

'How do you find yourself, Miss! I take pleasure in renewing our acquaintance—Thunder! that's not it; I reckon I'm off my head. Do me the favour, young woman, to forget every word I've said to you. If any mortal creature had told me I should find you here, I should have said 'twas a lie—and I should have been the liar. That makes a man feel bad, I can tell you. No! Don't slide off, if you please, into the next room—that won't set things right, nohow. Sit you down again. Now I'm here, I have something to say. I'll speak first to Mr. Frenchman. Listen to this, old sir. If I happen to want a witness standing in the doorway, I'll ring the bell; for the present, I can do without you. Bong Shewer, as we say in your country.' He proceeded to shut the door on Toff and his remonstrances. 'I protest, sir, against acts of violence unworthy of a gentleman!' cried Toff, struggling to get back again. 'Be as angry as you please in the kitchen,' Rufus answered, persisting in closing the door; 'I won't have a noise up here. If you know where your master is, go and fetch him—and the sooner the better.' He turned back to Sally, and surveyed her for a while in terrible silence. She was afraid to look at him; her eyes were on the book which she had been reading when he came in. 'You look to me,' Rufus remarked, 'as if you had been settled here for a time. Never mind your book now; you can go back to your reading, after we've had a word or two together, first.' He reached out his long arm, and pulled the book to his own side of the table. Sally innocently silenced him for the second time. He opened the book, and discovered—The New Testament.

'It's my lesson, if you please, sir. I'm to learn it where the pencil mark is, before Amelius comes back.' She offered her poor little explanation, trembling with terror. In spite of himself, Rufus began to look at her, a little less sternly.

'So you call him "Amelius," do you?' he said. 'I note that, Miss, as an unfavourable sign to begin with. How long, if you please, has Amelius turned school-marm, for your young ladyship's benefit? Don't you understand? Well, you're not the only inhabitant of Great Britain who don't understand the English language. I'll put it plainer. When I last saw Amelius, you were learning your lessons at the Home. What ill-wind, Miss, blew you in here? Did Amelius fetch you, or did you come of your own accord, without waiting to be whistled for?' He spoke coarsely, but not ill-humouredly. Sally's pretty downcast face was pleading with him for mercy, and (as he felt with supreme contempt for himself) was not altogether pleading in vain. 'If I guessed that you ran away from the Home,' he resumed, 'should I guess right?'

She answered with a sudden accession of confidence. 'Don't blame, Amelius,' she said; 'I did run away. I couldn't live without him.'

'You don't know how you can live, young one, till you've tried the experiment. Well, and what did they do at the Home! Did they send after you, to fetch you back?'

'They wouldn't take me back—they sent my clothes here after me.'

'Ah, those were the rules, I reckon. I begin to see my way to the end of it now. Amelius gave you house-room?'

She looked at him proudly. 'He gave me a room of my own,' she said.

His next question was the exact repetition of the question which he had put to Regina in Paris. The only variety was in the answer that he received.

'Are you fond of Amelius?'

'I would die for him!'

Rufus had hitherto spoken, standing. He now took a chair.

'If Amelius had not been brought up at Tadmor,' he said; 'I should take my hat, and wish you good-morning. As things are, a word more may