indeed," sighed Laura.

"If I were you," said I, "I would adopt the plan pursued (to quote high authority) in the library of Mr. Gladstone at Hawarden. He and Mrs. Gladstone lend their books freely, but a memorandum is made whenever a book is taken out. Why should you not keep a little book and pencil on purpose, and always on lending a volume or a periodical, put down the title, the date, and the borrower, in the borrower's presence."

"It might be a check on some people's carelessness, but not on poor Bessie's," said my niece. "And it would hurt some people's feelings."

"Not if they were possessed of common sense," said I.—*Christian Intelligencer.*

MY OWN BIBLE.

"Say, Will," said John Hester to his friend as they were going to Sunday-school together, "let me look at your Bible, will you?"

"Certainly, with pleasure," said Will Spencer.

"Now, that's nice," said John, as he took the beautiful book in his hand. "Opens splendidly, doesn't it? And stays open where you put it, too. Will, that cover looks as if it would never wear out. Good print, references—cover over the edges keeps them nice. Will, that's splendid! When did you get it?"

"On my birthday. Father and mother and sister Helen all put together and bought it for me; for, you see, such books cost a good deal of money. But then it will last; the binding won't break. It's my own Bible—just for my own use. I mean to carry it to Sunday-school and church with me. Somehow, John, it seems better to read out of this Bible than out of the old one in particular. This one, too, has got some things in it that will help me in studying it—maps and tables and a text-book."

"I tell you, Will, what I mean to do. I have some money saved up, and I mean to keep on saving till I get a Bible like that. It's better to wait and get a good one that will last all your life, isn't it?"

Will Spencer and John Hester were Christian boys and they valued a Bible most of all for what it teaches, but they knew they would think more of one of which they could say, "This is my own Bible."—*Young Reaper.*