



LIME'US AND PADDY.

THE barge had been blue once, with a white streak running along her sides, and a rim of red over that; but neither little Limehouse (pronounced Lime'us on board the *Betsy*) nor little Paddington could remember *Betsy* when she first put on those gay colours. To them *Betsy* had always been a dear old battered, dingy, dirty thing, with a little rusty chimney sticking up astern like the horn on a caterpillar's tail. Paddington seems a funny name for a little boy,—though that was shortened into Paddy on board the barge. Limehouse is a still queerer name for a little girl, even when shortened into Lime'us. "N. or M." wouldn't sound droller; indeed, a good many little girls *are* called "Em," you know.

This is why the little barge children were named in that funny way. Lime'us was born when *Betsy* was lying in Limehouse Basin, and Paddy was born when *Betsy* was lying in Paddington Basin. It was odd that both the children should have been born in London, for neither their father nor their mother was a Londoner, and when *Betsy* came back from Limehouse or the City Road Basin, she glided away by canal and river to all kinds of far-off places. Lime'us and Paddy, however, cared no more for London than they did for any other

place; or rather, if they took the trouble to think about the matter at all, I dare say they thought a good many other places a great deal nicer than London. They couldn't pick buttercups and daisies off the black, sloppy London towing-paths, and they couldn't make faces at themselves in the water there, as they could in some parts of the country *Betsy* went to. They might almost as well have tried to make faces in brimstone and treacle. The barge in which they had been born, and lived all their lives, was their only home.

The person in the world of most importance to them after each other was Towzer, the barge dog. He barked very fiercely, but he would let *them* do what they liked with him, however fierce he was.

Next to Towzer in their estimation stood their father and mother, known in their circle of society as Black Bill and Carrotty Sal. Father and mother were also fierce and good-humoured, but not so good-humoured as Towzer. They did not, like him, reserve all their fierceness for people outside the barge. They were generally very friendly with each other;—(although you, not being accustomed to the usages of barge society, might not have thought so, if you had seen the funny ways and heard the