

SILKEN THOMAS RENOUNCING HIS ALLEGIANCE TO ENGLAND.

"Ye Geraldines! ye Geraldines!—since Silken Thomas flung King Henry's sword on council-board the English thanes among. Ye never ceased to battle brave against the English sway, Though axe and brand and treachery your proudest cut away."—THOMAS DAVIS.

We read in the *Annals of the Four Masters* that, "in the year 1535, Garret, Earl of Kildare, Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, died in imprisonment in the Tower of London."

This nobleman had long been at deadly feud with the Butlers, lords of Ormond. In one of the raids which he made into their territory, finding that David Creagh, Archbishop of Cashel, was giving aid and comfort to his hereditary enemies, the fiery Geraldine burnt the cathedral and sacked the "City of the Kings." This occurred in 1498.

Complaint of this sacrilegious conduct being made to King Henry VII., that monarch summoned Kildare to London to answer the charge, when the audacious chieftain defended himself by solemnly swearing that "he would never have thought of burning the cathedral had he not been assured that the Archbishop was within it at the time."

On hearing this characteristic defense, his enemies exclaimed, "All Ireland cannot govern this man." "Then," replied the King, "he shall govern all Ireland." And so he was made Lord Deputy of that kingdom.

After the death of Henry VII., his successor, Henry VIII., continued Kildare as Lord Deputy. Through the influence of Cardinal Wolsey he was removed, and the Earl of Surrey appointed in his place; but Kildare soon managed to regain the favor of the king, and got re-appointed to his old position of deputy.

However, on his being ordered to proceed against the Earl of Desmond, Kildare, not wishing to be made the agent of his kinsman's punishment, evaded compliance with the royal mandate, and, taking advantage of some disturbances in Ulster, he marched into

that province under pretext of suppressing them, instead of going to fight the Desmond in Munster. For this contumacy he was summoned to London to account for his conduct; but before he went he supplied all his own castles with arms and military stores from the royal arsenals, and committed the government to his son, Lord Thomas Fitzgerald, then in the twentieth year of his age.

Ormond, the implacable and wily foe of the Geraldines, finding the veteran who had so long thwarted his plans and humbled his pride removed out of his way, and a hot-headed, inexperienced youth, the only obstacle to his ambition and thirst for vengeance, soon set himself to plot the destruction of his great rival.

Acting in accordance with his design, he, in conjunction with Sir William Skeffington and Alan, Archbishop of Dublin, bitter enemies of the old earl, caused a false report to be circulated, to the effect that Kildare had been murdered in the Tower of London. On this report reaching the ears of the young Lord Deputy, it had precisely the effect its cunning originators contemplated. Lord Thomas swore vengeance on his father's murderers; and, burning with rage, he proceeded from the Castle of Dublin to Mary's Abbey, where the Council were in session, for the purpose of delivering up his sword of office and renouncing forever all allegiance to the English king. He was accompanied by several of his noble kinsmen and a strong body guard of Irish retainers, devoted, body and soul, to the house of Kildare. The gates of Mary's Abbey were soon reached, and ere the last of his followers had ceased to pour into the echoing court yard, 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; but, stopping midway between the entrance and the council-table, while his friends gathered in a body at his back, and his faithful guards blocked up the door and filled the courtyard, Lord Thomas took the sword of state from its bearer, and, advancing up the hall to the council-table, thus passionately addressed the terrified and bo-