

CHAPTER II.

Halifax is a place where Her Britannic Majesty is obliged to keep several war vessels stationed for the purpose of protecting it from the incursions of a desperate band of savages that infest the woods in the immediate neighbourhood. Those untameable aborigines are known as the "Mic-Macs," a name assumed by them in honour of two notorious and fiery Celts, whom they had made chiefs of their tribes; one "Michael O'Rourke," was a desperate character in the eyes of the revenue authorities in Ireland, being a smuggler and distiller of illicit whiskey, which business he carried on for many years, and although narrowly watched, the gaugers could never catch him, or find the place where the distilling operations were going on, until one night, through some fortuitous circumstance, a posse of seventeen of them discovered the cave, and there surprised Mike and his comrades just in the act of finishing off a large batch of the very best *poteen*. Mike took in the situation at once, and was equal to the emergency. He told them that his game was up now, and as he had been so cleverly caught he would offer no resistance but submit quietly to his captors and punishment, but as the night was wild and stormy they might as well make themselves comfortable and merry till morning, as there was no way of escape from their custody in any case. The officers being wet and much fatigued, consented to take Mike's advice, and also to partake of refreshments which were set before them in abundance, whiskey not being the least important element in the fare, particularly as Mike had cleverly introduced an auxiliary into the bottle in the form of a powerful narcotic. The gaugers partook of the viands unsparingly, and of the whiskey unsuspectingly but cautiously, while their prisoner kept up a rattling conversation, relating many anecdotes about his smuggling career, which the captors enjoyed immensely for a time, but the narcotic was not long in doing its work; the officers, one by one fell into a state of stupor, and when the last one yielded to its influence, Mike and his companions proceeded to bind them hand and foot, with strong cords, till they came to the last, an athletic young fellow, who had taken but little of the whiskey, and consequently was not much affected by it. He woke up just in time to see what had been done, and made a spring out through the door, and although pursued for some distance effected his escape, and as it was several miles to the