

temper,' she said as she turned the shivering little girl around by the shoulder.

'Not much 'count 'bout chores on a farm, I 'low,' put in the husband.

'Don't go to sniffin,' child,' said the woman, more kindly, as the child began to wipe her eyes with the back of her hand.

'What's her name?' asked the woman.

'Dora, madam,' said the man, stroking the stringy red hair.

'She's an unusually good child. I never knew her to be ill-natured. She always tries to please, don't you?' said he, patting her head, kindly.

Dora nodded and pressed her cheek against the kind hand.

'Well I reckon we'll have to make her do,' said Mrs. Stevens.

When the proper papers had been signed, Mrs. Stevens called out in a business voice:

'Come on, Dora, it's gettin' late, we must be hustlin' home. Cows to milk, know.'

At these words, Dora flung herself on the tall stranger and wailed aloud.

'There, now,' he said gently. 'I want to be proud of you. You have always been so good. I know about your home. They will be kind to you, and you must be a brave girl. I'm coming to see you before long, and I want to hear what a good girl you have been.'

He lifted her into the big farm waggon. She shut her lips in heroic determination to obey him. He put a small satchel beside her, and put into her hand a small box of candy, saying:

'I knew you would be a brave little girl.' Dora crouched upon the seat, clinching her teeth and clutching her small hands in her desperate endeavor to be worthy of the praise. Not until she had seen the tall figure disappear as the heavy waggon rumbled over the rough road did she relax her fierce control, then flinging herself down in the waggon, she gave way to her desolate grief.

'Oh, take me back to him! Take me back!' she wailed.

'Poor little thing,' said Mrs. Stevens, climbing down beside her and taking her up in her strong arms. The farmer wiped his eyes with the back of his hand and snapped the horses's backs with the reins.

The new life on the farm awakened a new life in Dora. At first she was afraid of the long-horned cows and the calves that kicked up their heels at her, and the grunting pigs, and even the bold roosters who ran everywhere. But, by some strange instinct of mutual kindness the farm creature and the little girl soon became good friends.

The neighbors came to see the girl, Mrs. Stevens had 'took to raise.' They told one another what they thought of her in her presence, as freely as if she had been stone deaf.

At first she cried almost every day. Once the Turner boys, who lived across the farm, saw her in tears, and ever since that day in true boy fashion they had coined a rhyme of their own which ran,

'Cry baby, cry baby,
Put your finger in your eye,
If nothing else'll make
You cry.'

and which they sang out to her on every occasion.

Mrs. Stevens did not mean to be unkind. She had to work hard, from morning until night, and had little time to think of other things. She had no children of her own, or else she would have known how lonely and timid Dora felt at night when she went

away upstairs to her little room with its high, wide bed.

'There's nothin' to be a-feered of,' she told Dora when she one day timidly spoke of her dread of going to bed. 'It's only them that's been bad that gets skeered and hears things,' she repeated—an untruth that has tortured the heart of many another child as it did Dora's.

She had always slept in a room with other children, and this loneliness was something dreadful to her. Many a night she sat in the midst of her bed the livelong time, falling asleep with all her clothes on. Mrs. Stevens found her asleep just that way one morning.

'I never saw such a coward,' she told the neighbors.

Dora was ashamed of being a coward, and determined over and over again that she would be brave.

'He told me to be his brave girl,' she would whisper to herself over and over again in her determination to be what he wanted and expected of her. But when it got dark again, the old nervousness and dread came back with all their force. When the Turner boys heard of her fear of the darkness, they gave her a new name, and thereafter called her nothing else but 'Fraiddie-cat.' 'They would tell him when he came, and he would be ashamed of her.'

That thought made her life miserable. Whenever she whispered the little prayer she had learned in the orphan asylum, before she went to bed, she always added a little petition of her own which was: 'Oh, please make me good so I won't be afraid of things and the dark.'

