

there are few things more delightful than the famed sleigh ride when enjoyed in perfection. Over the frozen snow glides the sleigh with marvellous celerity, its motion unfelt; the sky is of the purest sapphire tint, the sun's brightness undimmed by the faintest shadow of a cloud, and every tree hanging its dazzling snow wreathes on high, to court its rays; the breath is frozen, the moment it leaves the lips, and yet wrapped in woollens and furs and half buried in robes of wolf and buffalo skins, the travellers are impervious to the cold and the tiny particles of ice, which fill the air as with Lilliputian arrows, but reach not his well-defended person—then the merry notes of the bells which stud the harness, fall cheerily on the ear, and the crust beneath the horses' feet is creaking and crackling in strange wild sounds—and all combined, sets the blood dancing and the spirit bounding with a momentary forgetfulness of all care. Yet delightful above all are the feelings of excitement, wonder, and thrilling enjoyment which to skim over a frozen lake for the first time excites. The vast expanse spread around like a sea of molten glass, the flying sleighs, cutters and carioles, which career along the surface with such bird-like speed, the new strange aspect which all objects and sounds assume, have the effect which an entrance into a new world might produce, while thoughts of the brittle materials over which the gaily caparisoned horses prance so proudly, and the deep waters beneath, whose imprisoned voice seems in smothered accents to pray for release, give just sufficient sense of danger to add a sort of wild zest to every other emotion. If a town line the margin of the lake, with its tinned roofs, steeples and domes shimmering in the sun's rays which fall with such dazzling power through the pure diaphanous atmosphere, it seems to realize all the fictions of the Thousand and One Nights, and glitters before you a city of crystal and amber.

The small arm of the lake, which stretched between the shore on which Hemlock Knoll lay, and the so-called city of Heliopolis, had been in one night frozen over, but it was as yet considered unsafe to cross. An intense frost was abroad, with that calmness and serenity of the atmosphere which is its usual accompaniment. The unsoftened snow, the glittering icicles, the sparkling of diamond-like frost which filled the air, the purple sky, and the radiant sun, tempted Helen forth, and she felt her spirits rise joyously as she bounded lightly over the frozen ground, now and then shaking down the light wreathes which hung like garlands of frosted silver, on the hemlocks and furs which lay in her path. Following the track

made by the feet of the woodsmen, she soon reached the open space which they had already cleared, and where, with Mr. Blachford, they were at work. The voice of Brian was the first which reached her ears:

"I'm hot and determined as a live salamander, I'll prove myself as valiant as the great Alexander, Won't you come to my wake, when I go my long meander, And they're all cryin' round me, 'arrah why did ye die!'"

"God save ye, Miss Helen! is it yerself! you're come to see the way we're massacreein' the trees; och! if I had 'em in ould Ireland, I'd soon make my fortin' of 'em, but sure here they're not worth an ould song. Faix and it goes to my heart to see all the fine splinters and rotten wood, let alone the timber itself, goin' to waste when I think of all the poor cratures I left at home that can't get a stick to bile their few praties, and have to be wandehrhin' about in the night stalin' the finces and gettin' themselves clapped into jail for it, and it's often I'm ready to stop and pick 'em up before I remember where I am."

"But, fortunately, the winters of Ireland are not so cold as they are here, Brian."

"Thru for you, Miss. Sure if God was'n't marcfiful to us that a way, what 'uld we do. The winters are mostly beautiful and soft, and if they can manage to get what biles their few praties, as I said afore, they do very well, and sure isn't that the way of the world? Where there's fine food there's mostly no appetite for it, and where it's coarse and poor, hunger and health makes it sweet."

"If all your countrymen have your cheerful content, Brian, in spite of their poverty, they must be happy."

"Musha, and so they are happy, Miss; as happy as the day's long when they can contrive to keep sowl and body together; an' as for myself there's not a more contented or lighther-hearted fellow undher the sun."

Leaving this natural philosopher, as Touchstone might have called him, Helen seated herself on a log near her father, who was assisting the men to cut the branches off some fallen trees and pile them ready for burning in the autumn. It was the first time she had seen a tree felled, and she watched the progress of the axe on a magnificent hemlock with strong interest. Sad it was to see the stately forest peer bend gradually forward its green branches, yielding by slow degrees to the resistless force which bowed its evergreen honours lower and lower, till, at last, with a crash, which smote on her excited ear like the death-shriek of some sentient being, it fell heavily to