

THE STORY OF IRELAND

(By A. M. SULLIVAN.)

CHAPTER XXXII.—THE REBELLION OF SILKEN THOMAS.

When Kildare was summoned to London—as it proved to be for the last time—he was called upon to nominate someone who should act for him in his absence, and for whom he himself would be responsible. Unfortunately he nominated his own son Thomas,* a hot, impetuous, brave, daring, and chivalrous youth, scarce one-and-twenty years of age. For some time the Earl lay in London Tower, his fate as yet uncertain; the enemies of his house meanwhile striving steadily to insure his ruin.

It was at this juncture that the events detailed in bygone pages—Henry's quarrel with the Pope, and the consequent politico-religious revolution in England—flung all the English realm into consternation and dismay. Amidst the tidings of startling changes and bloody executions in London brought by each mail to Ireland, came many disquieting rumors of the fate of the Geraldine Earl. The effect of these stories on the young Lord Thomas seems to have suggested to the anti-Geraldine faction a foul plot to accomplish his ruin. Forged letters were circulated giving out with much circumstantiality how the Earl, his father, had been beheaded in the Tower of London, notwithstanding the King's promise to the contrary. The effect of this news on the Geraldine party, but most of all on the young Lord Thomas, may be imagined. Stunned for an instant by this cruel blow, his resolution was taken in a burst of passionate grief and anger. Vengeance! vengeance on the trebly perjured and blood-guilty King, whose crimes of lust, murder, and sacrilege called aloud for punishment, and forfeited for him allegiance, throne, and life! The youthful deputy hastily assembling his guards and retainers, and surrounded by a crowd of his grief-stricken and vengeful kinsmen, marched to Mary's Abbey, where the Privy Council was already sitting, waiting for him to preside over its deliberations. The scene at the council chamber is picturesquely sketched by Mr. Ferguson, in his *Hibernian Nights Entertainment*.†

"Presently the crowd collected round the gates began to break up and line the causeways at either side, and a gallant cavalcade was seen through the open arch advancing from Thomas' Court towards the draw-bridge. 'Way for the Lord Deputy,' cried two truncheon-bearers, dashing through the gate, and a shout arose on all sides that Lord Thomas was coming. Trumpeters and pursuivants at arms rode first, then came the mace-bearer with his symbol of office, and after him the sword of state, in a rich scabbard of velvet, carried by its proper officer. Lord Thomas himself, in his robes of state, and surrounded by a dazzling array of nobles and gentlemen, spurred after. The arched gateway was choked for a moment with tossing plumes and banners, flashing arms and gleaming faces, as the magnificent troop burst in like a flood of fire upon the dark and narrow precincts of the city. But behind the splendid cortege which headed their march came a dense column of mailed men-at-arms, that continued to de-file through the close pass long after the gay mantles and waving pennons of their leaders were indistinct in the distance.

"The gate of Mary's Abbey soon received the leaders of the revolt; and ere the last of their followers

* Known in history as "Silken Thomas." He was so called, we are told, from the silken banners carried by his standard-bearers—others say, because of the richness of his personal attire.

† The book here alluded to, it may be right to remind young readers, does not purport to be more than a fanciful story founded on facts; but the author so closely adheres to the outlines of authentic history, that we may credit his sketches and descriptions as well justified approximations to the literal truth.

had ceased to pour into the echoing courtyard, Lord Thomas and his friends were at the door of the council chamber. The assembled lords rose at his entrance, and way was made for him to the chair of state.

"Keep your seats, my lords," said he, stopping midway between the entrance and council table, while his friends gathered in a body at his back. "I have not come to preside over this council, my lords; I come to tell you of a bloody tragedy that has been enacted in London, and to give you to know what steps I have thought fit to take in consequence."

"What tragedy, my lord?" said Alan, the Archbishop of Dublin; "your lordship's looks and words alarm me: what means this multitude of men now in the house of God? My lord, my lord, I fear this step is rashly taken; this looks like something, my lord, that I would be loth to name in the presence of loyal men."

"My Lord Archbishop," replied Thomas, "when you pretend an ignorance of my noble father's murder—"

"Murder!" cried the Lord Chancellor, Cromer, starting from his seat, and all at the council table uttered exclamations of astonishment and horror, save only Alan and the Lord High Treasurer.

"Yes, my lord," the young Geraldine continued, with a stern voice, still addressing the Archbishop, "when you pretend ignorance of that foul and cruel murder, which was done by the instigation and traitorous procuring of yourself and others, your accomplices, and yet taunt me with the step which I have taken, rashly, it may be, but not, I trust, unworthily of my noble father's son, in consequence, you betray at once your treachery and your hypocrisy." By this time the tumult among the soldiery without, who had not till now heard of the death of the Earl, was as if a thousand men had been storming the abbey. They were all native Irish, and to a man devoted to Kildare. Curses, lamentations, and cries of rage and vengeance sounded from every quarter of the courtyard; and some who rushed into the council hall with drawn swords, to be revenged on the authors of their calamity, were with difficulty restrained by the knights and gentlemen around the door from rushing on the Archbishop and slaying him as they heard him denounced by their chief, on the spot. When the clamor was somewhat abated, Alan, who had stood up to speak at its commencement, addressed the Chancellor.

"My lord, this unhappy young man says he knows not what. If his noble father, which God forbid, should have come under his Majesty's displeasure—if he should, indeed, have suffered—although I know not that he hath—the penalty of his numerous treasons—"

"Bold priest, thou liest!" cried Sir Oliver Fitzgerald; "my murdered brother was a truer servant of the Crown than ever stood in thy satin shoes!"

(To be continued.)

F A L L T I M E.

Gold of a ripe oat straw, gold of a south-west moon,
Canada thistle blue and flimflaming larkspur blue,
Tomatoes shining in the October sun with red hearts,
Shining five and six in a row on a wooden fence.
Why do you keep wishes on your faces all day long,
Wishes like women with half-forgotten lovers going
to new cities?

What is there for you in the birds, the birds, the birds,
crying down on the north wind in September,
acres of birds spotting the air going south?
Is there something finished? And some new beginning
on the way?

—CARL SANDBURG, in *Current Opinion*.

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