

little Idina Penrose, who was his confidante, slave and hero-worshipper; he ought not to live in that silent, deserted house with that pack of old men. Had not Forsyte, the local doctor, described him as "an old man's child"? He was highly strung, and there was every likelihood of his brain's exhausting his body and nerves. Sir Aylmer seemed to regard the great house as an empty frame and Deryk as a canvas that had to be covered with a suitable picture; he would not let him develop naturally. . . . From Eton the boy passed to Magdalen and in four years won two firsts and a university prize. He was in the running for a fellowship, but his father intervened arbitrarily with a wider ambition. Hatherly found difficulty in curbing his impatience. . . .

"It is not my idea that you should bury yourself in Oxford," Lancing told his son at the end of a silent dinner on the night after the class lists had been published. "With the money that I can put at your back——"

"What's the good of money, if I can't do what I want?" Deryk interrupted impatiently. "I haven't got to earn my own living, so why can't I lead the kind of life I want to?"

"Money carries responsibilities, Deryk. You can't just put your feet up and read a book."

"I don't propose to. I propose to work, but it's work of the kind that appeals to me. I've been at it for a year or two; they say up there that I shall do it well; why can't I go on with it?"

"You're only twenty-three," said Sir Aylmer. "You've seen very little of the world——"

"I don't want to see the beastly world."

"We shall not do any good by discussing this further."

Since first he went to school, fifteen years earlier, Deryk had been broken to the habit of obedience; the habit had never been strained, for his wants were simple and had generally been gratified.

"I am proposing that you should go round the world . . .," continued Lancing, leaning back with his bony hands on