

known Hellenist, who now came to Sir Aylmer because after twenty years' work he could go on no longer without assistance. Deryk decided to make Manisty's acquaintance as soon as possible and to use his influence and representations to escape from this nonsensical social business and get back to work. It was so curious that his father seemed lukewarm, when a few hundreds a year were all that was needed. . . .

The hall was beginning to fill by the time that he had changed and hurried downstairs. Raymond Stornaway, plump, untidy and prematurely white-haired, was standing in front of the fire, drinking tea and talking with characteristic violence of diction to a delicate-looking young man with rimless glasses, a stoop and an expression of disillusionment (Deryk afterwards discovered him to be George Oakleigh, the Radical propagandist, descending upon Ripley Court in search of funds). Gerald Deganway, of the Foreign Office, and Jack Summertown, with whom he had shared digs at Oxford, were drinking whisky and soda at a side table with Valentine Arden, the novelist; they hailed him vociferously as he ran down the stairs, three at a time, and surged round him with welcoming hands and eager questions. For ten minutes there had been so much chatter and bustle, the ring of so many cups and the scrape of so many matches that Sir Aylmer had had himself wheeled back to his study and was receiving his guests one at a time. Deryk threaded his way in and out of the little groups by fire or table, shaking hands with everybody once and occasionally more than once, to be on the side of safety. It was unnecessary to know their names, and his share of the conversation seemed restricted to "Very well indeed, thanks. Only last night. Oh, a great time, thanks. Honestly I've no idea; haven't had much time to think about it, have I?" This last was in answer to the invariable question what he proposed to do with himself now that he was back in England. Once, twice, twelve times he could stand. . . .

"Cheero! Deryk! I'm jolly glad to see you again!"