

DOOM CASTLE.

CHAPTER I.

COUNT VICTOR COMES TO A STRANGE COUNTRY.

IT was an afternoon in autumn, with a sound of wintry breakers on the shore, the tall woods copper-colour, the thickets dishevelled, and the nuts, in the corries of Ardkinglas, the braes of Ardno, dropping upon bracken burned to gold. Until he was out of the glen and into the open land, the traveller could scarcely conceive that what by his chart was no more than an arm of the ocean could make so much ado; but when he found the incoming tide fretted here and there by black rocks, and elsewhere, in little bays, the beaches strewn with massive boulders, the high rumour of the sea-breakers in that breezy weather seemed more explicable. And still, for him, it was above all a country of appalling silence in spite of the tide thundering. Fresh from the pleasant rabble of Paris, the tumult of the streets, the unending gossip of the faubourgs that were at once his vexation and his joy, and from the eager ride that had brought him through Normandy when its orchards were busy from morning till night with cheerful peasants plucking fruit, his ear had not grown accustomed to the still of the valleys, the