

ciated at the mock ceremony was not in orders, and that the parish register would prove that no such marriage had taken place—that as for Jemmy, he would have him brought up as befitted his future station in life.

“I was struck dumb with astonishment and horror—I knew Lord Altham to be capable of the baseness of which he had accused himself. I was carried fainting from his house, and never saw him again. On my recovery from a severe illness, which was the result of this interview, I employed a person in whom I could confide, to investigate the truth of my destroyer’s assertions, and his report fully corroborating them, determined to hide my shame in a foreign convent; and selling my jewels and other remnants of former days, I went to France; but continued ill health rendered me unable for some years to carry out my resolution, and on my partial restoration, finding that Lord Altham was dead, the advice of my medical attendants together with an eager desire once more to see my son, induced me to return to Ireland. With a beating heart, I sought Mary Weedon at Dunmaine,—even my old servants did not recognise me, such was the alteration which sorrow and long sickness had wrought. I then formed the plan of residing here permanently, under an assumed name, and made myself known to the steward and gardener, both of whom loved their old mistress well. Shortly after my arrival, Lord Altham sent instructions that a new housekeeper should be employed in the room of one who had lately died, and on the steward’s mentioning the matter to me, I determined to assume that character. I dreaded to write to Mary Weedon, (who, I found, was in Dublin, her husband being a servant of the present Lord’s,) fearing that my letter might fall into wrong hands, and determined to wait until the steward went to town, to lay his quarterly accounts before Lord Altham; but ere this time came, poor Mary arrived at Dunmaine; she too had suffered much, and her constitution being unequal to the burden, was sinking fast. Her account of my son’s situation on the whole comforted me, although it deferred indefinitely my prospect of seeing him. You know all, Mr. Bushe—may I enquire what course do you propose to take?”

“I confess, lady, that I am at a loss how to proceed.—Weedon must be in the confidence of his employer;—do you think we can do anything with him?”

“It must be tried at least, Mr. Bushe,” said Mary. “I feel that my end is near; I will see him once more—it may be that he will harken to me, at least I will —”

“It must not be, Mary,” interrupted lady Altham—“you are unequal to such an interview; it would but hurry your death most probably, without resulting in any good.”

“And what matters, dear lady, whether I die a few hours sooner or later. Believe me I should be worse if I felt that I