

CHAPTER X

A JOURNEY'S END

COLIN TRAIVE's child had never lived for him; the bitterest of his sorrows was that he could enter so little into his wife's experience of bereavement. He remembered a pink bundle that he had held in his arms, remembered something of a delicious thrill he had had in the feel of it, and more of the comic dismay at his own awkwardness; but it seemed to him that those moments of awed pride in the tiny precious thing scarce had given him a claim to fatherhood. That would have come with the years, if he had proved himself worthy: now he was her husband, and was absorbed in her, with an ache of lingering regret that he could have missed sharing her agony added to his intense tenderness.

He shared it only through the excruciating efforts of his lumbering fancy; and in the reluctant response of his heart to such pale images as he could summon, he wished fiercely for something of her power for visualizing the unseen. This she could not give him, he knew, seeming to himself a man of singularly dull sensibilities, and yet she helped him as she had done in that other hour. Trying to conjure up for himself the mind of a father bereaved of his son, he failed, but he remembered the surpassing sweetness of her face when she first saw her baby, and he came very near to the sense of fatherhood at the recollection of that. It had been the inrush of her joy, flooding from her to