

I feared to let him suspect the deep interest I had in learning the news he brought. You must endeavor to be yourself, my ever faithful friend; even he must not know our secret, at least at present. Do you think that you are equal to this meeting?"

"Oh, yes, madam,—I must see him, and hear what he has to tell. God grant that it may be no ill tidings, for I fear I could not bear *them*."

Again a slight tinkle of the bell was heard, and the old nurse having entered the sick woman's room, returned and beckoned Bushe to follow her. The student stole on tiptoe into poor Mary's room—the first momentary excitement over, she had sunk on her pillow, panting and exhausted. Weak and faded as he had last seen her in Dublin, he started at the change which had since taken place; were it not for the hectic blush which still burned on her hollow cheek, and the hurried breathing ever interrupted by a hollow cough, one had thought her an exceedingly emaciated corpse, so wan appeared her face and neck; but on his entrance, she raised herself on her wasted arm and gazed in his face with mute but eloquent questioning. On his hesitating to communicate tidings whose effect she feared, she gasped out—

"For God sake, speak sir, and tell me all."

Thus adjured, he succinctly narrated how Mr. Quill had got him out of the way, and with Weedon's assistance, kidnapped the boy.

Mrs. Weedon bore the recital with more firmness than he had expected; when he had ended, she said—

"At length then they have gone so far, that though a dying woman, I feel it my duty to break an oath, which I never should have taken. That oath, and its consequences, have rendered my life accursed, but it was imposed by Jemmy's father, and he swore that it was for the boy's good; by it I pledged myself never to tell what I knew of occurrences at Dunmaine. Now then, cruelty to its legitimate heir, (for so my poor boy is,) has passed all bounds, and I consider it my duty to tell you all. Nay, dearest lady, I know Mr. Bushe—fear him not, he is all kindness and honor. In that wronged lady, sir, you see our poor boy's mother. The Lord Altham, who is gone to his account, (God be merciful and pardon him,) shortly after Jemmy's birth, sought occasion of quarrel with my lady, and cast her off, and so managed matters that the country believed they were never married: the witnesses are dead or absent, and the parish registers show no entry of the marriage, altho' they do of parties married on the same day. I often in long past days spoke with persons who had been by at the ceremony, but on my return here last autumn, sought in vain for any of them. You may imagine my astonishment when I found my honored lady acting as housekeeper. By the aid of her true