

BORROWING STRANLEIGH'S NAME. II

at these rooms, and I told him exactly what I have told you. By a curious coincidence, his answer and yours were almost identical. He said it was impossible for him to stop work at the moment, because of numerous engagements he had accepted, and further stated that the only inconvenience he suffered was an increasing shortness of breath. In six months he would knock off for a while, but he could not do it then. Before six months were past, he was in Westminster Abbey. I suggest that you consult your friend, Lord Stranleigh, and bring him here, say a week from to-day, at this hour."

With that Mackeller took his leave, still wondering how much truth, if any, there was in the doctor's prognostications. He stepped into the electric brougham awaiting him in Harley Street, and curtly ordered his man to drive him to the office. Seated in the noiseless vehicle, he endeavoured to throw from his mind all thought of the doctor's doleful diatribe, and concentrate his attention on the business now awaiting him. He was disquieted to find that in spite of himself the sentence of six months kept running through his head like a recurring decimal. Suddenly he touched the electric button, and as the driver slowed down, directed him to turn round and proceed to Stranleigh House.