

were so healthy that Dr Frere used to say that they were almost wasted on a doctor, as he could never make experiments on them, or dose them with tonics, or anything else.

There were no boys in the Frere family. Prue and Patty came first; and then a long way below them came a little girl called Rosaleen. She was a dark and very handsome child, aged eleven, and was called after the famous Dark Rosaleen, so well known to all lovers of Irish ballads. The next girl was called Amélie. She was only a year younger, and when this story begins was ten. Rosaleen was generally spoken of as Rose, and Amélie as Amy. Thus there were four girls in the Frere family, and they were known in the time of the great fight as the Evens.

Now the Carlingfords were, of course, the Odds; and this can be soon explained when a little is said with regard to the chief members of the household. The grown-ups had nothing to say to the great battle, and for a long time did not even know of its existence. To begin with the youngest in that house: there were twins—a boy and a girl aged ten, who went by the names of Fred and Peach; and there were two big boys called Kenneth and Malcolm, aged thirteen and fourteen; and then there was Nina, who was the cause of all the mischief,