

A WISE CHOICE.

ONE evening towards the close of February, 1872, an outside car, bearing a solitary passenger dashed up to the portals of the Shelburne Hotel, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin.

"I require a room," said the newcomer addressing the clerk.

"Very well, sir" replied the clerk.

"Dolan, take this gentleman's luggage up to ninety-seven. Will you be pleased to register, sir?"

A white hand, fit for a countess, wrote, "Charles Greville, the Temple, London."

Charlie Greville, the second son of Sir Percy Greville, was a young Englishman of the active and ambitious type. At first it was Sir Percy's intention to have obtained a nomination for him in the Foreign Office, but the lad having evinced a very decided wish to go to the English bar, his father at once turned the current of his studies towards the woollack, and Charlie was now pulling with the current, onward to fame and fortune.

Greville led a busy life. It was his wont to live perpetually under pressure. He was playing for high stakes, for one of the many big chances that come to the patient, the persevering, the strong.

"Men have sat in the Upper House who began with smaller advantages than mine," he thought. "All I require is a wife with a fortune. A fortune will buy anything in commercial England. Yes, I must go in for a girl with money, and will accept all dowager invitations even at the risk of a slice of my constitution, as girls are only to be met with at those Turkish baths called balls."

No lady in the land extends more gracious hospitality to rising statesmen, artists, barristers, and such like,

than Countess Waldegrave. Her ladyship's receptions are the most attractive crushes in the immensely great little world of fashion. It was at one of these crushes that Charlie Greville met Mr. Morgan Blake, member of Parliament for Connemara—an English Irishman who was engaged in a perpetual endeavor to conceal a rich brogue, and who regarded the fact of having been born in Ireland in the light of an actual misfortune. The possessor of a splendid estate which he seldom visited and of a rent-roll of three thousand per annum, he was so pregnated with the poison of absenteeism that he came to regard everything Irish as a mistake, not even excepting the constituency which he so grossly misrepresented and whose interests he so glaringly neglected. In this anti-Irish feeling he was fondly encouraged by his wife, who believed in Central Africa but not in Tipperary, and who by his will tied up the sum of thirty thousand pounds in such a manner as to preclude the possibility of its being expended, or any portion thereof, in that "cursed and impossible country." Mrs. Blake was to enjoy the interest until her eldest child came of age—if a son, at twenty-one; if a daughter, at eighteen; the son to marry an Englishwoman, and to reside in England, the daughter to marry an Englishman and to reside in England; and, in default of issue, the money on the demise of Mr. Blake was to go to Her Most Gracious Majesty, Queen Victoria, or the then sovereign of the realm.

"Aw! how de-do, Mistaw Greville?" exclaimed the M. P., as the barrister was gently crushing past in an endeavor to reach within greeting of his hostess.

"You here, Mr. Blake?"