

Voices' Cannon.

THE VOICE AND PEN.

BY DENIS FLORENCE M'CARTHY.

Oh! the orator's voice is a mighty power

As it echoes from shore to shore—

And the fearless pen has more sway o'er men

Then the murderous cannon's roar.

What burst the chain far o'er the main,

And brightens the captive's den?

'Tis the fearless voice and the pen of power—

Hurrah! for the Voice and Pen!

Hurrah!

Hurrah! for the Voice and Pen!

The tyrant knaves who deny our rights,

And the cowards who blanch with fear,

Exclaim with glee, "no arms have ye—

Nor cannon, nor sword, nor spear!

Your hills are ours; with our forts and tow'rs

We are masters of mount and glen"—

Tyrants, beware! for the arms we bear,

Are the Voice and the fearless Pen!

Hurrah!

Hurrah! for the Voice and Pen!

Though your horsemen stand with their bridles in hand,

And your sentinels walk around—

Though your matches flare in the midnight air,

And your brazen trumpets sound;

Oh! the orator's tongue shall be heard among

These listening warrior men,

And they'll quickly say, "Why should we slay

Our friends of the Voice and Pen!"

Hurrah!

Hurrah! for the Voice and Pen!

When the Lord created the earth and sea,

The stars and the glorious sun,

The Godhead spoke, and the universe woke,

And the mighty work was done!

Let a word be flung from the orator's tongue,

Or a drop from the fearless pen,

And the chains accursed asunder burst,

That fettered the minds of men!

Hurrah!

Hurrah! for the Voice and Pen!

Oh! these are the swords with which we fight,

The arms in which we trust;

Which no tyrant hand will dare to brand,

Which time cannot dim or rust!

When these we bore, we triumphed before,

With these we'll triumph again—

And the world will say, "No power can stay

The Voice and the fearless Pen!

Hurrah!

Hurrah! for the Voice and Pen!

THE DISINHERITED SON.

A LEGEND OF FURNESS ABBEY.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DAY OF SURRENDER.

It was one of the gloomiest of all days, a wet day in summer. The sky was a leaden hue, the rain pattered down, not heavily but without ceasing, a blue haze rose from the ground, and hung like a veil over the valley of Beckansgill; not a tree in the green woods that did not droop its boughs, from each leaf of which streamed the slow continuous ooze of the rain.

The great bell of the abbey had tolled, tolled since the grey dawn—tolled in minute strokes as for a parted soul.

It was a soul dismissed rudely from its earthly habitation—the soul, the spirit of religion, was banished from its stately dwelling at St. Mary's of Furness.

The noble church was already stripped of its ornaments: the plate and the jewels had been torn from the altar, and had been sent off to London. The altar was bare; the censers of silver and gold no longer threw up the vapory wreath of the incense; the lamps and tapers were extinguished; the solemn tones of the organ floated not through the lofty aisles; but prostrate on the cold pavement of their despoiled church, the abbot and his monks chanted the doleful *De Profundis*.

Verily, verily, *De Profundis*!

Out of the depths of her affliction, was the church in white-cliffed Albion, ever to be revived more! "Alas, alas!" as Prior Briand had said to the abbot, "the spirit may indeed be willing, but the flesh is weak."

Faint and weak, indeed, in heart and spirit, was the community at Furness on that day of desolation, when Nature itself put on dim hues of penitence, and seemed to weep the spoliation of that glorious fane.

Harassed, browbeaten, insulted, and plundered; betrayed by their own menials—by those who had eaten the abundant bread of their charity—the Cistercians of Furness had yielded to the hand of tyranny, and "suicidally," as was said by the great lawyer Blackstone, agreed to surrender their abbey.

How poor were the pretences against them, we may judge by the terms which were used by Henry's myrmidon Sussex, in his letter to the king, wherein he says "that though he had sent three of the monks to Lancaster Castle he really could not devise any

means to get rid of them, but offering pensions to the heads of the community.

This pension consisted, in the case of Roper the last abbot of Furness, of bestowing on him the rectory of Dalton, worth about one hundred and forty pounds per year of our money.

