

yond a joke; and her father had some money.

"Who's there at this time of night?" cried Moxy Thomas, sharply, and in Welsh of course, although she had some English; "pull the latch, if you be honest. Evan Black is in the house."

By the tone of her voice I knew that this last was a fib of fright, and glad I was to know it so. Much the better chance was left me of depositing Bardie somewhere, where she might be comfortable.

Soon as Mrs. Thomas saw us by the light of a home-made dip, she scarcely stopped to stare before she wanted the child out of my arms, and was ready to devour it, guessing that it came from sea, and talking all the while, full gallop, as women find the way to do. I was expecting fifty questions, and, no doubt, she asked them, yet seemed to answer them all herself, and be vexed with me for talking, yet to want me to go on.

"Moxy, now be quick," I said; "this little thing from out the sea —"

"Quick is it? Quick indeed! Much quick you are, old Dyo!" she replied in English. "The darling dear, the pretty love!" for the child had spread its hands to her, being taken with a woman's dress.

"Give her to me, clumsy Davy. Is it that way you do carry her?"

"Old Davy tarry me aye nicely, I tell 'a. Old Davy good and kind; and I 'ont have him called kumsy."

So spake up my two-year-old, astonishing me (as she always has done) by her wonderful cleverness, and surprising Moxy Thomas that such clear good words should come from so small a creature.

"My goodness me! you little vixen! wherever did you come from? Bring her in yourself, then, Dyo, if she thinks so much of you. Let me feel her. Not wet she is. Wherever did you get her? Put her on this little stool, and let her warm them mites of feet till I go for bread and butter."

Although the weather was so hot, a fire of coal and drift-wood was burning in the great chimney-place, for cooking of black Evan's supper; because he was an outrageous man to eat, whenever he was drunk, which (as the doctor told me once) shows the finest of all constitutions.

But truly there was nothing else of life,

or cheer, or comfort, in the great sad stony room. A floor of stone, six gloomy doorways, and a black-beamed ceiling—no wonder that my little darling cowered back into my arms, and put both hands before her eyes.

"No, no, no!" she said. "Bardie doesn't 'ike it. When mama come, she be very angry with 'a, old Davy."

I felt myself bound to do exactly as Mrs. Thomas ordered me, and so I carried Miss Finical to the three-legged stool of firwood which had been pointed out to me; and having a crick in my back for a moment after bearing her so far, down I set her upon her own legs, which, although so neat and pretty, were uncommonly steadfast. To my astonishment, off she started (before I could fetch myself to think) over the rough stone flags of the hall, trotting on her toes entirely, for the very life of her. Before I could guess what she was up to, she had pounced upon an old kitchen-towel, newly washed, but full of splinters, hanging on a three-legged horse, and back she ran in triumph with it—for none could say that she toddled—and with a want of breath, and yet a vigor that made up for it, turned up her little mites of sleeves, and began to rub with all her power, but with a highly skillful turn, the top of that blessed three-legged stool, and some way down the sides of it.

"What's the matter, my dear?" I asked, almost losing my mind at this, after all her other wonders.

"Dirt," she replied; "degustin' dirt!" never stopping to look up at me.

"What odds for a little dirt, when a little soul is hungry?"

"Bardie a boofley kean gal, and this 'tool degustin' cochong!" was all the reply she vouchsafed me; but I saw that she thought less of me. However, I was glad enough that Moxy did not hear her, for Mrs. Thomas had no unreasonable ill-will towards dirt, but rather liked it in its place; and with her its place was everywhere. But I, being used to see every cranny searched and scoured with holy-stone, blest, moreover, when ashore with a wife like Amphitrite (who used to come aboard of us), could thoroughly enter into the cleanliness of this Bardie, and thought more of her accordingly.