

motto is, *Noblesse oblige*, and the full meaning of this great maxim my mother had instilled into every fibre of my being. But on going into the world I found it ridiculed among my own class as obsolete and exploded. Every where it seemed to have given way to the mean doctrine of expediency. My sentiments were gayly ridiculed, and I soon began to fear that I was not suited for political life.

"At length a crisis arrived. I had either to sacrifice my conscience or resign my position. I chose the latter alternative, and in doing so I gave up my political life forever. I need not tell the bitterness of my disappointment. But the loss of worldly prospects and of hope was as nothing compared with other things. The worst of all was the reception which I met at home. My young, and as I supposed loving wife, to whom I went at once with my story, and from whom I expected the warmest sympathy, greeted me with nothing but tears and reproaches. She could only look upon my act with the world's eyes. She called it ridiculous Quixotism. She charged me with want of affection; denounced me for beguiling her to marry a pauper; and after a painful interview we parted in coldness."

Lord Chetwynde, whose agitation was now evident, here paused and drank another glass of wine. After some time he went on:

"After all, it was not so bad. I soon found employment. I had made many powerful friends, who, though they laughed at my scruples, still seemed to respect my consistency, and had confidence in my ability. Through them I obtained a new appointment where I could be more independent, though the prospects were poor. Here I might have been happy, had it not been for the continued alienation between my wife and me. She had been ambitious. She had relied on my future. She was now angry because I had thrown that future away. It was a death-blow to her hopes, and she could not forgive me. We lived in the same house, but I knew nothing of her occupations and amusements. She went much into society, where she was greatly admired, and seemed to be neglectful of her home and of her child. I bore my misery as best I could in silence, and never so much as dreamed of the tremendous catastrophe in which it was about to terminate."

Lord Chetwynde paused, and seemed overcome by his recollections.

"You have heard of it, I suppose?" he asked at length, in a scarce audible voice.

The General looked at him, and for a moment their eyes met; then he looked away. Then he shaded his eyes with his hand and sat as though awaiting further revelations.

Lord Chetwynde did not seem to notice him at all. Intent upon his own thoughts, he went on in that strange soliloquizing tone with which he had begun.

"She fled—" he said, in a voice which was little more than a whisper.

"Heavens!" said General Pomeroy.

There was a long silence.

"It was about three years after our marriage," continued Lord Chetwynde, with an effort. "She fled. She left no word of farewell. She fled. She forsook me. She forsook her child. My God! Why?"

He was silent again.

"Who was the man?" asked the General, in a strange voice, and with an effort.

"He was known as Redfield Lyttoun. He had been devoted for a long time to my wretched wife. Their flight was so secret and so skillfully managed that I could gain no clew whatever to it—and, indeed, it was better so—perhaps—yes—better so." Lord Chetwynde drew a long breath. "Yes, better so," he continued—"for if I had been able to track the scoundrel and take his life, my vengeance would have been gained, but my dishonor would have been proclaimed. To me that dishonor would have brought no additional pang. I had suffered all that I could. More were impossible; but as it was my shame was not made public—and so, above all—above all—my boy was saved. The frightful scandal did not arise to crush my darling boy."

The agitation of Lord Chetwynde overpowered him. His face grew more pallid, his eyes were fixed, and his clenched hands testified to the struggle that raged within him. A long silence followed, during which neither spoke a word.

At length Lord Chetwynde went on. "I left London forever," said he, with a deep sigh. "After that my one desire was to hide myself from the world. I wished that if it were possible my very name might be forgotten. And so I came back to Chetwynde, where I have lived ever since, in the utmost seclusion, devoting myself entirely to the education and training of my boy."

"Ah, my old friend, that boy has proved the one solace of my life. Well has he repaid me for my care. Never was there a nobler or a more devoted nature than his. Forgive a father's emotion, my friend. If you but knew my noble, my brave, my chivalrous boy, you would excuse me. That boy would lay down his life for me. In all his life his one thought has been to spare me all trouble and to brighten my dark life. Poor Guy! He knows nothing of the horror of shame that hangs over him—he has found out nothing as yet. To him his mother is a holy thought—the thought of one who died long ago, whose memory he thinks so sacred to me that I dare not speak of her. Poor Guy! Poor Guy!"

Lord Chetwynde again paused, overcome by deep emotion.

"God only knows," he resumed, "how I feel for him and for his future. It's a dark future for him, my friend. For in addition to this grief which I have told you of there is another which weighs me down. Chetwynde is not yet redeemed. I lost my life and my chance to save the estate. Chetwynde is overwhelmed with debt. The time is daily drawing near when I will have to give up the inheritance which has come down through so long a line of ancestors. All is lost. Hope itself has departed. How can I bear to see the place pass into alien hands?"

"Pass into alien hands?" interrupted the General, in surprise. "Give up Chetwynde? Impossible! It can not be thought of."

"Sad as it is," replied Lord Chetwynde, mournfully, "it must be so. Sixty thousand pounds are due within two years. Unless I can raise that amount all must go. When Guy comes of age he must break the entail and sell