

kingdom. Until the end of the eighteenth century the Stornaways had maintained it from a sense of pride, but in the last hundred years poverty of scholarship and lack of money had been stronger than pride; the books were uncatalogued, ill-arranged and unreplenished, their bindings tattered, their pages worm-eaten and the mouldings of their cases battered and defaced. Deryk had repaired the havoc and produced a catalogue; each new enthusiasm was marked by a new collection, and in the map-cases by the fire and the coin cabinets under the long, narrow windows could be traced the growth of his later literary passions. A third of the floor-space was covered with white wooden boxes waiting for him to unpack. The books had been ordered more than two years ago, before he went abroad; their number and cost were characteristic of his impetuosity and curious ignorance of money. Deryk certainly was impetuous, but his brain moved quickly, and he was a wonderfully rapid learner; he could speak a considerable number of languages, he was a scholar of proved taste and achievement, he was a musician. Already he had done so much that there seemed nothing of the few things remaining that he would not be able to do—and do quickly; perhaps, if he needed more time to learn a subject, he would not abandon it so quickly. And he certainly did abandon a new enthusiasm as impetuously as he took it up—early Church music (involving a new organ in the chapel), French caricaturists of the nineteenth century, even the silver age of Greek civilisation, on which he was engaged and to which he proposed to consecrate his life, when he was sent round the world. Of course he was young enough to be naturally unstable; he would want careful watching for some years yet; he must be set to work and kept at work, otherwise he would get up to all kinds of mischief; he must decide upon his career . . .

A wave of watery sunlight broke through the February sky and shone through the long, deep-set windows of the library. Over the rhododendrons and beyond the last sweep of the drive, Sir Aylmer could see a pennant of bunting