

old servants the steward and gardener, she had been represented to Lord Altham as the widow of a gentleman in the neighborhood, and he employed her, little imagining that she was his brother's widow; he had indeed long supposed her dead, as I also did."

"But, lady," asked Bushe, "what induced you to allow a doubt of your son's right to the succession?"

"Alas, sir, my story is a most unhappy one; deserted by my kindred, my lonely situation induced Lord Altham to indulge in designs against my honor; finding himself frustrated, he sought me in marriage; young, unexperienced, dependant on the bounty of unkind relatives, who seconded his suit with all their power, I at length consented, though with a foreboding heart—would to God I had listened to its promptings, or had rather married the poorest peasant on his vast estates. My husband was a capricious tyrant, whose passion having quickly subsided, treated me with the utmost barbarity; by mutual consent we separated, and for twenty years all intercourse ceased, when unfortunately we met at the house of a mutual acquaintance in Dublin, where neither expected the other's presence. Lord Altham could assume any character he chose, and, notwithstanding my previous knowledge of him, his pretended penitence deceived me, and I suffered myself to be persuaded that he had changed. A renewal of intercourse took place, and we came to live at Dunmaine; but, alas, my eyes were soon opened—he assembled around him a horde of his most vicious acquaintances—days and nights were passed in mad riot and sottish debauch, whilst to me his conduct was more cruel than at first. I however bore up as well as I could, for I was about to become a mother. Increased uproar and revelry marked the period which heralded my unfortunate son's birth; for his sake I lived, for I felt what situation his would be if I suffered my weary frame to sink. Years passed during which my only comfort was my boy, whom I removed to my faithful Mary's house. About this time, Lord Altham first met a being who contrived to render my misery still more acute. During one of his short residences in Dublin, a Miss Gregory had fascinated him, and thenceforth he strove by all means in his power to drive me from his house; finding neglect and cruelty unavailing, he at length succeeded by bringing an abominable accusation against me. This drove me to despair—I returned to town, and only twice since have seen my poor boy. As long as his father treated him with common decency I was satisfied; but finding after a time that he was regarded as illegitimate, I summoned resolution once more to see Lord Altham,—he received me at first more courteously than I expected, but on my alluding to his treatment of our son, stated in coarse terms that I had never been legally his wife, of which I might easily satisfy myself: that the party who offi-