Shall we blame the weakness of those who thus surrendered?

Let us read of what befell the nun who dared resist the tyrant Henry, and pause ere we censure those who shuddered to encounter the burning pile, the halter, and the rack!

The Abbot of Furness had admitted the treason of his monk, Henry Salley, who had said, "No secular knave should preach in that church!"

But then the abbot himself had been charged by his own base dependent, the bailiff of Dalton, with bidding his monks be of good cheer, for that he was sure both of the king and Commons!

The prior Gonor, too, had summoned tenants of the abbey, on All Hallows Eve, and said "the king should make no abbots there, for they would choose for themselves?"

These were the treasons of the great Cistercian community at Furness.

And now the day, the fatal day of surrender, had arrived!

Not only from the deprived monks arose the chaunt of lamentation. Such base wretches as the bailiff of Dalton were rare. The people of Furness knew, too, that the ruin of the abbey was their own ruin.

From far and near, on that wet and doleful morning, came the tenants of the abbey to bid adieu to their kind lords—to pray for the last time in their spoiled church.

Oh! how heart-rendering were the sights and sounds that awaited them.

Ere the wretched community had concluded their doleful chant, rude artisans, who had accompanied the commissioners from London, busied themselves in removing the stained glass from the windows, in knocking to pieces the statues and tombs, in tearing up the sepulchral brasses, even in removing the lead from the roof, not only for its saleable worth, but that the monastic buildings might the sooner fall into ruins.

In the abbey courts, before the great doors of the church even, were carts and waggons, filled with the furniture from the abbot's lodgings, from the monks' cells, with portable articles from the church itself.

It approached the hour of noon.

The clouds had not lifted from the grey sky, nor the rain ceased to fall; but the wind and rain had swept with a hollow sound athwart the vale of the Nightshade.

The last doleful echo of the song of penitence had ceased to roll along the roof of the church.

In the heaviness of that hour, perhaps the despoiled Cistercians feared that the chaunt of religion would never be raised in that desecrated hall again.

Long, indeed, has the silence of desolation reigned there; but lo, though three hundred years have fled, the voice of prayer has again pealed sweetly under the shattered roof of St. Mary's Abbey at Furness!

No cheering thought of such a far future, however, had the dispossessed monks or their poor tenants, to cheer them on that woful day.

They knew, those poor peasants, those artificers, those military vassals, those herdsmen and fishermen, that the ruin of the monks would be shared by themselves.

How they pressed round the various members of the community, those poor people.

How they struggled for a word with this father or that, who had pronounced over them the nuptial blessing, baptised their children, administered the last rites of the church to their dying parents.

The poor fathers in vain endeavoured to release themselves. The abbot himself was in tears, and giving them his pastoral blessing, implored them to retire, for the commissioners would soon arrive to break the great seal of the abbey, and dismiss its occupants.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LANDS OF CONISTON.

It was nigh over, the deed of surrender had been signed and delivered to the commissioners of King Henry; the great seal of the abbey was broken, and the superior and community of Furness were for the last time assembled in the spacious and magnificent guest chamber, where they had so often dispensed almost princely hospitality.

That beloved and venerable roof-tree was to shelter them no more, they were to depart that night, that very hour.

The grantee of the abbey lands first nominated by the king was his favorite, Sir Everard Tilney.

That recreant never came into possession, for the hour of his triumph was also doomed to be the hour of his humiliation and defeat.

He had kept in the back ground while the attack on the monastery was made, and the preliminaries of the surrender being settled.

Now in the supreme moment, when the abbot and his monks were assembled to quit the noble building, when the people, who were to be the ultimate sufferers, were waiting and watching in the court for a last glance of, a last blessing from, their munificent landlords and benefactors, the base spoiler came to enjoy his triumph, to gloat over the humiliation of the monks, and the grief of their tenants and dependants.

It was wearing towards evening, and the light which had been all day so grey and feeble, fell dimly through the painted windows of the spacious gothic chamber.

The rain continued to patter down but the wind had risen, sobbing athwart the valley of the Nightshade, and round the stately pile of St. Mary's with a voice like that of human lamentation.