

a trance, with his tall thin figure and his clear-cut military face, laid his hand like a father upon Harry's shoulder, and cried in a voice full of genuine emotion, "Harry, Harry, for your own sake, my boy, and for Bertha's sake, and my sake, don't try to push this fruitless inquiry one step farther! Don't, I implore you. You will only make us all unhappy. You are reopening the most appalling chapter of my life. My boy, my boy, you will kill me, you will kill me." And then he wrung Harry's hand hard, and before the young man had time to answer him, stumbled blindly out into the streets of Melbury.

Harry stood long watching him from the door step, his own eyes dim with tears, and his heart almost standing still with horror within him. Sir Arthur tottered feebly up the street; Harry's heart went out in pity to him as he went. It was a painful crisis, deal with it as he might. To have arraigned that old man after so many years for the unforgotten crime of his early youth, was in itself almost an act of cruelty. Surely his punishment was already more than he could bear! The law could do no worse for Sir Arthur Woolrych than his own heart must already have done for him.

At the railway station, a bundle of texts, printed in very large letters, hung loose upon the wall. As Harry entered, with thoughts like these burning in his heart, he started at sight of the single sentence that stared him in the face from the printed placard opposite:—"Judge not, that ye be not judged." Was he too judging again too hastily? If others had made up their minds with undue

precipitancy, as he himself had done at first, that his father was really the Erith murderer, might he not also now be making up his mind too fast on slender evidence against Sir Arthur Woolrych? The timely suggestion sank deep into his mind. He returned to London hoping against hope. Yet his very hope was in itself despair; for was it not true that to vindicate his father was to condemn Bertha's, and to vindicate Bertha's was to condemn his own?

## VIII.

A WEEK later, Harry was startled by receiving a solicitor's letter from America, which ran as follows:

"DEAR SIR,—In reply to your favour of the 9th inst. we have the honour to inform you that our client, Surgeon-Major Charles G. Withers, formerly of the United States Army, who is now in this city, having heard that a son of the late Dr. Lichfield is still living, has made up his mind to proceed to Europe almost immediately, and will arrive in Liverpool by the steamer *Aurania* shortly after your receipt of this letter. We will mail you his address in a few days, and will instruct him to call without delay at the office of your solicitor in London.—Respectfully,

"GREGG AND MCMURDO."

Neither Harry nor Serjeant Thorowgood could make much of this singular and non-committing letter. The only conjecture either of them could hazard was that Surgeon-Major Charles G. Withers, whose name certainly sounded very American, was a person who had, in some way, been privy to the disap-