

"It was my washing-day," said the widow surlily.

"And you," said the Laird, "stood in the door of your cottage, as we bore her past, and cursed her coffin. I heard ye, I heard ye."

He paused with blind eyes, and throat of iron; and the dark woman in the door stood cowed before him.

"What sort of a dog's life you led the-only-son-of-his-mother after that," said the Laird, "I don't rightly know. I was a bit lost like myself for a while just then. When I came to I endured him and you for some years, for the sake of her whose dead body you cursed. Then I found he was plotting at Danny," said the Laird, "set on by you; and I packed him off. And I'd have packed you off too, but I knew you was drinking yourself to death, and I hoped each day would be your last."

"Well," he continued, "you disappointed me. You didn't die. You lived, and for four years you've been the bane of my life. You thought I was withering away, and you could do as you liked; and you set the people against me. I did nothing. As I tell you," said he, "I was living in hope. But," said the Laird, "'hope deferred maketh the heart sick'; and I was just about sick of hoping, when ten days since Simon came home."

He paused.

"I wasn't sorry to see the lad home. No one was," he continued, "except his mother; and you was just *wae*," said the Laird, "just *wae*."

"Wae!" cried the mother. "To have him home, and him only son to me. Oh!" she cried. "Little your Honour knows of a mother's heart."

"I know what was the matter with your mother's heart," said the Laird. "Ay," he went on, "ye could blether away about your murdered husband, and Simon and the softies in the village 'd likely believe you; but I know better. You thought, by setting Simon to break his kirk, whoever came out undermost you was safe to come out top: if I bore with