

"It's what you said last night," he answered. "A million a year; divide by fifty; that's roughly £20,000 a week. Divide by seven; say £3,000 a day. Twenty-four hours in a day; that's roughly £120 an hour. Two pounds a minute!" He looked up from the paper, and his eyes dilated in bewilderment. "Had you ever worked it out like that, dad? Two pounds a minute—a fiver while we've been talking—night and day, summer and winter!"

Sir Aylmer leaned over the side of his wheeled chair and took the paper.

"It's rather more than that," he said with the detachment of accuracy. "I said a million, to put it in round figures, but it was well over that the last time I took stock, nearly two years ago, at the time that I built the new wing for the Crawleigh hospital."

"When they made you a Bart?" Deryk asked. "Why didn't you stick out for a peerage?"

Sir Aylmer frowned and made no answer. He had no desire for a peerage, and had not welcomed the baronetcy. It was too much and too little. If these honours meant anything, they should not be given to any rich man who spared a fraction of his wealth for charity; if they meant nothing, he would sooner be without them. He had a position of his own, which he had made for himself; he did not choose to be tolerated in company with half a dozen company promoters and Rand mine-owners like Sir Adolf Erckmann of Priory Court. He was not going to buy himself into a society which thought itself too good for him; either England had a place for him in its social scale, or it had not; he was not going to out-bid Erckmann in surrounding himself with the more venal section of the impoverished nobility. On the whole, the English aristocracy and he were both too good for that. In the early days he had been tempted to tell Sir Roger Dainton or Lord Pebbleridge that their social influence was a small thing to a man who had broken the Smelting and Refining Combine, that Lord Pebbleridge's scattered 80,000 acres bulked small beside the control of transportation in eleven states. A trifling change in