

says, they always fell, and at last their very dress—their long hair, and yellow mantles—was proscribed. I wonder if their angry ghosts ever wander about their old haunts now-a-days. I think, if they do, it must soothe them to hear you when you sing—‘I will fly with my Coulin.’ I know it wrapt me in Elysium last night.”

“You are so fond of music,” said the happy Katharine.

“Of *your* music—music that comes from the soul, and speaks to the soul—I am,” said Frank.

Turning into the lane leading to the farm-yard, they rode on between its banks, where the hazel bushes hung out their ripening clusters, and the weird old ash trees, half-covered with ivy and lichen, had their roots clothed with soft cushions of moss, till they came to the yard gate. A boy inside was sitting on a stone, eating apples, and Frank called to him to come and take the horses.

The boy threw away his apple, and ran into the lane. “Oh, sir,” he exclaimed, “have you brought any news of Mr. Byrne?”

“Mr. Byrne? No. What do you mean, Barney?”

“Sure he never came home since he went to Dublin, and to-day the mistress got a letter that’s drove her fairly distracted.”

“Why, what was in the letter?” asked Frank.

“Oh, sorra bit of me knows,” said Barney. “Ned Keegan says Mr. Byrne’s murdered, and Terry Ryan says he’s gone across the seas to America; but Nancy Connor says the letter was from himself, and sure if it was, he can’t be dead anyhow.”

“Where is Mrs Byrne?”

“Up at the old castle, sir. The very minute she read the letter she ran up there like a madwoman, and we thought she’d do herself a mischief, till Nancy had the wit to send for Little Dorinn.”

“Is Little Dorinn with her now?”

“Yes, sir, and there was a letter for her

too, and Nancy says whatever was in it she doesn’t know, but she thinks it has broke her heart.”

“Katharine, I must go to them, poor souls,” said Frank. “I must find out what has happened. There is a seat under that old budlea in the bawn—will you wait for me there?”

“May I go with you?” asked Katharine, from whose beautiful and sensitive face the flush of young love and happiness had suddenly fled, leaving it quite pale. “I am so sorry for Mrs. Byrne—and for Little Dorinn, too,” and her eyes filled with compassionate tears.

“Yes, my Katharine, come if you wish; perhaps you may be able to comfort them a little. And when we know the truth, it may not be so bad as Barney says.”

Drawing Katharine’s arm through his, Frank led her across the little stream that ran by the dairy, and up the bank to the ruined tower. A few green mounds, a pile or two of huge granite stones, and broken fragments, were all that remained. Mosses and lichens, weeds and wild flowers, grew over the stones, and thickets of elder, thorns and briars, clustered about them. Just outside one of the mounds stood the remnant of a once magnificent oak, dead at one side, and with a hollow space in its trunk that would have held twenty men; the other side still bore branches, green and apparently vigorous.

Under this grand old tree, which had flourished before the tower was built, Mrs. Byrne was sitting, her head bowed down, her arms clasped about her knees, rocking herself to and fro while she moaned and wept. She had torn off her cap in her frenzy of grief, and her long hair, raven black, with here and there a white streak gleaming through, fell wildly over her shoulders. Little Dorinn knelt beside her, not weeping or lamenting, but quiet and still; every vestige of colour had fled from her face, her very lips were white, and her eyes had a