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BY MISS MURRAY.

CHAPTER I.

READER! have you ever visited the county of Wicklow, the fairest of all the fair counties in Ireland's green isle? There lie scenes which artists have painted and poets sung; there young wedded lovers resort to spend that month sweet as "the honey of Hybla;" there the votaries of the rod and gun congregate, slaughtering the gallant grouse among his heathy mountains, or luring the speckled trout from his silvery stream; and there one who belongs to neither of the aforesaid classes, but is simply a lover of nature for her own sweet sake, may find her in some of the wildest and softest phases she ever assumes. In that lovely region, valleys of Arcadian richness, scattered with gigantic timber, watered by full rivers, adorned by stately mansions, and flourishing, thriving villages, are enclosed by gentle and fertile hills, beyond which are hidden fairy dells, where flower and shrub, crag and moss, half-hide the sparkling little streams that leap among them,—narrowing into deep wild glens, traversed by mountain torrents, and glorious in the mingled beauty and grandeur of water, rock, and wood,—

"The oak, the ash, and the bonnie ivy tree!"

or widening into lonely moorlands, where the golden furze and purple heath make gorgeous the summer day; where the hum of the bee and the chirp of the grasshopper are heard, and innumerable larks soar over head, carolling their joyous lyrics above their mossy nests. Farther again rise frowning granite-browed mountains, heathy coverts for game, and hiding in their recesses many a secret glen, sterile and savage, yet in spite of its lonely austerity wearing on its bosom some deep, glassy lough, like a gem; or, perhaps, sheltering the grey ruins of some