

is this? Hath thy step-mother been beating thee?"

But it was to Janki that little Sundri turned, Janki who was the fearless defender of the poor and weak and helpless children all over the neighborhood.

"Wilt thou get me back my doll—my beauty doll, with the yellow hair and blue eyes—the doll that the Missun Miss Sahib gave me at Christmas?" "Oh, Oh, Oh!"

"Where is thy doll, then? Has it gone lost?" asked Janki.

"No, not lost. Mariam, she has carried it off, and if thou—" and the wee girlie looked pitifully at ten-year-old Janki, who seemed to her so big and strong and capable.

"What! One-eyed Mariam, the Mussalmani?" asked Janki.

Sundri nodded "Yes".

"Come, child, we'll go to the Missun Miss Sahib", and Janki took the little one's hand and said soothing words to her, as they went along the lanes towards the Mission School.

"The Miss Sahiba has just gone away to old Mariambai's house—thou knowest it?—in the Mussalman Quarter. Mariam's girl is ill. But what dost thou want? Come in and tell me", and the Christian teacher smiled kindly on the two children standing before the door of the poor room dignified by the name of Mission School.

"We'll follow the Miss Sahiba." And Janki led Sundri to old Mariam's place.

Miss Venner had reached Mariam's house only a few minutes before the two little girls appeared at the door, and was kneeling beside a low cot on which lay a dying girl, Mariam's only daughter. Fatima had been married when only eight years of age to a young man who lived near by, and her mother-in-law, a coarse, bad-tempered woman, kept the child with her most of the time so that she might work—slave—for the family. Weakened in body, and broken in spirit by constant hard work and ill-treatment, the girl one day threatened to drown herself.

"Well, go then, thou useless daughter of a witch mother", and her mother-in-law gave her so savage a push, that Fatima staggered and fell over the open fire on which

the day's bread was cooking. In a moment her thin, cotton clothes were in a blaze, and before the fire could be put out she was terribly burned. Fatima would be no longer of any use to her husband's family, so no objection was made when Mariam had her carried to her own house. She was dying. But some days before the accident she had happened to see a "mission doll" carried proudly in the arms of a little friend, and when Mariam, in anguish of soul, said to her, "My darling, what can I do for thee—my love—my heart?" Fatima whispered:

"A mission doll. Oh mother, give me a doll—an *Ingles* doll." And Mariam swore that a mission doll her child should have. And she got it—stole it—from little Sundri, and hurried back with it to the bedside of her child. "Here, my daughter! Here my darling! Open thine eyes. Here is thy doll."

A shadow fell across the room, and Mariam, looking up, saw Miss Venner standing in the doorway. She thought that the theft had been reported, and that the mission Miss Sahiba had come to recover stolen property.

"It's the property of your Honour, I know it. But my daughter—she is going away—look? You will not take it from her."

"No, sister. Fear nothing. I will not take it from her."

Fatima hugged the doll close to her breast with the unburned arm, and looking with rapture towards her mother, murmured, "My own doll, mother. My very own doll with the yellow hair—look—and the blue eyes. My own beautiful dollie." "Thine own, my darling."

The little hand loosened its grasp, and the spirit fled away to the beautiful land where all the little children may have dolls if they want them, and where there is nothing but happiness all the day long.

"Come, Sundri", said Janki in an awed voice. "We will not tell the Miss Sahiba that old Mariambai is a thief. And I will give thee my dollie, for thou art but a baby."

But brave little Janki's lips quivered as she spoke, for she was parting with her dearest treasure.

Indore, Central India