

"Time enough yet!" rejoicing sarcastically:—"Time enough for a quart!"—the labourers at the dyke had recognised the fact that unless new material could be obtained, the pent-up waters would burst the curb and bound, rejoicing to be free, and rush headlong to the nearest drain. All the work would be lost unless a fresh supply could be obtained; the ruling fiction of a new Noachian deluge might prove a deadly reality instead of, as now, a theoretical contingency under conditions which engineering skill might avert. The Sappers and Miners who were roused from their beds to make good a dynamited embankment and block the relentless Thames did not work with a more untiring zeal to baffle a real enemy than did Dave and Dolly to keep out a fictitious one, and hypothetically save Uncle Moses and Aunt M'riar from drowning. But all efforts would be useless if there was to be a shortage of mud.

The faces of our little friends, and their little friends, were earnestness itself as they concentrated on the great work in the glow of the sunset. They had no eyes for its glories. The lamplighter even, dropping jewels as he went, passed them by unheeded. The organ interpreted Donizetti in vain. Despair seemed imminent when Dolly, who, though small, was as keen as the keenest of the diggers, came back after a special effort with no more than the merest handful of gutter-scrapings, saying with a most pathetic wail:—"I tan't det no more!"

Then it was that a great resolve took shape in the heart of Dave. It found utterance in the words:—"Oy wants some of the New Mud the Men sloyded up with their sloyd," and pointed to an ambitious scheme for securing some of the fine, rich clay that lay in a tempting heap beyond the wooden bridge across the sewer-trench. The bridge that Dave had never even stood upon, much less crossed!

The daring, reckless courage of the enterprise! Dolly gasped with awe and terror. She was too small to find at a moment's notice any terms in which she could dissuade Dave from so venturesome a project. Besides, her faith in her brother amounted to superstition. Dave *must* know what was practicable and righteous. Was he not nearly six years old? She stood speechless and motionless, her heart in her mouth as she watched him go furtively across that awful bridge of planks and get nearer and nearer to his prize.

There were lions in his path, as there used to be in the path of knights-errant when they came near the castles of necro-