

so that the gratitude of the people ruined, at the same time, their benefactors and themselves. And yet, this age of Elizabeth was a glorious age. Every where, but Ireland, it was filled with power and with promise. From the death of Mary to that of James the First, was a period such as comes but seldom, and when it comes, such as makes an era. A mighty life was palpitating among the nations; the head of civilized humanity was filled with many speculations, and the heart was beating with marvellous fancies and magnanimous passion. Genius and glory had burst as a flood of light upon the world. The feudal system was passing away. The arm of its oppression had been broken, but its high-bred courtesy yet remained; its violence was repressed, but its heroic spirit had not been quenched. The courage of the savage warrior had given way before the chivalry of the humaner soldier. The dominion of superstition, too, had been broken, but a rigid utilitarianism had not yet taken place. The spectres of night had vanished, but dreams of the wonderful and the lovely still hovered around imagination. The earth was not bare, nor the heavens empty. The merchant and the money-changer began to rule the city; but Queen Mab was not yet dethroned. She had yet her fairy empire in the green-wood shade; she had yet her dancing in the moonlit glen. The practical had not yet banished the romantic, and the soul had her philosophy, as well as the senses. Columbus had opened new worlds, and the old world hailed him as the Moses of the seas. Dreams of sunny regions; of Edens in the deserts; of El Doradoes in the treadless hills, wafted longing fancies from olden homes, and thoughts flew fast and far on the crest of the wave and the wing of the wind. Learning started from leaden sleep to earnest life. Philosophy poured forth her eloquent wisdom; and the thoughtful listened with enraptured ear. Poetry was filling the earth with her music;