

spremisses ' he says, and the gentlemen they says ' Don't see no spremisses ' they says, and then—' Ho here's a little girl ' they says all at wunst. . . ."

" And that was my little lass, warn't it, lassie ? And she showed 'em where the board was up. That was the way of it, I lay. And whereabout was Bridgetticks the whilst ?" Lizarann was hecoming more reposeful in style, and was working round to a proper distrihution of stops.

" Bridgetticks," she replied, " was in behind the palin's at 'Acker's, and was for biting Aunt Stingy if she laid 'ands. And Jimmy 'Acker's granny she come out, and ' Leave the child alone ' she says. But the two gentleman come down out of the hansom scah and said there was no spremisses, hut I was a nice little girl and should have a threp'ny bit. Yass !"

" And then your aunt she looked round after you, I'll go bail. Wasn't *she* in it, little lass ?"

" Then Aunt Stingy she giv' over, 'cos of Jimmy 'Acker's granny, and come to see. And the tall gentleman, he needn't trouble her, he says, and she kep' a little way off. And I kep' the threp'ny hit in my mouf, I did."

" So she mightn't get it ?" Lizarann nodded. " And where was Bridgotticks ?"

" Over acrost, feelin' up like, 'cos of Aunt Stingy."

An imago passes through Jim's mind of a powerful rodent working stealthily round, clear of its enemy, to join the colloquy, and perhaps secure another threepence. His image of Bridgetticks is not a pleasing one. He doesn't believe in her sex or her girlhood—classes her with the fiendish boy at the fish-shop, and rather wishes he could let her locse on him to run him down, as one slips a dog from a leash. She would do it.

" And how came she to cut in ? It was my little lassie's cake."

But Lizarann felt hurt on her friend's account. " She giv' me two apples," she said, and left the point, as one sure to be understood. Then she continued : " The gentlemen wanted for to know our names, and Bridgetticks said not if took down. So the gentleman put the pencil away and she says Bridgetticks and I says Lizarann Toopländ."