

"If you please, sir, Mr. Llewellyn," he said "we was forced to bring her over; she have been crying so dreadful, and shivering about the black pit-hole so. And when the black things came into the house, she was going clean out of her little mind, ever so many times almost. No use it was at all to tell her ever so much a-yard they was. "I don't yike back, and I 'on't have back. Yite I yikes, and boo I yikes; and my dear papa be so very angry, when I tells him all about it." She went on like that, and she did so cry, mother said she must change the air a bit."

All the time he was telling me this, she watched him with her head on one side and her lips kept ready in the most comic manner, as much as to say, "Now you tell any stories at my expense, and you may look out." But Watkin was truth itself, and she nodded, and said "Ness," at the end of his speech.

"And if you please, sir, Mr. Llewellyn, whatever is a 'belung,' sir? All the way she have been asking for 'belung, belung, belung.' And I cannot tell for the life of me whatever is 'belung.'"

"Boy, never ask what is unbecoming." I replied, in a manner which made him blush, according to my intention. For the word might be English for all I knew, and have something of high life in it. However, I found, by-and-by, that it meant what she was able to call 'Ummibella,' when promoted a year in the dictionary.

But now anybody should only have seen her, who wanted a little rousing up. My cottage, of course, is not much to boast of, compared with castles, and so on; nevertheless there is something about it pleasant and good, like its owner. You might see ever so many houses, and think them larger, and grander, and so on, with more opportunity for sitting down, and less for knocking your head perhaps; and after all you would come back to mine. Not for the sake of the meat in the cup-board—because I seldom had any, and far inferior men had more; but because—well, it does not matter. I never could make you understand, unless you came to see it.

Only I felt that I had found a wonderful creature to make me out, and enter

almost into my own views (of which the world is not capable) every time that I took this child up and down the staircase. She would have jumps, and she made me talk in a manner that quite surprised myself; and such a fine feeling grew up between us, that it was a happy thing for the whole of us, not to have Bunny in the way just then. Mother Jones was giving her apple-party; as she always did when the red streaks came upon her "Early Margarets." But I always think the White Juneating is a far superior apple: and I have a tree of it. My little garden is nothing grand, any more than the rest of my premises, or even myself, if it comes to that; still you might go for a long day's walk, and find very few indeed to beat it, unless you were contradictory. For ten doors at least, both west and east, this was admitted silently; as was proved by their sending to me for a cabbage, an artichoke, or an onion, or anything choice for a Sunday dinner. It may suit these very people now to shake their heads and to run me down, but they should not forget what I did for them, when it comes to pronouncing fair judgment.

Poor Bardie appeared as full of bright spirit, and as brave as ever, and when she tumbled from jumping two steps, what did she do but climb back and jump three, which even Bunny was afraid to do. But I soon perceived that this was only a sort of a flash in the pan, as it were. The happy change from the gloom of Sker House, from the silent corners and creaking stairs, and long-faced people keeping watch, and howling every now and then—also the sight of me again (whom she looked upon as her chief protector), and the general air of tidiness belonging to my dwelling—these things called forth all at once the play and joyful spring of her nature. But when she began to get tired of this, and to long for a little coaxing, even the stupidest gaffer could see that she was not the child she had been. Her little face seemed pinched and pale, and prematurely grave and old; while in the grey eyes tears shone ready at any echo of thought to fall. Also her forehead, broad and white, which marked her so from common children, looked as if too much of puzzling and of wondering had been done there. Even the gloss of