

told, Lime'us and Paddy liked being left alone for a little. They were used to it, under such circumstances; Towzer was there to take care of them and the barge; and Carrotty Sal, though she did leave her children—to boose with her husband at a public-house—was mother enough to leave them plenty to eat. There was a luscious scent of new-made hay in the air, and Lime'us and Paddy and Towzer greatly enjoyed it. They went to bed together in the little cabin, not at all distressed by the non-appearance of the other members of the *Betsy's* ship-company. But when the clock of the village church had tolled two over the hushed country, Towzer, who had only been taking a "dog sleep," stretched himself, and finding that his master and mistress had not returned, jumped off the children's coverlet, and trotted up, like a conscientious dog as he was, to take his watch on deck. All day long on Sunday the father and mother stayed away; but Lime'us and Paddy and Towzer did not trouble themselves. They snuffed the scent of the new hay, they basked in the glorious Sunday sunshine, they took lazy strolls in the gentleman's waterside meadows; lying down every now and then on the yellow bristles of the shorn grass, and in the cooler green, white and yellow flower-spangled, unshorn grass. They could not have told you why they were less frisky on Sundays than on other days, but somehow they were, even when *Betsy* was in motion. That Sunday as she lay at rest in the still green water, bristling with rushes, and plated with blossom-bossed broad water-lily leaves, they greatly enjoyed the peal of the village bells, ringing out before morning and evening prayer; and so did Towzer. He understood as much about the meaning of church-bells as Lime'us and Paddy. Poor little souls, they had never heard a prayer.

All three left on board *Betsy* enjoyed themselves all Sunday, and went to bed quite peacefully; but when they woke on Monday morning, and found the complement of their crew still missing, all three began to feel anxious. That was a new experience. Towzer ran up and down the towing-path, yelping; and little Paddy stared at Lime'us for an explanation, but Lime'us could only stare

back at little Paddy. Of course, all three had their usual week-day gambols on the Monday, but they did not enjoy them half so much as they had enjoyed their lazy strolls the day before. All three were getting seriously anxious. On Monday afternoon, when Towzer was away on the nearest but still distant bridge, howling "Come back, come back," the Squire's daughters chanced to stroll down to the waterside. They looked with kindly but yet half-contemptuous compassion at the lonely little barge children. They were inhabitants of a far-off, lower world to the Squire's daughters. The Squire's daughters were inhabitants of a far-off, possibly higher world to Lime'us and Paddy; and they returned the young ladies' stare with interest.

"Poor children, have not you any one to look after you?" asked the eldest girl.

"There's Towzer," answered Lime'us sturdily; and round-eyed Paddy snuggled up to her with a look that plainly said, "If you're a-goin' to hurt me, there's Towzer and Lime'us won't let you."

"Are you hungry, my poor children?"

"No, we ain't," answered Lime'us.

"But isn't there anything you want?"

"We want feyther and mammy to come back."

Just then Towzer gave a yelp of delight, and galloped off the bridge towards the village. Presently Black Bill and Carrotty Sal and the horse crossed the bridge, and came along the towing-path, with Towzer circling round them, and jumping up at their noses to express his pleasure at their return. The big dog and the very disreputable-looking couple frightened the young ladies. They retreated from the towing-path; but they turned round to watch the meeting between feyther and mammy and their youngsters. There was so much pleasure on both sides, that the young ladies were astonished. Their papa and mamma were much nicer-looking and nicer-behaved people than Black Bill and Carrotty Sal, but yet they could not remember ever feeling, or seeming to feel, so pleased at the sight of their parents after an absence, as Lime'us and Paddy did at the sight of theirs. The Squire's daughters went home wondering.

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