

except that they generously gave Towzer the heads and tails. It wasn't so nice in bad weather, but so long as they were not forced to stay all day in the smoky little cabin they did not mind. They made themselves cosy enough, snuggling under the tarpaulin with Towzer, whilst the soft snow fell thick, or the hail or the rain rattled sharply on their counterpane. And when *Betsy* was quite frozen in, they could slide and scamper on the ice, wondering at the dead fish they could see inside the ice, and laughing to see Towzer tumble on his nose or slip along upon his haunches with his forelegs very wide apart, as he tried to scamper after them. And even when they were obliged to stay in the smoky little cabin, they could amuse themselves for a time, especially when Towzer was allowed to slink in after them.

Black Bill did not want his children to learn all the plaguesome things that your papa wants you to learn. He thought that he had done his duty in that way when he had taught his daughter to play at oughts and crosses.

"There, Lime'us," he said, as proudly as if he had been the mistress of a finishing school bidding good-bye to a governess she had trained to teach everything; "There, Lime'us, you knows it now, and when he's old enough, you can larn Paddy."

Wouldn't you like to have a kind, thoughtful papa like that? Lime'us played at oughts and crosses with chalk on the black side of the smoky little cabin, and at first Paddy and Towzer would be very much interested in the marking and the smudging out; but the amusement palled after a time. Towzer looked the other way, and Paddy would pull his tail; and then Lime'us grew tired of her game.

Altogether, however, I should not wonder if there were a good many unhappier little children in England than poor little neglected Limehouse and Paddington. I can't say much for Mr. Black Bill and his wife, but at any rate they did not make little white slaves of their children; they gave them plenty to eat, and clothes to wear; and though, I am afraid, they often set them a bad example, oughts and crosses was the only thing they taught them by precept. Towzer was as fond of the children as even a dog can be, and they were a good deal fonder of each other than a great many little brothers and sisters are. So, as long as they continued little children, I don't think they could have been so very unhappy. I suppose they must have had a little quarrel now and then, but, so far as I can make out, it was so soon over that it could hardly be said to have begun. If they quarrelled, who was there that either could have made friends

with? Towzer wouldn't take part with one against the other. When they quarrelled, if they ever did quarrel, I have no doubt that Towzer sat looking at them with sad severity, and then jumped up and wheeled about like a dancing dervish when they made it up again.

I can't help thinking that theirs must have been rather a jolly life—always at home, yet always out. They saw all kinds of places—cornfields, and meadows, and water-mills, and farmyards, and hop-gardens; old villages, sound asleep round their old churches, and old towns not much wider-awake; and woods, and rocky hills, and furzy chalk-downs dotted over with sheep, and marshes with black bullocks grazing in them; and huge jumbles of black buildings with gaslight gleaming in the early morning out of hundreds of windows, and tall chimneys lost in the smoke they belched out; and miles of country black with cinders, blotched with coal-pits and brick-kilns, and bristling with iron-furnaces vomiting flame, and sluggishly fuming pottery-cones. Sometimes they were up above the country; sometimes it towered high above them. The long canal-tunnels never frightened Lime'us and Paddy. They were so used to them by the time they got to understand what they were that they thought it great fun to glide out of daylight into the darkness. Going down, down, down, or up, up, up, in the slimy, dripping locks, with the water cascading in or out, was also great fun to Lime'us and Paddy; and so was the splash with which the tow-rope fell into the water when another barge had to be passed, or the horse had to cross a bridge where the towing-path changed sides. What Lime'us and Paddy liked least was when *Betsy* stopped to take in or discharge cargo. The children then had no longer the run of *Betsy*, and these stopping-places were some of the dreariest places which *Betsy* visited. They were especially disagreeable to Lime'us and Paddy. When *Betsy* was lying alongside them, Lime'us could only make up stories about churchyards, and ghosts quarrelling in them, and pelting one another with their gravestones.

But Lime'us and Paddy greatly enjoyed *Betsy's* stopping-places in the country. *Betsy*—or rather Black Bill and Carroty Sal—sometimes stopped longer at them than was proper, but of course Lime'us and Paddy knew nothing about that.

One calm, dewy summer evening Black Bill and his wife moored *Betsy* in a quiet reach of the canal—where it ran between a gentleman's grounds and his snug little home-farm—and departed with the horse to the neighbouring village. If the truth must be