

betrayed my secret, was to leave Ireland in a few days, and the Prince, to whom I told everything, with the kindness of a true friend promised that he would take the very same day for his own departure. The remainder we were to leave to fortune. Love-making left me little time for any other thoughts; but still as, for appearance' sake, I was obliged to pass some hours of every day apart from Donna Maria, I took the occasion of one of these forced absences to visit a scene which had never quitted my mind through all the changeful fortunes of my life, — the little spot where I was born. Rising one morning at break of day, I set out for Horseleap, to see once more, and for the last time, the humble home of my childhood. The distance was about sixteen miles; but as I rode slowly, my mind full of old memories and reflections, I did not reach the place till nigh noon. Alas! I should never have known the spot! There had been a season of famine and pestilence, and now the little village was almost tenantless. Many of the cabins were unroofed; in some, the blackened rafters bore tokens of fire. The one shop that used to supply the humble luxuries of the poor was closed, and I passed on with a heavy heart towards the cross-roads where "Con's Acre" lay.

I had not gone far when my eye, straining to catch it, detected the roof of the cabin rising above the little thorn hedge that flanked the road. Ay, there was the old stone-quarry I used to play in, as a child, fancying that its granite sides were mountain precipices, and its little pools were lakes. There was the gate on which for hours long I have sat, gazing at the bleak expanse of moorland, and wondering if all the wide world beyond had nothing fairer or more beautiful than this.

"Who lives in that cabin yonder?" asked I, of a peasant on the road.

The man replied that it was "the minister;" adding his name, which, however, I could not catch. Long as I had been away from Ireland, I could not forget that this was the especial title given to the Protestant clergyman of the parish, and I rode up to the door wondering how it chanced that he was reduced to a dwelling of such humble pretensions. An old woman came out as I drew up, and told me that the