

Barty left England, far from being a breaker of the law, except, indeed, that he was knowingly bearing another man's punishment, he was doing what he believed to be the best thing he could do for his children's interests. It is useless thinking of repairing the wrong now," he said, looking at George. "The idea is naturally in your mind, but the better way, considering all that has happened since, is to bury the whole matter, once and for all. Is it not so, dear friend?" to Mrs. Barty.

"Surely!" she said quietly. "We know the whole truth and the world does not matter. Besides, it has forgotten all about it."

"I wish I had known the truth when he was here," said George, in a voice full of regrets.

"It might have done more harm than good to know it then," said Sinclair. "At all events things would probably have been very different from what they are. You would have gained nothing and lost much."

"Oh—gained!" said George, with quick scorn and irritation. "I would have sacrificed everything to set his name straight."

"Exactly! And in straightening out one coil you would only have involved him in fresh ones. It is better as it is for all concerned."

"Yes," said Mrs. Barty, with gentle decision. "Things are better than they might have been, and certainly better than I ever dared hope. We will let the dead past bury its dead and think of the future."