

the kirk-breaking, you'd know I was no better than of no account, and you'd be cock of this midden; and if I turned on Simon and ejected him, you'd be left alone with your cottage and your whisky-money. I stopped that," said the Laird. "I ejected you both. And that," said the blind Laird, "is the history in short of the past. I now turn to the future."

The gaunt chin dropped. He opened his eyes and stared bleakly across the hall.

"I've borne with you for ten years for my wife's sake," said the Laird; "I'm now going to bear with you no longer for my own. In the past I've done everything man could do to oblige you——"

"Ay!" screamed the widow, flaming suddenly, "shot my man! locked my laddie in a mad-house! and——"

"And yet," said the Laird, continuing, like the tide, "you're not satisfied. You've abused my kindness in every way you know how; you've set the people against me; you've set Simon to defy me; you've plotted on Danny; and now I am weary of you."

"Sir!" whined the widow, beginning to be afraid, "consider Simon."

"I have," said the Laird, "for twenty years," he continued earnestly; "I've tried all in my power to make amends to that lad for any harm I did him. I've felt for him, as I've felt for few in my life—as I'd feel for any man that had you for mother; and I've not done with him yet. When you leave this parish," said the Laird, "as leave it you will, if you like to let him bide, I will become responsible."

"Him bide that broke his kirk! and me go that did not?" cried the mother. "And is that your Honour's justice?"

"Or," continued the Laird, "if you don't like that, I will pay the lad's passage to America and give him five pounds."

"Money down?" asked the widow, pricking her ears.

"To be given him by the captain the day before he lands," said the Laird, and waited a reply.