

Miss Katharine, there they were, all camped round about the Devil's Kitchen, and they were eating and drinking, and talking and singing, and full of sport, and it came into my head to give them a fright, and I screeched just like the Banshee of the Glen—I can do it splendid. And when they heard it—and it sounded so wild among the rocks that it almost frightened myself—they jumped up, out of their wits with fear, and some ran down to the river, and some up to the top of the mountain, and some one way, and some another, but they didn't catch me, I'll be bound. And then I got a snug place among the heath, and fell fast asleep, and when I woke I screeched again, and I screeched once more at daybreak, and I wouldn't be a bit surprised if I have scared them out of the Glen."

"Malachy," said Katharine, "you mustn't tell any one that you saw them, or that you know they are there, till Mr. Frank hears."

"Not a word will I tell, Miss Katharine," said the boy. "Sure you may trust me. Did I ever tell any one about the papers I found in Black Tom's cellars?"

"No; I am sure you are a good, faithful boy; but, Malachy, even Mr. Frank's life may depend on your silence!"

"Ropes and wild horses wouldn't draw it out of me, Miss Katharine," said the boy, passionately. "Don't you believe me?"

"Yes, Malachy, I believe you," said Katharine. "Now come with me to the house."

On entering the breakfast room, Katharine found Dr. Wingfield and Miss Dicy there, wondering at her absence. "Dear Aunt Dicy, dear Dr. Wingfield," she said, speaking as calmly as she could, "I must go to Dublin instantly; I must see Frank before he leaves; no telegram, no messenger would do. I must see him myself. When you have heard all I have to tell you, I know you will agree with me that I ought to go to him without a moment's delay."

CHAPTER XVII.

A FENIAN CAMP.

IT was one of those delicious nights in June when sunset and moonrise meet together, and the silvery rays of the first stars were faintly gleaming through the golden atmosphere in which earth and heaven were wrapped, when Matty the Mouse passed the sentries guarding the Phooka's Glen, and climbed the rocks to the spot selected by McCann for a camp. It was half-way up the northern mountain, where great masses of rock were thrown together in such a manner as to form a chain of caves or grottoes capable of holding several hundred men, and with so many intricate passages and windings that no one ignorant of their mysteries could have traversed them in safety. Here a remnant of the rebels of "Ninety-eight" lay concealed for months, till a spy of Lord Lake's managed to get in among them, and having mastered the secrets of the caves, led the soldiers thither and surprised the fugitives, who, after a desperate defence, were driven out, and nearly all mercilessly slaughtered. One of these caves, with a curious funnel-shaped opening at the top (called the Phooka's Chimney), was traditionally known as the Phooka's Kitchen; and another, in which something like a horse's stall and manger appeared to have been cut in the rock, bore the name of the Phooka's Stable. In front of these caves was a broad ledge or terrace, falling precipitously down more than a hundred feet, where it was broken by a deep dent or hollow, called the Phooka's Footstep, in which lay broken and jagged fragments of rock, a few hazel and holly bushes, and one very old and thickly branched yew tree growing among them. Huge masses of rock, with stunted and twisted oak and birch trees hanging almost horizontally from their crevices, impassable cliffs rising at each side, led from thence to the river and glen below.