

'Did you give it to Mr Barrymore himself?' I asked.

'Well,' the boy said, 'he was working up on the roof, so I couldn't give it to him. I gave it to Mrs Barrymore, and she promised to give it to him at once.'

'Did you see Mr Barrymore?' I asked him.

'No,' said the boy, 'but why did his wife say he was up on the roof if he wasn't?'

It was hopeless to ask any more questions. It was clear that Holmes' cleverness with the telegram had not given us the proof we needed.

I was walking away from the post office when I heard someone running after me. A voice called me by name, and I turned. I expected to see Dr Mortimer, as I knew nobody else in the village. To my surprise it was a stranger. He was a small, thin man, between thirty and forty years old, with fair hair and no beard. He was carrying a butterfly net, and a box for putting butterflies in.

'I hope you will excuse me for introducing myself, Dr Watson,' he said as he came up to me. 'My name is Stapleton. I was in Dr Mortimer's house and we saw you. He told me who you are. May I walk along with you? This path back to the Hall goes near my home, Pen House. Please come in and meet my sister, and spend an hour with us.'

I accepted Stapleton's invitation, and we walked together.

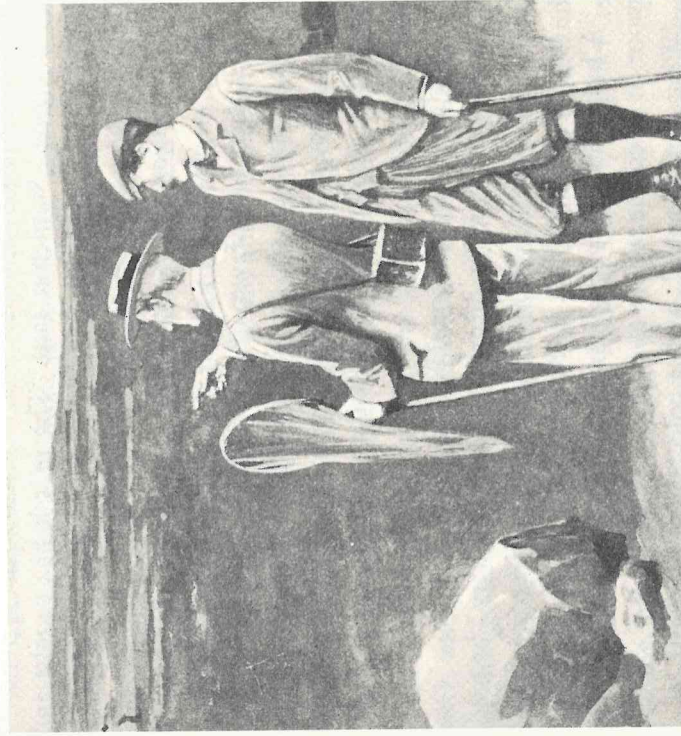
'I know that you are a close friend of Sherlock Holmes,' said Stapleton. 'Has Mr Holmes any ideas about Sir Charles' death?'

'I'm afraid I can't answer that question,' I said.

'Will Mr Holmes visit us himself?' he asked.

'He can't leave London at the moment,' I answered. I was rather surprised that he was asking me these questions.

We walked on. Stapleton told me that he and his sister had lived in Devonshire for only two years. They had moved there soon after Sir Charles had begun to live in Baskerville Hall. He also talked about the moor and how it



*'That is the Great Grimpen Marsh.'*