

CHAPTER IV

AN ENGLISHMAN'S HOME

I

LIFE has described a circle, as a preliminary, no doubt, to describing another; I sit at my knee-hole desk, consider my regulation silk hat, then gaze awhile through the window into the misty depths of the trees. Idly I watch the traffic in Kensington Gore, motor-cars speeding towards Richmond, Surrey, perhaps the West Country, ponderous motor-buses advertising English soaps, plays, oats; and horses swiftly drawing the broughams of Englishwomen to Dover or Grafton Street. This is England, wealthy, easy England. And there is the immense policeman at the gate of the Gardens; near him are two blues from Knightsbridge, who flirt with nursemaids in hospital garb. Handsome, well-groomed men, dainty children, women whose clothes are six months behind the Paris fashion, pedigree terriers—England.

And in this room, my study, are Morlands on the brown paper; in the bookcase I read the names of the bigger books: Macaulay's *History of England*, the *Life of Disraeli*, a massive volume on the Pre-Raphaelites; I recognise the novels of Fielding and Thackeray, Boswell's *Life of Johnson*; and a playwright's corner, Beaumont and Fletcher, Sheridan; there are no French yellow-backs. On a bracket my well-beloved collection of Lowestoft china; on the mantelpiece Liverpool transfer. Comfortable chairs are covered with green-leaved black chintz; a pipe-rack hangs over my piled golf-clubs. *The Times* has fallen on the floor, littering the hearthrug, and John,