

Monks' Gonna.

THE IRISH SHORE.

"Tis vain to hope, 'tis vain to dream,
Your land can never rise:
With hate her children rend her heart.
While low in dust she lies;
Forget her wrongs." So says the world
As many did before,
But, oh; how can we e'er forget
Our dear old Irish shore?

Can we forget the glorious host
Who scorned as slaves to live,
Who gave their lives to native land—
What more could mortal give?
Or cease to venerate the soil
Made holy by their gore?
Our hearts were clogs, could we forget
Our dear old Irish shore.

When we forget to open our eyes
To meet the smile of day,
Forget to weep when those most dear
Are shrouded in the clay.
Forget to look with love and trust
To Him we now adore,
We may forget, but not till then,
Our dear old Irish shore.

'Tis vain to dream, but not to toil,
O land we love, for thee,
While hope remains and memory last
Our dearest wish must be
For thee to labour, plan, and pray
And sleep when life is o'er
Beneath the sod that wraps thy breast
Our green old Irish shore.

A MONARCH'S LYKE-WAKE.

CHAPTER I.

THE DEATH BED.

"ALL is lost" All is lost. Awful words on the lips of a dying man! What must have been the consternation and despair of the soul, about to wing its flight, that found utterance. How often had those lips pronounced condemnation on the pious, the innocent, the true?

Never had that man of ruth been known to spare. Neither age, nor sex, nor rank, could avert his dire wrath.

He looks wildly round, him his eyes try to pierce the dim corners of his spacious chamber.

Gorgeous as well as spacious it is, with rich furniture, a glimmer of gold and silver, and flush of crimson and purple, in the curtains and draperies of velvet and silk.

The air is faint with perfumes burning in vessels of silver and gold, those precious metals being of less worth than the costly workmanship.

The walls are hung with tapestry, but silk, and gold and silver thread, are mingled profusely with the wool with which it is wrought.

Ostrich plumes surmount the tester of the magnificent bedstead, and at the foot is the blazon of the royal leopards of England, for that is a monarch's chamber. It is a king who is gasping there, appalled at the black retrospect of his own life—shrinking from the account which he is called to surrender to the King of kings.

It is Henry, the Eighth of that name, the tyrant, the wife killer, the "bloot king," who lies dying there a death as horrible as any he had decreed to his victims.

What was the axe upon the neck of the miserable Anne Boleyn, or the still more hapless and youthful Katherine Howard? What was the slow torture of Katherine of Arragon's broken heart?

The chaste, the noble, and virtuous Spanish lady had, amid all her afflictions, the supreme consciousness of her own rectitude. She died peaceably in her bed, with more pity for the vicious tyrant, her husband, than for herself.

Vain, selfish, ambitious, and immoral as was the unhappy Anne Boleyn, she was truly repentent in her last hours; and so sharp were the thorns over which she trod her last steps on earth, that the intensity of her sufferings might in some sort atone for her sins.

So also with her hapless successor, the poor girl-queen, her cousin Katherine Howard.

Not one of Henry's victims, with the exception perhaps of the infamous secretary, Cromwell, but might have derived some consolation in their dying hours.

There is none for him—ALL IS LOST!
He has said it. Out of his mouth he is condemned, and there shall be no reversal of this sentence.

He raises his hands—those swollen hands which have been for months incapable of affixing his royal signature to his atrocious decrees; so that a stamp had been used to verify the royal authority.

Feebly he raised those disabled hands; he points to the dusky space opposite his bed and mutters "Monks! monks!" in a voice which, though hoarse and low, is full of condensed horror.

What visions does this guilty and disordered fancy summon up?

Does he see the poor fathers of the Charter House, wasted

with hunger and cold as they perished in the dungeons of Newgate? Does Forrest look between the curtains of his bed, with hoary hair all singed, and features all distorted by the cruel fire; and are Abell and Featherstone by his side, and the wretched reformer Barnes, and the luckless Anne Askew, and other victims, gentle and simple, Catholic and Protestant, whose immolation was all too little to quench that tiger's thirst for blood.

But the cowed-figures draw aside, and, lo, an aged lady seems to bend over the dying Monarch's couch.

Her garb is poor and faded, but a queenly grace she has, is not obliterated by her sordid attire.

