

like some Peri who had wandered from Southern climes, gleaned for an instant in the sunbeams and then vanished. In the Eastern horizon masses of curled clouds, tinted in part of a deep lurid hue rose above the green summits of the trees and rested movelessly there. Max Von Werfenstein was wandering idly through the wood which lay between Hemlock Knoll and Leafy Hollow, starting the blue pigeons from their coverts every now and then, when he came suddenly on a cluster of sugar maples, around which the trees had been partially cleared. Here he saw Brian O'Callaghan, laboring with his harmful hatchet, "On a blasted old oak," and as himself unseen, Max watched the force and vehemence with which the boy brought his blows to bear on the devoted tree, and the determined swing of his sinewy little arm, he could not help smiling at such an apparent waste of time and energy. As Brian chopped, he sung in his own gay insouciant manner.

"It's up the foggy mountain
And down the dewy glen;
For we are the boys that dar ye
We're all United Men!
We are the boys that dar ye
That dar ye, that dar ye
We are the boys that dare ye
For we're all United Men!"

Farther than this verse he seemed unable to get, for at its conclusion he always paused in his song, and after two or three tremendous blows on the dead oak commenced again.

From the day the young painter and Brian had together encountered danger on the ice for the sake of Helen Blachford, Max had felt a strong interest in the frank and gallant young Irish boy, and he now accosted him in a friendly tone.

"What did that old fellow do to you, Brian, that you have brought him to the ground before his time?"

"Oh! is that yerself, Mr. Max? By gorra the ne'er a bit of harum it ever done me, sir, but you see I was jist vent'in' my ill-humor on it, and sarvin' it the way I'd sarve some one else if I could."

"It's well that some one else is out of your way then," Max replied, laughing, "both for you and him. "But who is it that has thus mortally offended you?"

"It's well for him, sir, I'm thinkin' but I dunna whether its well for me or not. At any rate murdherin' that ould oak has done me a power of good. I don't feel so dangerous all out now."

"But you haven't told me what has put you in such a position, Brian."

"Who is it, sir? Oh! faix it's that Yankee

man, Mr. Iron Fist, or whatever you call him. I don't care about his name, but if I had him here I'd thry whether his fist or mine 'uld hould out the longest, as Iron a wan' as it is."

"Why, Brian," cried Max, laughing more than ever, "would such a little fellow as you have the temerity to attack such a giant as Mr. Fisk?"

"I'm little to be sure, sir, but I'm pretty tough, and I know them braggin' Yankees don't know how to use their fingers. Nothing but knives and pistols suit *them*."

"How has Colonel Fisk offended you?" asked Max.

"Troth, sir, just by making a fool of one who ought to know better nor to believe his nonsense. It's more her fault nor his."

"Whose fault? I cannot understand you."

"Lydy's fault, sir. Didn't she tell me not an hour gone that she intended to be Mrs. Fisk. As sure as you're standin' there she did, Mr. Max; and I know myself he's been talkin' baldherdash to her whin he could get hould of her this long time back. Bad luck to him for a dhried eel-skin as he is! whin he seen he had no chance of the mistress he turned to the maid!"

"Do you mean that Colonel Fisk wishes to marry Lydia?" asked Max, somewhat surprised.

"Faix he does, sir, and 'uld marry her to-morrow, if she'd have him for as great a gentleman as he purtends to be. Not but the girl's too good for the likes ov him."

"I suppose," said Max, smiling, "you wish her to become Mrs. O'Callaghan instead of Mrs. Fisk."

"You've hot it, sir," answered Brian, coolly, "that's just it."

"Why, Brian, you can hardly be more than sixteen."

"Bydad, sir, I'm that and two years more. I was eighteen the first of last month, sir. Faix my father was married whin he was a year younger. You think I'm only a boy because I'm little, but I'm ould enough."

"Not very old, Brian, according to your own showing. But how do you intend to support a wife?"

"Sure, sir, ant there plenty of land to knock up a shelther on, and plenty of wood to build it with, and haven't I health and strength to work, thank God! and the will to do it? Oh no fear but I'd be able to support her asy enough wid the help of God. Whin a boy marries for love first, he may get the money afther, but if he waits to get the money, first it's likely the love'll be all gone by the time it has come. However, I'm not all out so unperviden' as you think, sir, I'd wait a year or