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and let us climb down the steps and jump and splash about as much as we liked,

Lucy said it was fine fun; and so it was for a little while, until an immense blue-and-black creature, with fins flapping about on each side of her, came wading towards us from another of the little houses. I had never seen anything of the kind before. I was quite sure she was a shark, or a mermaid, or one of those scaly dragons I had read about in fairy tales, and I was dreadfully frightened. I tried to run back into our little house; but, before I could reach the steps, she had got fast hold of me with her great blue fins, and with a horrible laugh she had dragged me down under the water, and was swimming with me to the bottom of the sea. At least I thought she was, and of course that was just the same. I screamed and fought and struggled, but it was no use. Her wet slippery fins were wrapped tightly round me. Down we went, down, down, down, the great waves rushing and roaring round us, the sea-weeds floating over us, the fishes darting past us, the water pouring into my mouth and nose until I was nearly choking. I don't know how far we went into the sea, nor how long we stayed, but I am quite sure it must have been a very long time, and a