

who were comforted by their superstitions; happy people, possessed of faith. Don't you even believe that dreams are sometimes fulfilled by chance?'

'Nobody can deny that,' Amelius replied; 'the instances of it are too many. But for one dream fulfilled by a coincidence, there are—'

'A hundred at least that are *not* fulfilled,' Mrs. Farnaby interposed. 'Very well. I calculate on that. See how little hope can live on? There is just the barest possibility that what I dreamed of you the other night may come to pass—and that one poor chance has encouraged me to take you into my confidence, and ask you to help me.'

This strange confession—this sad revelation of despair still unconsciously deceiving itself under the disguise of hope—only strengthened the compassionate sympathy which Amelius already felt for her. 'What did you dream about me?' he asked gently.

'It's nothing to tell,' she replied. 'I was in a room that was quite strange to me; and the door opened, and you came in leading a young girl by the hand. You said, "Be happy at last; here she is." My heart knew her instantly, though my eyes had never seen her since the first days of her life. And I woke myself, crying for joy. Wait! it's not all told yet. I went to sleep again, and dreamed it again, and woke, and lay awake for a while, and slept once more, and dreamed it for the third time. Ah, if I could only feel some people's confidence in three times! No; it produced an impression on me—and that was all. I got as far as thinking to myself, There is just a chance; I haven't a creature in the world to help me; I may as well speak to him. O, you needn't remind me that there is a rational explanation of my dream. I have read it all up in the Encyclopædia in the library. One of the ideas of wise men is that we think of something, consciously or unconsciously, in the day-

time, and then reproduce it in a dream. That's my case, I dare say. When you were first introduced to me, and when I heard where you had been brought up, I thought directly that *she* might have been one among the many forlorn creatures who have drifted to your community, and that I might find her through you. Say that thought went to my bed with me—and we have the explanation of my dream. Never mind! There is my one poor chance in a hundred still left. You will remember me, Amelius, if you *should* meet with her, won't you?'

The implied confession of her own intractable character, without religious faith to ennoble it, without even imagination to refine it—the unconscious disclosure of the one tender and loving instinct in her nature still piteously struggling for existence, with no sympathy to sustain it, with no light to guide it—would have touched the heart of any man not incurably depraved. Amelius spoke with the fervour of his young enthusiasm. 'I would go to the uttermost ends of the earth, if I thought I could do you any good. But, O, it sounds so hopeless?'

She shook her head, and smiled faintly.

'Don't say that! You are free, you have money, you will travel about in the world and amuse yourself. In a week you will see more than stay-at-home people see in a year. How do we know what the future has in store for us? I have my own idea. She may be lost in the labyrinth of London, or she may be hundreds and thousands of miles away. Amuse yourself, Amelius—amuse yourself. To-morrow, or ten years hence, you *might* meet with her!'

In sheer mercy to the poor creature, Amelius refused to encourage her delusion. 'Even supposing such a thing could happen,' he objected, 'how am I to know the lost girl? You can't describe her to me; you have not seen her since she was a child. Do you know anything of what happened at