



A ROOM WITH A VIEW



It all looks magnificent until one looks a little closer. The priceless (Louis XIV clock) and the ridiculous (Lady Anne's toleware urn) side by side, dwarfed on the massive mantel; the William and Mary firescreen next to the elephant-foot stool; the Louis XVI fauteuils facing the silly inlaid table Uncle Rupert brought back from Goa. Everywhere, relics of the family's grand past: battle standards, armor, portraits, a globe showing just where the 4th Earl was governor-general. Also everywhere, evidence of neglect: the massive Ming vase, chipped; the glorious plaster ceiling, water-damaged; the exquisite Aubusson carpet, stained by some dog—possibly the dog who has done the upholstery so little good. The heiress will be expected to right many of these wrongs, but she will not be permitted to remove the dog's bed.