

had come up blank. The life of a country gentleman was good enough for him, the life his fathers had lived before him.

He began to picture Candida the mistress of the Hall; her bright face smiling at him from under the long row of painted beauties who framed the vaulted room.

She was worthy to take her place among them—worthy too, he told himself, to be a mother of the race.

He had not even that secret misgiving that his wife might not bear him a child; and at the thought, a sudden longing rose for the sound of little footsteps pattering across the oak, young laughter waking the echoes where ghostly silence lay.

Again he heard Sir George's voice and caught the speaker's desire.

"Time you married, Derry."

It was true. He nodded his head, facing the great decision of his life, strung afresh by the knowledge that he held his title in trust, that his duty plainly was to hand it on to another.

Yes, he would do it—there should be no regret—henceforth he would "ride straight," Candida by his side.

And a quick sadness seized him that the dead could not hear his vow—that awful knowledge that there was no reaching out across the silent gulf—that the opportunity had passed—to all Eternity!

But a gleam of sunshine stole into the room, all the more vivid for the shower that was over, and rising to his feet the new Baronet stepped down into the garden.

There stood the old dove-cot, where as a child he