

Harry Tristram doing there? Harry advanced, holding out his hand.

"We neither of us thought we should meet in this way, Major Duplay? The world's full of surprises. I've learnt that anyhow, and I daresay you've known it a long while."

"You're in this business?" cried the Major, too astonished for any preamble.

Harry nodded. "Let's get through it," he said. "Because it's very simple. Sloyd and I have made up our minds exactly what we ought to have."

It was the same manner that the Major remembered seeing by the Pool—perhaps a trifle less aggressive, but making up for that by an even increased self-confidence. Duplay had thought of his former successful rival as a broken man. He was not that. He had never thought of him as a speculator in building land. Seemingly that was what he had become.

Harry sat down by the table, Sloyd standing by him and spreading out before him a plan of Blinkhampton and the elevation of a row of buildings.

"You ask us," Harry went on resentfully, almost accusingly, "to throw up this thing just when we're ready to go ahead. Everything's in train; we could begin work to-morrow."

"Come, come, where are you going to get the money?" interrupted Duplay. He felt that he must assert himself.

"Never mind, we can get it; or we can wait till we do. We shut you out just as badly whether we leave the old buildings or put up new. However, we shall get it. I'm satisfied as to that."

"You've heard my offer?"

"Yes," smiled Harry. "The reward for getting ahead of Mr. Iver is, it seems, two thousand pounds. It must be done pretty often if it's as cheap as that! I hope he's well?"

"Quite well, Mr. Tristram, thank you. But when you talk of getting ahead of him——"

"Well, I put it plainly; that's all. I'm new to this and I