

tried to open the box ; it was locked—and the key was not to be found. The ever-ready Toff fetched a skewer from the kitchen, and picked the lock in two minutes. On lifting the cover, the box proved to be empty.

The one person present who understood what this meant was Amelius.

He remembered that Sally had taken her old threadbare clothes away with her in the box, when the angry landlady had insisted on his leaving the house. 'I want to look at them sometimes,' the poor girl had said, 'and think how much better off I am now.' In those miserable rags she had fled from the cottage, after hearing the cruel truth. 'He had better have left me where I was,' she had said. 'Cold and hunger and ill-treatment would have laid me at rest by this time.' Amelius fell on his knees before the empty box, in helpless despair. The conclusion that now forced itself on his mind completely unmanned him. She had gone back, in the old dress, to die under the cold, the hunger, and the horror of the old life!

Rufus took his hand, and spoke to him kindly. He rallied, and dashed the tears from his eyes, and rose to his feet. 'I know where to look for her,' was all he said ; 'and I must do it alone.' He refused to enter into any explanation, or to be assisted by any companion. 'This is my secret and her's,' he answered. 'Go back to your hotel, Rufus—and pray that I may not bring news, which will make a wretched man of you for the rest of your life.' With that he left them.

In another hour he stood once more on the spot at which he and Sally had met.

The wild bustle and uproar of the costermongers' night-market no longer rioted round him ; the street by daylight was in a state of dreary repose. Slowly pacing up and down, from one end to another, he waited with but one hope to sustain him—the hope that she might have taken refuge with the two women who had been her only

friends in the dark days of her life. Ignorant of the place in which they lived, he had no choice but to wait for the appearance of one or other of them in the street. He was quiet and resolved. For the rest of the day, and for the whole of the night if need be, his mind was made up to keep steadily on the watch.

When he could walk no longer, he obtained rest and refreshment in the cook-shop which he could remember so well ; sitting on a stool near the window, from which he could still command a view of the street. The gas-lamps were alight, and the long winter's night was beginning to set in, when he resumed his weary march from end to end of the pavement. As the darkness became complete, his patience was rewarded at last. Passing the door of a pawnbroker's shop, he met one of the women face to face, walking rapidly, with a little parcel under her arm.

She recognised him with a cry of joyful surprise.

'O, sir, how glad I am to see you, to be sure ! You've come to look after Sally, haven't you ? Yes, yes ; she's safe in our poor place—but in such a dreadful state. Off her head ! clean off her head ! Talks of nothing but you. "I'm in the way of his prospects in life." Over and over and over again, she keeps on saying that. Don't be afraid ; Jenny's at home, taking care of her. She want's to go out. Hot and wild, with a kind of fever on her, she wants to go out. She asked if it rained. "The rain may kill me in these ragged clothes," she says ; "and then I sha'n't be in the way of his prospects in life." We tried to quiet her by telling her it didn't rain—but it was no use ; she was as eager as ever to go out. "I may get another blow on the bosom," she says, "and, maybe, it will fall on the right place this time." No ! there's no fear of the brute who used to beat her—he's in prison. Don't ask to see her just yet, sir ; please don't ! I'm afraid