

a friendly, intimate room, set in the bastioned tower that dated from feudal times. But arrow-slits had long given place to unlimited light and air; and, like all rooms that are loved and genuinely lived in, it was quick with the personality of one who imparted something of herself to the very chair she used and the books and pictures on her walls. These last were few and individual; but of the books there was no end. A catholic assembly, they climbed the only bit of wall-space not occupied by the grate. They stood about invitingly in revolving cases; and a privileged company was piled upon the floor near her chair. Keith often accused her of having an untidy mind; and the state of her room betrayed her. The one tidy spot was the writing-table, which she never used.

Over the mantelpiece hung an early portrait of her husband, that might almost have been a portrait of Mark. But Sir Richard's face was heavier than his son's; the brow more massive, the lower lip more prominent. It was a shrewd, virile Anglo-Saxon face, unillumined by the Gaelic strain that Mark had from his mother.

Yet, throughout, Sir Richard had respected his wife's ideals and enthusiasms, had smiled indulgently over her panacea for the democratic peril, and had allowed her a fairly free hand in the education of his sons. So long as the heir of Wynchcombe Friars remained a staunch Imperialist, he might be as constructive as he pleased; and if there was the remotest truth in Helen's convictions, let Mark stand for Winchester and air his views in Parliament. That had been Sir Richard's practical contribution to the subject.

But the Baronet had now been dead ten years; and, so far, Mark had made no bid for Parliamentary fame. Helen Forsyth had spent the first years of her widowhood travelling in Europe with Keith and