

was gradually being learnt, so that the life of Rippl Court moved like a perfect piece of mechanism: Phillimore, the elderly confidential secretary, Benson, the man nurse, Arkwright, the butler, Mrs. Benson, the housekeeper, Jepson, the agent, were beginning to appreciate that you got most done and wasted least time by slowly making up your mind and then treating your decision as something that could not be re-opened, could hardly be discussed. He was generally accounted a slow thinker—which perhaps meant that he was more patient than his critics,—but he was very tenacious when he had finished thinking; his critics, again, called him obstinate—which perhaps meant that they were eternally shifting and changing, while he had finished his shifts and changes before finally making up his mind. He knew himself better than did these same critics, who, by the way, remained critics while he created one of the largest fortunes in America; he had nothing of their quickness and imagination, but a compensating providence had given him a stubborn, clear-sighted sense of proportion and probability, which saved him from panic and impetuosity, as he had proved a dozen times, when they lost a million and he made one.

"You'll leave the house till after you've had your lunch, sir?" Benson suggested, as they completed the circle of the gardens and came back to the side door. Sir Aylmer's face looked grey with the unaccustomed exertion, the minute departure from routine, and it was Benson's first business to watch for the change of colour and make tactful proposals when it appeared.

"I told Mrs. Benson I would go round *before* luncheon," was the deliberate answer. It was not infrequently Benson's second business to be snubbed for his pains.

"You remember what Dr. Forsyte—" he continued persuasively.

"That will do, Benson."

Changing into his wheeled house-chair, Sir Aylmer had himself pushed into the long library which filled the whole south-west projection of the house and constituted Deryk's