

CHAPTER II

GIRLHOOD, EDUCATION, VOCATION, MARY WARD, FRANCES BALL

“**H**OW beautiful were the days of France,” says a French poet. How really beautiful life in the old world, must have seemed to this brilliant girl, who, emerging from childhood, had the protection and companionship of a beloved aunt, Mrs. Conry of Dublin. Everything that could possibly be done to render Ellen’s life bright and pleasant was lovingly done by her devoted relatives, who were fully aware of the rare virtues of the soul entrusted to them. But while cherishing the spiritual tendencies manifested by the young girl, no opportunity was lost to train her for the social position in the world she seemed destined to grace, and so she was soon introduced to the society of the elect, then enjoying the morning of life in that rare old capital of her native land. At times, the home life of Dublin with its genial companionship and virtuous setting, was exchanged for the country air, and bright skies of Lisnadarra; and the return to city life, made the change which gives a variety of scene so greatly desired by the young. How cultured must have been that early environment, it was not difficult to tell in after years, and how joyous that period of her existence, which left the calm, radiant expression that lighted up her face till death. Her education—a matter of the deepest concern to those to whom she was entrusted—was well attended to, in the Metro-