

"Why does he wish you to take me at that unearthly hour?"

"Oh, I suppose," replied Mackeller, with impatience, "that everyone wishes to see the great Lord Stranleigh."

"Ah, yes; I had forgotten! Quite natural, quite natural. Did the doctor counsel your country place as a sanatorium?"

"No; that was my own idea."

"I believe your country house is connected with the city office by telephone?"

"Yes; it has that advantage."

"Pardon me, Peter: you mean disadvantage, and a very vital disadvantage, too. However, let us summon authority to our aid, for, as I tell you, I am profoundly ignorant."

He touched the bell, whereupon the grave and dignified Ponderby appeared silently as a genie responding to the rubbing of a lamp.

"Ponderby, when a man is afflicted with an affection of the heart—I refer to a physical affection—what should he do?"

"It depends, my lord, upon whether he prefers to reside in France, Belgium, or Germany."

"He prefers, Ponderby, to live in England, but that is not the point. His chief desire is to live."