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IN SEARCH OF THE SUPERNATURAL.

## CHAPTER I.

When I was a little girl living in Ireland the great desire of my life was to see a fairy. I was staying with my aunt, who lived in a country village, near enough to Slemish (*Slieve mis*) to watch him putting on his night-cap of cloud when a storm was brewing.

My education in fairy lore had been neglected. Father said, "The child is too imaginative, her mind must not be filled with lying wonders." My dear mother, who thought she had been injured by such stories in her youth, confined my reading for amusement to Watt's Hymns, and Pollock's and Miss Edgeworth's Tales. I enjoyed them very much; but while I wept over the sorrows of "Helen of the Glen," or wondered at the namby-pamby silliness of Rosamond, I was so little influenced by these authors that I backslid into fairy tales whenever I got the opportunity. I was not tempted at home, where nothing of the kind was ever allowed to enter. I did indeed, once bring home "The Yellow Dwarf," borrowed from one of the pupils at Mrs. Campbell's preparatory school; but our ruling power, the maid, Lizzie Beveridge, flung it into the fire as "bein trash enuech tae pit ony lass bairn wrang i' the head."

When Uncle West came to our house in Edinburgh and borrowed me for a long visit, because he had no little ones of his own, while father had a houseful, I was allowed to go, and I went gladly, and found myself at once in Wonderland.

Uncle had some appointment under Government that had caused him to move about a good deal; so that his home had for a time been in different parts of Ireland, Scotland and even Wales. His sojourn in each place had been long enough to justify him in taking his family with him. The family, when I went to visit them, had been for some time back in their original home in the North of Ireland. They lived in a delightfully rambling old house, full of unexpected places, where any amount of ghosts might be hidden away. It was covered with ivy, and Mary O'Neil, the ruler over aunt's house, told me that the banshee never cried round a house that had "no coverin' of ivy to show its ancientness."

Mary liked her mistress, and was loyal to the family as an Irish servant should be—had followed them in all their removals; but deep down in her heart she nourished a pride of the name she bore, and a belief that if ever the banshee cried round uncle's, it would not be for any of the family, but for herself,