

"Why not?"

"Why, the house is in a frenzy over Mr. Butt's amendment, and there is just a chance for the Irish party to beat the government."

At this moment Mr. Blake was joined by a fair, slenderly-built girl, with hair of that special hue that is seen on the shell of the Spanish chestnut, and the complexion of a May morning.

"For what hour did you order the carriage, papa?" she asked in a somewhat weary tone.

"Half-past one, Blanche."

"Another hour of this?"

"Are you tired?"

"I suppose so. I don't much care for this sort of thing."

"Let me present Mr. Greville to you. Mr. Greville, my daughter."

The aspiring barrister felt a thrill of exultation pass through him. Thirty thousand pounds! Mr. Blake moved away, and Greville was left alone with Blanche.

"What shall I talk to you about, Miss Blake?" he asked.

"Ireland, if you *can*," she laughed.

"Are you *very* Irish?"

"*I am*", firmly, almost haughtily.

"I hope to do Ireland some day."

"Some day is *no* day; go at once!"

"You reside in Ireland?"

"Oh! very little; *too* little," she exclaimed. I have been at the convent near Honfleur for three years, and my vacations have always been spent in London; but we go over next week. I am to be presented at the Irish court, and then we go to Curragh-na-Copple for some weeks.

"Is Dublin much?" he asked after Miss Blake had dashed over Connemara as though mounted on a thoroughbred and leading the "Galway Blazers."

"How do you mean?"

"Have you any society?"

"Why should not Dublin be for society the societiest? Have they not a Castle and a lord Lieutenant, a lord chancellor, a master of the rolls, twelve judges, the law officers of the crown, and, thanks to Saxon terror, a

tremendous garrison? Have they not clubs, and musical societies, and coteries to no end?"

"You quite interest me. I *must* take time for a flying visit. I do like Irish people," he added honestly enough.

"Collectively you hate us, individually you love us. Pshaw!" with an irresistible shrug, "you are too self opinionated here, too conceited, ever to think of us save as a purchased people. Am I not right, Mr. d'Alton?" turning to a gentleman who had just lounged up to her side.

"Of course you are Miss Blake; and having conceded this, may I ask what the question at issue happens to be?"

"This conceding is a recklessness that leaves the county throbbing between hope and despair. Why *concede* anything?"

"Expediency! Although, seriously, we should concede *nothing*. To-night, for instance, in the House we are fighting the government with cold steel, beating them at their own weapons, contesting the ground inch by inch. The struggle is raging *now*."

"And Mr. D'Alton, the member for Dunmore, dallies in Lady Waldegrave's drawing room, instead of taking his stand at Thermopylae," cried Blanche, her lips curling in open scorn.

"You are unjust, Miss Blake," retorted d'Alton hotly. "I was sent here by Mr. Butt to bring down your father *vi et armis*. We are trying a change of front, and, although we are very few, we mean to stand shoulder to shoulder to the bitter end."

Herbert D'Alton is a superb specimen of the Irish gentleman. Six feet two in height, he has the shoulders of an athlete and the waist of an Adonis. His handsome face, ever sunlit, is a face that irresistibly attracts. Come of the "rale ould stock," his love for Ireland is a love that is more than love, and with her glowing cause, he has cast his lot. He is member for Dunmore, and an ardent Home-Ruler.