

She had entered the room attired *en costume du bal*. "A tax on absentees! Why, who on earth would live in Ireland that could live out of it."

"Mamma, we can never agree about Ireland, so let us talk of the weather."

"Mr. Greville, take my advice and return to our beloved London by the morning boat."

"I cannot go back, Mrs. Blake, until I shall have done three things."

"What are they? if not an impertinent question."

"Number one, to see Miss Blake presented at court; number two, to have a tremendous ride on an outside jaunting car; and number three, to take a dash with an Irish pack of hounds."

"What Saxon is talking of Irish hounds?" demanded a bright, cherry voice, as a dapper, little fellow, whose age might have been fourteen or forty, arrayed in the white waist coat and brass buttoned coat indicative of his being attached to the household of the lord lieutenant, plunged into the apartment.

"Mr. Greville is, Captain Dillon. Let me introduce Mr. Greville, of the English bar, to Captain Dillon, of his excellency's staff."

The two gentlemen bowed.

"I was just saying," said Greville, "that I want a plunge with an Irish pack."

"You're in luck, then, Mr. Greville, for the Ward Union stag-hounds meet to-morrow, but if you want real hard riding, run down with Blake here to Curragh-na-Copple. By the way, you'll want a mount."

"I suppose I can arrange that."

"I don't suppose you can without my help. Let me see. Bertie Hope is off to town and won't be down until Thursday. You can have Bertie's chestnut."

"Why, my dear Captain Dillon, you overwhelm me!" cried Greville.

"What are you talking about, Mr. Greville? When a stranger comes amongst us we only try to take him in.

What! not dressed yet, Miss Blake?"

"I am not going to the Jephson's ball."

"Do you not care for balls, Miss Blake?" asked Greville.

"In deed I do not."

"Nor for dancing?"

"Nor for dancing."

"Strange girl!" thought Greville, as, later on, he strolled round Stephen's Green smoking a meditative cigar preparatory to making a visit of the city.

"Is Dublin much?" laughingly demanded Miss Blake as the barrister upon his return gushed over the beauty of the city.

"I am perfectly charmed with it. What a glorious building is the Bank of Ireland! Do you know, it made me sad to stand in the old House of Lords and think . . ."

"It doesn't bear thinking," she interrupted. "How do you like Sackville Street?"

"It is very beautiful."

"It is wide enough to drive cattle through for the English market, and that's about the best use for it," said Mrs. Blake.

The time glided past all too rapidly, and every hour the rosy tide of love crept upward, upward, until Charlie Greville felt that he was doomed to be overwhelmed unless a rope was cast to him by the dainty hand of Blanche Blake.

Greville "did" the *levée*, and, upon the following night attended the drawing room.

The presentation came off at the drawing room, and Miss Blake was duly saluted by the viceroy and made free of the Irish court. There was quite a buzz of admiration as, all blushing and radiant, she emerged from the throne-room into St. Patrick's Hall.

"It's a terrible ordeal," she laughed; "and why I did not back into my train is still a mystery to me."

Officers in gorgeous and glittering uniforms pressed for introductions.

"She's eighty thousand pounds,"