

from that most awful visitation—paralysis of the insane. "Come to look round, eh?" he chuckled, and waved his stick as if indicating a vast space. "Yes, great changes. Sampson and I have had hard work, but we've nearly finished. You see, we'd got the plans out before the crash came. The whole place has been restored. Cost a lot of money, Mr. Drayle; a lot of money! But we'd made up our minds to spare no expense, once the Court was ours. You remember what it was, of course, Mr. Drayle?"

He scarcely paused for a reply, but quavered on, looking about him with an air of pride.

"You remember what it was in Sir Anson's time; and you see what it is now, what we've made of it; a credit to the county, eh? Oh, Sampson's a clever boy; he knows what's what. He'll make a solid place and a name for himself, mark my words. The gentry may look down upon him and ignore him for a bit, but they'll give in and accept him as one of 'em before long. Money's everything nowadays, Mr. Drayle, eh?"

Suddenly the smile of satisfaction and triumph vanished, and he shuffled up to them and caught Mr. Drayle by the coat sleeve.

"But perhaps you've come on business, Mr. Drayle? About the moor, isn't it? Well, now, I'm ready to talk to you; we're still willing to buy; but you must be reasonable."

At this moment Sampson came from the house. At sight of the visitors, his bloated face grew redder, and he advanced with a blustering air.

"Anything you've got to say to my father, you'd better say to me," he said. "He's not fit for business."

"So I perceive," said Mr. Drayle, with a pitying glance at the huge yet shrunken figure which had sunk on the seat again. "We will go into the house,