

and abandonment. Presently the boy stopped for a moment, and she came and took the knee of his trousers, and put it to her pretty lips with the most ardent gratitude.

"She must be a foreigner," said I to myself: "no British child could dance like that, and talk so; and no British child ever shows gratitude."

As they had not espied us yet, where we stood in the passage-corner, I drew Bunny backward, and found her all of a tremble with eagerness to go and help.

"More pay," said little missy, with a coaxing look; "more pay, Yarkin!"

"No, no. You must say, 'more play, please, Watkin.'"

"See voo pay, Yarkin; I 'ants—more pay!" The funny thing laughed at herself while saying it, as if with some comic inner sense of her own insatiability in the matter of play.

"But how do you expect me to play the music," asked Watkin, very reasonably, "if I am to hold my clothes out all the time?"

"Can't 'a?" she replied, looking up at him with the deepest disappointment; "can't 'a pay and dance too, Yarkin? I thought 'a could do anything. I 'ants to go to my dear mama and papa and ickle brother."

Here she began to set up a very lamentable cry, and Watkin in vain tried to comfort her, till, hearing us, she broke from him.

"Nare's my dear mama, nare's my dear mama coming!" she exclaimed, as she trotted full speed to the door. "Mama! mama! here I is. And 'e mustn't scold poor Susan."

It is out of my power to describe how her little flushed countenance fell when she saw only me and Bunny. She drew back suddenly, with the brightness fading out of her eager eyes, and the tears that were in them began to roll, and her bits of hands went up to her forehead, as if she had lost herself, and the corners of her mouth came down; and then with a sob she turned away, and with quivering shoulders hid herself. I scarcely knew what to do for the best; but our Bunny was very good to her, even better than could have been hoped, although she came of a kindly race. Without standing

upon ceremony, as many children would have done, up she ran to the motherless stranger, and, kneeling down on the floor, contrived to make her turn and look at her. Then Bunny pulled out her new handkerchief, of which she was proud, I can tell you, being the first she had ever owned, made from the soundest corner of mother Jones's old window-blind, and only allowed with a Sunday frock; and although she had too much respect for this to wet it with anything herself, she never for a moment grudged to wipe poor Bardie's eyes with it. Nay, she even permitted her—which was much more for a child to do—to take it into her own two hands and rub away at her eyes with it.

Gradually she coaxed her out of the cupboard of her refuge, and sitting in some posture, known to none but women children, without a stool to help her, she got the little one on her lap, and stroked at her, and murmured to her, as if she had found a favourite doll in the depth of trouble. Upon the whole, I was so pleased that I vowed to myself I would give my Bunny the very brightest half-penny I should earn upon the morrow.

Meanwhile, the baby of higher birth—as a glance was enough to show her—began to relax and come down a little, both from her dignity and her woe. She looked at Bunny with a gleam of humour, to which her wet eyes gave effect.

"'E call that a ponkey-hankerchy? Does 'a call that a ponkey-hankerchy?"

Bunny was so overpowered by this, after all that she had done, and at the air of pity wherewith her proud ornament was flung on the floor, that she could only look at me as if I had cheated her about it. And truly I had seen no need to tell her about mother Jones and her blind. Then these little ones got up, having sense of a natural discordance of rank between them, and Bunny no longer wiped the eyes of Bardie, nor Bardie wept in the arms of Bunny. They put their little hands behind them, and stood apart to think a bit, and watched each other slyly. To see them move their mouths and fingers, and peep from the corners of their eyes, was as good as almost any play without a hornpipe in it. It made no difference, however. Very soon they