HELPING A FRIEND

By Charles Turner Ross

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"What a charming man," said Miss Ada Rankin.

Her practical father noticed her flushed cheeks and shining eyes critically. Then he propounded:

"How long will be last?"

Ada shivered. She had not thought of that. She and her father had been interested for years in mission work in the poor section of Ironton. Philanthropically inclined, Mr. Rankin and some other charitably inclined men of wealth in the rich section of the town had financed the movement and Ada and her girl friends had done a good deal of misionary work to help along.

Three ministers in turn had essayed to "reform the humble and erring." They had failed signally. One remained only a month, his fastidiousness taking alarm at the constant proximity of rags and dirt. A second essayed to quiet a riot on the rear benches and was badly beaten. The latest incumbent had antagonized "the scoffers," who were denominated "lost souls," and they had forthwith forbidden their wives and children from going nigh to that gospel shop."

Rev. Abbott Winslow had met with considerable success in conducting a large mission in the heart of the slums of a big city. He had overworked himself and his physicians had ordered less arduous labor. Mr. Rankin had heard of him. Mr. Winslow had been invited to meet a group of representative local business men of Ironton interested in missionary progress. He had pleased them greatly. Miss Rankin particularly had been drawn toward this earnest, unselfish man, who, it could be readily seen, was one-minded and sincere in principle and practice.

The words of her father aroused in Ada thought and anxiety. How long, indeed, would Mr. Winslow last with the unruly mob who resented intrusion on what they called their rights? It needed a trained pugilist to handle some of the rough ones. Mr. Winslow was not frail or puny, but Ada shuddered as a mental picture of the brawny fists and bulging shoulders of some of the millworkers flashed through her mind.

"If they would only give him a chance," reflected Ada. "He does not talk like the others. His soul is full of pity and charity. I wish I could help him."

Meantime, at the misison in the city a certain James Frawley, otherwise known as "Big Jim," was arranging to give some creditable help to the young man who had so impressed Ada Rankin. Jim was a natural product of the slums. He had lorded it over all the other hoodlums until they were forced to acknowledge his supremacy. He had run the gauntlet of police supervision until he had gained a very bad name.

"I Should Say No."

One day he stood in the prisoner's