

something for a little soul like that—if I had the means,' he said, after a pause.

Mrs. Dorr sighed. She wished she were rich, so that she might help such cases. The dainty little actress did not look as if she would succeed as a farm-hand.

'But we're old people,' Mr. Dorr went on, 'with only our home and enough to bury us to call our own.'

'Except the memorial money,' added his wife.

'Yes?' he said, quickly.

The old lady had begun to muse on her favorite subject. She did not notice his tone of inquiry.

'I never shall cease to be grateful that we can make a memorial to our Nettie's happy life,' she said. 'It is worth any personal sacrifice.'

Myrtle was successful in amusing the baby. When it fell asleep she returned to the Dorrs. She talked to them all the afternoon. They did not refer to Mrs. Stupson, and her other homes seemed to have been happy ones. She was very bright and cheerful, and had a great many stories to tell of her theatrical friends and the charity people. She seemed to love them all.

She had seen any number of interesting things since she left New York, three days before. She had gone away in charge of the train conductor, who transferred her to his successor when he left the train, and he to his successor; and so on she had been shifted from one conductor to the next, until she was put on the Northern Pacific train.

At six o'clock the Pullman porter came into the day car to carry the Dorr's luggage back to the sleeper, where they had engaged berths for the night.

Myrtle slept on the seat where she was. The conductor would bring her a pillow, she said. She showed her new friend she could be comfortable by doubling her knees a very little. Then she kissed them both good-by. She should not see them again, as the train reached Wellstown, where she was to get off, at five the next morning.

'I do hope the Stupson woman will appreciate the child,' Mrs. Dorr said during the evening. 'Everyone she's been with so far evidently has been good to her.'

Thomas Dorr faced about to his wife with impressive earnestness. They had been sitting silently thinking for the past hour.

'Mother, it's her own sweet nature that's good to her. She's got good eyes. They see what's best in everybody, and they don't see meannesses.' He had lost his heart to the little girl.

'The Lord grant she'll grow up in that mind!' said the old woman, devoutly.

'She will if she's at all properly treated!' Mr. Dorr spoke with an energy that was almost indignation.

After a while Mrs. Dorr said, 'Thomas, fancy our Nettie being buffeted about like this baby!'

Mr. Dorr was already thinking something of the kind. He sat up very erect, with his hands on the silver knob of his cane. He looked rather stern. That was his way when anything troubled him. He was a good man, with a heart for all children through the memory of his own little one.

The car made a low noise. A thought of his gradually fitted itself to the creaky

tune and kept repeating itself. He glanced now and then at his wife, furtively, as if he wanted to say something, but did not quite like to.

Presently, when she took the angel picture out of her satchel and began studying it with an eye to possible improvements, he gave up the effort. Then he went to bed and fell asleep with the refrain still in his ears.

About four o'clock Thomas Dorr was wakened with a confused sense of danger. The train was going at an alarming speed. He raised the shade and looked out. The prairie was covered with the dull gray of approaching morning. Over in the east, behind a ridge of jutting hills lined up against the horizon, the sky was just beginning to lighten.

Meaning to inquire the cause of the unusual speed, Mr. Dorr got up and pulled on his clothes. He had scarcely accomplished this feat when the car gave a fearful lurch, and then came to a standstill with a thud.

There was a babel of screams and frightened questions. Several passengers had been thrown from the berths, but no one in the Pullman car was seriously injured. The accident had been further forward. The baggage-car and two day-coaches were overturned. It was not explained just how it had happened. The people who escaped unhurt helped the less fortunate ones. The engine pushed on to Wellstown, three miles distant, for medical assistance.

Three-quarters of an hour later a number of people from town had collected about the wreck. Among them was a woman who drove in a white-topped buckboard. She was a large, vigorous person of about forty, in a brown jeans dress and a white sunbonnet, which made her florid, strong-featured face look redder than was natural.

She left her horse a short distance from the train and walked with long, determined strides over to where some quiet figures were laid out in a row on the sage-brush. Sheets had been thrown over them, and these the woman raised unceremoniously.

'I'm lookin' for a girl that was to have come on this morning's express,' she explained to a bystander. 'She's bound over to me. I reckon she came in one of the upset cars, and I thought maybe she'd be here. I don't want her if she's crippled. They'll have to take her off my hands if she is. I said I'd take a stout young 'un who'd soon be some help.'

'I guess she ain't here,' she said, when she had examined all. 'I wonder where she be? I guess I'll ask the conductor,' and she went off.

The incident occurred directly outside the window of the Dorr's berth in the Pullman car. The window was open and little Myrtle, whom Mr. Dorr had found and brought to his wife, was lying beside it, helpless and frightened from the accident, but quite conscious, and hearing every word the woman spoke. She did not, however, realize that she was the subject of the remarks. She looked up with a weak little smile at the Dorrs, who were standing beside her.

'I'm glad I'm not that girl,' she said, and they exchanged troubled glances.

They were waiting for the surgeon to come to Myrtle. Mrs. Dorr sat down on the side of the berth and took the hand of the child, who had grown strangely

dear to her in their few hours' acquaintance.

Myrtle closed her eyes. She was trying to be brave. The pain made her pale as death. Something in the still, white face brought a flood of memories surging through Mrs. Dorr's mind, memories of her Nettie, and with them came a deep and tender realization of the crying need of a young nature for real mother-love and understanding. She recalled the hard voice of the woman outside the window with a shudder. Poor little Myrtle was going to this!

'Thomas!' said Mrs. Dorr, in a sort of gasp.

Then she stopped. An idea had come which made her heart throb terribly. She was trembling.

While Mrs. Dorr was striving to collect herself and speak the surgeon entered the car, followed closely by the large woman in the brown jeans gown.

'You'll have to say fair and square how much she's hurt. I ain't a-goin' to raise no cripple. An' the railway's got to stand the doctors' bills if I take her at all,' she was saying.

Mrs. Dorr gave a kind of leap down the aisle at her. 'Be still, you heartless thing!' she said, sternly.

The woman was twice the size of the old lady, but she was quite frightened by the sudden attack. She stopped in the middle of the car.

'Stay there until I speak to my husband!' commanded Mrs. Dorr. She never had felt so imperative before in her life. Mrs. Dorr drew her husband aside from Myrtle.

'Thomas,' she said, tremulously, 'Thomas, dear, I've been thinking—I wonder what you'll say, my dear. I've been thinking, Thomas, maybe instead of expending our money to build the memorial we might —' She stopped and lifted her eyes anxiously to his.

'We might use it to keep and educate this little girl,' he finished for her. There was a glow on his face. He stooped and kissed his little, elderly wife very tenderly.

They went over to Mrs. Stupson. When the doctor had concluded his examination of Myrtle, they called him to them.

'The little girl's collar-bone and right arm and left ankle are broken,' he said. 'She'll come out all right in time, but she'll probably be laid up for several months.'

He made the report to Mrs. Stupson. She looked at the Dorrs. 'I ain't sorry to let her off my hands. I never set eyes on the child,' she remarked.

One evening about two years later Thomas Dorr and his wife sat together on the front porch of their house in Thrifton, Minnesota. They were almost completely walled in by honeysuckle and climbing roses, for the month was fragrant June.

The old people sat in the entrance, and the vines made an oval frame round their heads. The full moon shining through the great trees in front of the house cast a soft light on their faces. Both wore an intent look.

They had been listening for some minutes to a child's voice singing in the room directly above them. The window was open, and the sound of Myrtle's voice came out with happy little trills as she pre-