

THE  
ABBAY OF RATHMORE.

---

CHAPTER I.

---

On a high rocky promontory which jutted boldly into the Atlantic Ocean, in a remote part of Ireland, frowned in isolated grandeur the ruined Abbey of Rathmore. It was an ancient massive structure, and in the days of monastic seclusion had been the residence of a Dominican Order of Monks. In later years it was the abode of a noble but impoverished family—a descendant of which had, at the time this story commences, lately become a resident there. The greatest part of the building was in a dilapidated condition; one wing alone was habitable, and here Dr. Percival, its present occupant, with two domestics, resided in gloomy retirement. He was a man in the prime of life; of noble bearing and pleasing countenance. He had been for some years surgeon of a British ship of war, but the loss of an arm having incapacitated him for duty, he retired on half pay. Owing to some secret sorrow, life had lost its charms for him, and shunning society, he withdrew to the isolated home of his boyhood, the Abbey of Rathmore,—which, since the death of his parents, had been shut up.