

to Melbury, and asked once more to meet Sir Arthur by appointment at his own now deserted cottage.

Sir Arthur met him, Harry imagined, not quite so frankly and easily as of old. That, perhaps, was perfectly natural, and he must expect it in future; Lichfield's son could not look forward to a cordial greeting from those who knew the secret of his origin. But besides all this, Harry fancied—was it fancy or reality?—that Sir Arthur shuffled and hesitated suspiciously, seemed half afraid, in fact, of too open admission. Harry told him in part of his visit to Serjeant Thorowgood, omitting of course the Serjeant's opinion of Sir Arthur himself; and he told him also of the clue which Thorowgood had put into his hands for tracing the fate of the boy Waterlow. At the first mention of Waterlow's name, Sir Arthur's face grew suddenly blanched and rigid with horror. "Who told you about Waterlow?" he asked eagerly, clutching for support at the back of a chair. "How did you come to hear of Waterlow? How did you ever know there was any such person?"

"I have read up the full reports of the case," Harry answered quietly, "and I want now to find out for myself what has become of this missing assistant. Serjeant Thorowgood thinks," and he eyed Sir Arthur closely as he spoke, "that the boy Waterlow was put out of the way by some guilty person the day after the murder."

Sir Arthur sprang aside as though something had stung him. "Put out of the way," he cried; "why, what do you mean by that, Harry? Do you

mean murdered? Ay, ay, I suppose murdered! Thorowgood was always on the wrong tack. I saw it in the inquiry; I saw it at the trial. . . . Harry, I tell you the boy Waterlow was *not* murdered. I believe, myself, he fled the country, at your father's request, because he did not wish to give evidence which would have sent your father to the gallows."

"Where do you think he is now?" Harry asked, his lips white and trembling with excitement.

Sir Arthur sank back exhausted in an easy-chair, folded his hands before him helplessly, and rubbed the palms together with nervous energy. "I have some reason to believe," he said at last, "that Waterlow is living under an assumed name somewhere in America."

Harry looked at him with a searching glance. It was a terrible thing to think about Bertha's father; it had been a terrible thing to think about his own; but he wondered silently in his heart to himself which of those two had been the real murderer.

The interview was a short and very embarrassed one. In Harry's eyes, Sir Arthur seemed all the time to be shuffling and prevaricating. What was worse, he seemed to be terribly anxious—anxious and frightened for his own safety, Harry somehow fancied, whenever Harry spoke of reopening the question and endeavouring to vindicate his father's character. Was it slavish fear for his own life, or conscience-stricken anxiety for the shame and disgrace of a tardy exposure for his wife and daughter?

Yet, when Harry was leaving, the grey old general, rousing himself as from