

He was conscious of an enormous amount of comfort ; he had said all there was to say, and he could now see the value of the advice Isabel's father had urged upon him ; to turn his back on the story which for a brief time had made life so ugly. Seeing his mother standing as he had so often seen her, her beautiful eyes full of passionate devotion to himself, it was perhaps only natural that the young man should dismiss from his mind now that revelation of her true nature and character, and resume once again the rôle of protector to one whom he had always regarded as being weak, delicate and almost foolish. The suggestion that she could cut herself away from him, and let another person take care of her and control her, had brought a hot rush of new anger and resentment into John Cheston's mind.

He was not at all sure of the place he would give his mother in his life's future, but he was absolutely sure now on one point ; he would let her go to no one else. She had always been his possession ; she would remain his !

The events of the day, and particularly Sir Thomas Matheson's straightforward dealing, had brought Olivia Mary's son completely away from that harsh and almost vindictive view he had professed when discussing the situation with Isabel in the early morning. He was not prepared to say he would ever forgive, but he was very eager to forget in an active sense, and as, according to Sir Thomas, all was to go forward just as though nothing had happened, and such an unpleasant individual as Angus Kurtiss was still in existence, why, John's mother would be necessary to him, more necessary indeed than she had ever been before.