

charged with being drunk and disorderly. Darrel instantly left the bench; his fellow-magistrates fined Sampson, and the painful incident would have been closed by the conviction and the payment of the fine, but Sampson uttered sundry threats as he left the dock, and that same evening indulged in another drinking bout.

"I don't know what is to be done," said Darrel to Cynthia and Mr. Drayle. "The fellow appears to be bent on ruining himself; besides, he is upsetting the village——" he added frowning; you see, it was now his own village again, and therefore Sampson's misconduct was a personal matter to Darrel.

Mr. Drayle rubbed his eyebrow and glanced at Cynthia, who was looking much distressed.

"I'll step round and have a talk with him," he said.

"And I'll go with you," said Cynthia in a low voice.

They went round to the Burridges' house. Already signs of the ruin Sampson was bringing about so persistently were observable in the once trim place; the garden had been neglected, the windows had not been cleaned for some time, the steps were dirty. Cynthia looked round with a sigh, then laid her hand on her father's arm quickly; for she had caught sight of old Burrige seated on one of the benches. He was leaning forward, his huge hands resting on his stick; his loose mouth was working, his face twisted with a smile of cunning and satisfaction.

"We will speak to him," said Drayle.

As they approached the old man looked up, and shading his eyes, stared at them vacantly; then he rose slowly to his feet and nodded patronisingly.

"How d'ye do? Mr. Drayle, I think, and Miss Drayle, Cynthia Drayle? Glad to see you!" he said, with a catch in his voice peculiar to the sufferer