

seemed, had lately come to the parish. If my hostess was to be credited, his learning, eloquence and piety were not to be equalled in all Ireland; he had the handsomest face and figure she had ever seen in her life; and she assured me, with all an Irishwoman's respect for ancient descent, that he came of one of the oldest families in the kingdom. The neighbouring churches, she affirmed, had all been deserted for his, and the gentry came "miles upon miles" to listen to this wonderful young orator. This last piece of intelligence brought my thoughts back again to the somewhat slang appearance a velveteen shooting-jacket would exhibit in church; but I consoled myself that I had no acquaintances within a morning's drive of the place; and with a glance at the glass, to assure myself that in spite of my dress I did not look exactly like a gamekeeper, I set forth.

CHAPTER II.

I have not yet forgotten the beauty of that morning. It was late in September, but not a leaf had yet fallen, and the woods were radiant with their autumnal splendour; the sky was a lovely blue, flecked with silvery-white clouds, soft and shining as masses of glossy floss silk; the air was clear as crystal, yet balmy as June; and the river, very full, but not turbid, flowed, now deep and calm, now more shallow and rapid, over its stony bed, rushing and gurgling with a pleasant sound. The tired horses were resting in the fields; the big mill-wheel was still and silent; every thing around seemed full of peace. Late as the season was, the meadows and pasture were emerald green, except where ripe fields of grain and potatoes surrounded some cabin perched on the upland, or sheltered in the valley. The pure fresh atmosphere raised my spirits, always ready to sympathise with nature's moods, and I strode gaily along, enjoying the ripe, but not yet mournful, beauty of the year, the river's flow, and the tolling of the church bell,—a peculiarly sweet and full-toned one,—whose echoes came solemnly down the vale from the mountain solitudes among which it lay, making rich music to my ear. Ere long I climbed the heights, and entered upon the moor where the grey church rose so still and lone. The lights and shadows resting on the hills were exquisite; and my blood, bounding in a joyous flow with youth, and health, and exercise, made me in a mood to be delighted with every thing. Even the blue harebells and the fairy rings over which I trode, were as rich in magic charm to me as if I had been where Shakspeare was when he dreamt his *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

When I entered the church, I found that it was yet very early. But few of the congregation had yet assembled; and these were all of a very humble class. Peasant girls, in grey frieze cloaks, and coarse straw bonnets, beneath which the lace borders of their Sunday caps, trimmed with