

I deal. As you know, I employ twelve of the shrewdest business men I can secure. To the chief of these I shall turn over the general direction of your interests, and he will distribute the different sections among the eleven others."

This by-proxy proposal did not commend itself to Mackeller, who sat glum and depressed while the scheme was explained to him. Stranleigh, however, continued unperturbed—

"Of course, Peter, if you'd like to have the business conducted as you would do it yourself——"

"That's exactly what I wanted, if possible," interrupted Mackeller, "but I suppose such a condition of things is not to be hoped for."

"Oh, bless you, yes, it is! Anything may be accomplished if a man really makes up his mind to it. Instead of employing twelve competent men, I'll substitute for two or three of them an equal number of ordinary, fussy individuals who will muddle whatever is put in their charge, and thus reduce the average of excellence to your liking."

Peter scowled darkly at him.

"What we wish to attain," Stranleigh went on, ignoring his displeasure, "is, first of all, the restoration of your health. Quite a secondary consideration is the carrying on of your business. A doctor will