

of old pasture fell cascades of daffodils, and in the fringes of the coppices lay the blue haze of wild hyacinths. The house was so wholly in tune with the landscape that the eye did not at once detect it, for its gables might have been part of wood or hillside. It was of stone, and built in many periods and in many styles which time had subtly blended so that it seemed a perfect thing without beginning, as long descended as the folds of downs which sheltered it. The austere Tudor front, the Restoration wing, the offices built under Queen Anne, the library added in the days of the Georges, had by some alchemy become one. Peace and long memories were in every line of it, and that air of a home which belongs only to places that have been loved for generations. It breathed ease and comfort, but yet had a tonic vigour in it, for while it stood knee-deep in the green valley its head was fanned by moorland winds.

Jean held her breath as she saw it. It seemed to her the most perfect thing that could be imagined.

She walked in shyly, winged like Mercury, to be greeted respectfully by a row of servants. Jean shook hands with each one, smiling at them with her "doggy" eyes, wishing all the time for Mrs. M'Cosh, who was not specially respectful, but always homely and humorous.

Tea was ready in a small panelled room with a view of the lawns and the river.

"I asked them to put it here," Lord Bidborough said. "I thought you might like to have this for your own sitting-room. It's just a little like the room at The Rigs."

"Oh, Biddy, it is. I saw it when I came in. May I really have it for my own? It feels as if people had been happy in it. It has a welcoming air. And what a gorgeous tea!" She sat down at the table and pulled off her gloves. "Isn't life mightfully well arranged? Every day is so full of so many different things, and meals are such