The new home that Dora had found was in that section of country known as the 'Natural Gas Belt.' She went to live with the Stevens soon after the discovery of gas. Everybody was excited over the discovery, and almost every farmer was drilling for gas. One of the finest 'wells' in the country was the one on the Turner farm. It was what is called a 'gusher.' It sent out a volume of gas so powerful that when it was 'turned on' like a great gas jet, it burnt with a flame bright enough to light up the whole countryside, like a burning building. Even when it was quietest, it rumbled and shook and hissed in a way to frighten older people.

To timid little Dora, this rumbling roaring monster was a perfect terror at any time. When she had to go to the Turners' on an errand, even in the broad daylight, she fairly trembled when she was forced to pass near the stand pipe from which the gas issued. The Turners sold the acre of ground on which the gas well was sunk for enough to make them rich.

On the day the sale was made, Mrs. Stevens was taken suddenly sick, and Dora had a great deal of extra work to do. It was almost dark in the barn by the time she had finished her evening work. Just as she was about to leave the barn, she was startled by hearing men's voices. In the silence of the darkness she heard a man say distinctly:

'The money was paid to-day, a nice fat pile, too. I've been watchin' the house all day an' no one went to town. We'll begin operations 'bout midnight.'

Dora never could tell just how she got into the house. She was used to keeping everything to herself, she never dreamed of telling anyone, but she was slowly coming to a desperate conclusion. It was earlier than usual when she slipped away to her high room and crouched down with her cheek against the window pane, fixing her eyes on the road in front of the house.

Hours went by, and still the little girl kept her lonely vigil. Just about midnight, when a death-like stillness was over everything, she saw two figures steal noiselessly along the roadside. Her brave feet flew down the stairs, without a sound, out through the little orchard gate, over the orchard hill, her heart pounding against her breast like a hammer. She climbed through the rail fence and crept into the gruesome wood that divided the Turner farm from the Stevens farm.

The awful shadows were full of frightful images, crouching behind stumps, stretching out long arms to catch her, or treading on her bare heels, while beyond, straight in her pathway, hissed and whistled and blazed the ever terrifying gas well, looking yet more fearful in the solitude and darkness.

But on she pressed until she was in the shadow of the old smoke house above whose roof hung the great farm bell used to call the hands in from the field when dinner was ready. In the shadows she crouched down to wait and watch. She did not wait long before she saw creeping stealthily toward her, even near enough to touch her as she lay there, not daring to breathe, the two noiseless figures she had seen stealing along the roadside.

They shuffled softly across the long porch and up to the shaky old kitchen windows. They stopped and whispered softly. One drew out a long knife and the other held up a shining revolver. They cautiously drew out the unresisting sash, and one crept inside. In a moment the door opened, and they were both within, ready for their work of death.

Like a flash the little girl sprang up, and seizing the rope to the heavy bell, she pulled it with all her might. Loud and terrible it rang out on the silence as though it cried, 'Help! Help!'

Instantly two cursing figures rushed past her and covered themselves in the darkness beyond. Voices in the house called to one another, and in another moment the whole Turner family, in all sorts of clothes, and no clothes at all to speak of, came tumbling out, pell-mell, each one asking: 'What made the bell ring?' Away in the black shadows, two scowling, cursing men were asking the same question.

'Here's someone!' cried one of the Turner boys, stooping down over the little girl who lay with her face, all white and cold, against the ground.

'If it hain't Dory, as sure's I'm alive!' he cried as he recognized her.

They took her into the house, and rubbed her cold hands and feet and put camphor to her nose. Presently Dora slowly opened her eyes, but shut them up again and began to cry.

The Turner boys looked at each other, but said nothing.

'Mrs. Stevens's worse, I'll venture,' said Mrs. Turner.

'Boys, run over and find out,' commanded the father.

At that the little girl raised her head and said quickly:

'Don't go, they'll kill you, they're out there,' and she sank back to cry afresh.

The Turner boys looked at each other and shut the kitchen door. Then one of them saw the window sash lying on the porch, and called out: 'Burglars! Burglars!' and ran into the kitchen, crouching behind his father.

'What's he talkin' 'bout?' demanded the father.

'The winder sash!' gasped the boy; 'it's took out.'