

years; that he was a scholar of promise, more than a year younger than any boy in his division; that he could look forward to an academic career of distinction; that, so far as an outsider could judge, he had achieved a certain popularity. From a supplementary account of their holidays on the continent, it appeared that he could speak fluent French and German, and was at home with Italian and Spanish. He was credited further with great musical talent, but of this Hatherly was not in a position to judge.

As Lancing wheeled himself about the house or drove into the neighbouring forest or onto the Downs for his daily exercise, life seemed less empty, and the routine of food, work, recreation and rest a shade less wearisome. He had handed on to his son the seeds of his own vigour and aptitude before they were paralysed; there was a possibility of living again in his son's body. Thereafter Deryk had to spend rather more of his holidays at home, and his father talked, a little nervously, about the future, and let fall anecdotes about the past. The boy certainly did not pass muster in his present shape; he looked delicate and neurotic, he was absorbed in a world of pictures, books and music, from which he could only be roused with difficulty to interest himself in the material life of living men and women, and, when the house filled, as it inevitably did, with a heterogeneous gathering of men and women who were leaving a mark on the administration and politics of their country, he had a habit of shutting himself up in the library and neglecting not only his father's guests but his own opportunities.

Hatherly looked on with misgiving and a pang of something that he would not admit was jealousy; it was but natural that Aylmer Lancing should become absorbed in his own son, that he should seek to mould and direct him, but he was enjoying the fruit of others' work without consulting them or being guided by their opinions and experience. Now, if there were one thing more clear than another, it was that Deryk ought not to spend much time at Ripley Court, where the only youthful society was provided by