She holds up a tress of her long grey hair. It is dabbled in blood; it drops with the gory stream.

She points her aged hand to her throat, and lo, there is round it a crison circlet the mark of the headsman's axe.

The dying monarch is incapable of articulate speech, but his brain is clear, his consciousness is intense.

So he mentally ejaculated—

"Margaret, Countess of Salisbury!"

Yes, Margaret Countess of Salisbury! The last of the royal line of Plantagenet, foully done to death, in her eightieth year, by the savage descendent of the paltry Welsh knight Owen Tudor. Beside the aged lady hovered the shadow of one in the prime of youthful manhood, Henry Courtenaye, the Marquis of Exeter, who in the fair deceitful promise of the king's youth had been the most beloved of his kinsmen, his first cousin, son of the Princess Katherine of York.

What mattered that! nor kin, nor friendship, nor early association availed with that poor soul, possessed of seven devils; around the neck of Exeter, the glazing eyes of the king seemed to descry the crimson line, that told how by his decree, the spirit was dismissed by the headsman's axe.

He resolutely closed his eyes, his powers of speech had gone, but if he could have spoken he could have cried, "This is but a dream!" Then seemed a clear but gibing voice to make answer to his unuttered thought.

"Tyrant it is no dream! It is death, and soon shalt thou learn that life only is a dream, and death the awaking!" Conscious, but speechless, the miserable Henry looked up at the sound of that voice, and lo, bending over his pillow seemed the face of Anne Boleyn, with a wrathful look, fierce, vindictive, and around, behind her, on every side, a crowd of shadowy forms.

There was his first most noble wife, who, of all those awful shadows, seemed alone to regard him with an eye of compassion, save that of the stately figure at her side, whose wan and weary face was shadowed by a scarlet hat, and who seemed to say, "I neglected my duty to our Maker to serve thee, oh miserable king; but I restrained thy fierce spirit, and had I not wickedly, and weakly, abandoned the cause of the royal Katherine, our united influence might have held thee back from the abyss of thy vile passions!"

"Alas, the time!" seemed to sigh a venerable man his side. "Verily this woman, Boleyn, as I said to my good daughter, made footballs of our heads, till, alas, poor soul, her own had become a foot ball too."

"The Chancellor, Sir Thomas More," groaned the spirit of Henry, as glaring at Anne Boleyn, those words recurred to him that he had spoken to her when news was brought of the execution of that good and wise man.

"Thou art the cause of this man's death!" while to them he now added the bitter reproach. "Wanton, thou wast the primary cause of all thy enemies."

Then the reproachful face of Anne Boleyn seemed to melt away from beside the king, as though away again of that unspoken thought, and conscious of its justice.

Then seemed the other bleeding spectres to close round the monarch's couch, the accomplished Surrey, his latest victim, foremost of them all.

He could not drive away those terrible shadows, he could not speak, but lay speechless, motionless, bound as to a rock, with the vulture of everlasting punishment already tearing at his breast.

Then came Cranmer, who had been sent for to administer spiritual consolation to the dying king.

The Archbishop spoke to him in vain, Henry could not answer. But the ear well-nigh deafened in death, was aware of the awful interrogation.

"Dost thou believe in Christ?" He pressed the Archbishop's hand in mute assent. Like the fiends who had possessed his soul, in that parting hour, he believed, and trembled.

CHAPTER II.

THE LYKE-WAKE.

Many were the masses that were said and the dirges sung for Henry's soul. He died on the 28th January; it was not till the 14th February that his remains were removed from *chapele ardente* at Westminster for final interment at Windsor.

Among the ruins of the devastated convent of Sion home, in the desecrated chapel, hastily decorated and draped with black for the occasion, the coffin of the monarch was placed for the night.

There was a midnight dirge; but mourners and cloisters quitted the chapel when it was concluded.

The king was dead, and awful superstition possessed men's minds. The hired mourners cared not to continue their dreadful watch throughout the night; a banner did not flutter, nor the light of a taper waver, but the horrid thought of ghostly influence made their hearts grow chill.

It was in the chapel of the ruined convent that Henry rested on his bier. The ruined convent from which he had driven the poor nuns; the ruined convent said to be haunted by the phantom of his ill-fated young wife, Katherine Howard, who had been imprisoned there.

So while the dark waters of the Thames rolled sluggishly by,