

# The True Witness,

AND

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THE IRISH WIDOW'S SON;  
OR,  
THE PIKEMEN OF NINETY-EIGHT.  
—  
BY CON. O'LEARY.

(From the Boston Pilot.)

CHAPTER XXI.—(Continued.)

The girl naturally thought that something was expected of her in return, and artlessly she replied, with her head bent, "And I, dear Peter, love you, too."

And this was the full and unsophisticated courtship of Peggy Dolan and Peter Mullan. True, they had known each other for a considerable time, and probably had, on more than one occasion, investigated the state of their hearts towards each other; but further than this they had not ventured. The readiness to acknowledge what they felt, one to the other, somewhat astonished the pair after their mutual avowal. Peter believed that nothing could be more difficult than to act as he did, and now he wondered at getting over the matter so easily.

Peggy would have fainted only one hour ago, if any person had told her she would so readily accept the advances of Peter. Now, however, when all was over, she thought nothing of it, not even the plain avowal of her love for him, a thing she would have carefully avoided had she been a skilled or proficient prude.

But neither one or the other ever imagined such a thing. They were alike ignorant of the cunning and selfish manner of those who were trained in the world's ways.

Peter was about to take his leave just as Peggy's father entered.

"You may rest yourself contentedly, if you like," said Pat Dolan, addressing Peter. "Our boys beyond there," he continued, nodding his head in the direction of Mackenzie's place of safety, "are carefully watched and attended to."

Peter resumed his seat, expressing his anxiety for Cormac's return.

"I, too, wish he were here," responded Pat. "We don't know the minute when the whole country may be up about our ears in consequence of what has happened."

"The people themselves are all right; at least the greatest part of them," said Peter, "and anything else must happen through the soldiers or some others of the yeomanry."

"Yes, that's quite true," Pat replied.

"Here comes John."

John entered, and casting a knowing glance at the proximity of Peggy's seat toward Peter's, laughingly remarked, "Both comfortably seated, I perceive."

"I was just about remarking something of the same thing," said Pat, quietly; "but that Peter was in the act of leaving when I entered, I suppose he resumed the seat he had just quitted before I came in."

Peggy sprang to her feet and made to rush into a room, but Peter gallantly detained her, telling her to never mind his brother's nonsense.

It was evident, however, from the appearance of both Peter and Peggy, that they had been engaged in some sort of conversation that had nothing unpleasant about it.

The three men engaged in conversation, and Peggy retired. Mike had betaken himself to the place where Mackenzie was located, half suspicious that matters could not go on well if he had not an eye to them, now and again.—Mike could never be made to believe that danger was absent when Cormac was not there to superintend everything himself.

"We can form no opinion, I presume," said John Mullan, "of the nature of Cormac's instructions concerning the disposal of our party?"

"No, not easily," replied Pat; "but I hope they'll be removed from this quarter soon and sudden. I have a sort of feeling in my mind that their capture might upset a good many of our plans unless things are wisely managed."

"I wish to goodness there had been a fight before we got them this length," said Peter emphatically.

"That would noly have made matters worse," replied his brother.

"Most decidedly," insisted Pat. "Besides, they were far too few. What would five or six men be to our number?"

"Quiet so," added John. "I hope, too, that Cormac may have some further news home with him."

"The very thought that was in my own mind," cried Pat. "He will doubtless have heard something as to how matters are proceeding in another quarter."

"You mean Dublin?" replied John.

"Yes."

"I would fain hope so."

"This is a ruse," said John, rising to leave; Pat agreed with him, but thought it would do no harm to go in a see how things were getting on.

Peter was also about to leave, but Peggy, hearing John and her father speak of going, came into the kitchen, seeing which, Peter remained.

To John's inquiry, one of his own party told him that angry words had passed between some of the men. One of them told Mackenzie it was all his fault.

"Shall we go in?" inquired Pat, speaking to John.

"Yes, we'll both enter."

They did so, and as the door opened, one of the men made a rush, as if to escape. He was a tall and powerfully-built man, but Mullan sprang before him, and threw him with full force upon the ground.

Mackenzie merely looked on, but did not interfere.

"Try that game again," said Dolan, "and by heavens, I'll give you the contents of this," presenting a horse-pistol at the fellow's head.

"And, moreover," continued Pat, "if there be any attempt at kicking up a row, or making any noise, it will be worse for those attempting the like."

Both left after locking the door, and placing their guards in proper positions. Scarcely had they done so, when they observed two men coming towards them at a rapid pace.

For a few moments, Dolan felt somewhat annoyed.

"I think," he said, addressing John, "that man on the near side is Cormac."

Pat was right.

Cormac and Milliken approached, and shook hands warmly with John and Pat.

CHAPTER XXII.—THE GREEN FLAG OF IRELAND—MIKE GLINTY'S DELIGHT AT BEHOLDING IT—HOW IT WAS PRESENTED AND RECEIVED.

"Drink the faithful hearts that love us,  
Mid to-morrow's thickest fight;  
While our Green Flag floats above us,  
Think, boys, 'tis for them we smite."

A large meeting was convened for that night, at which Milliken insisted that a strict guard should be kept on Mackenzie and his party.—It was just possible that an exchange of prisoners would take place ere long between the people of Ireland and the British government; and, in that case, the body of Mackenzie would turn out to be some value. He strongly recommended the utmost vigilance and secrecy.—Matters were fast ripening, and he doubted not but the hour would soon be at hand when every Irishman, who wished to prove his devotion to his country, would have an opportunity of trying the issue of battle with his country's enemies.

Great enthusiasm prevailed, and the men, according to custom at separating, broke into squads of twenty-five to go through their full exercise.

Mike Glinty was on his high horse with excitement, as he watched Pat Dolan go through his work with his men.

"Right about, wheel, quick-march!" were words churged with electricity for poor Glinty. Neither was he alone in this respect. The men's hearts beat high with hope as they engaged in their work, and little wonder, either.

What work so noble as the preparation and training to defend or to rescue one's country?

The world has never yet beheld a nobler picture, than that of the soldier who prepares to battle to the death in behalf of his fatherland.

Pat Dolan felt this, so did Cormac, so did John Mullan, so did they all; and it must be confessed that Kate O'Neill, Brigid O'Hara, and even Peggy Dolan, were under its influence also, and that no small portion of their love arose from the fact that these young men were prominently and ardently engaged in working for their country's redemption.

The missing of Mackenzie and his party had caused considerable stir among the yeomanry and government authorities. They left nothing undone to ferret out their whereabouts, but every effort proved abortive.

With one or two trifling exceptions, spies and informers were nearly unknown. As time wore on, it was evident the government knew not the hour in which the insurrection would break forth. Nothing was left undone to reach the heads of the conspiracy. Secret service money was freely lavished about, and pensions and promotions held temptingly forward to induce the recreant and weak-minded to aid the corrupted minions of Dublin Castle.

Thus has it been down to our own day, and thus shall it ever be.

England and Ireland will never live contentedly together; and the sooner the unnatural connexion ceases, the better it will be for all concerned.

Israel Milliken returned to Belfast, to inform all friends there how matters stood in the Antrim and Randalstown Districts.

Many were the praises bestowed upon the gallant conduct of young Rogan, and it was confidently anticipated by those who knew him best, that Cormac would distinguish himself as a soldier of Ireland!

Kate O'Neill and Brigid were working hard at what they considered would be a welcome surprise to all the "boys."

Father John hoped they were equally attentive to their prayers as they were to their self-imposed tasks.

"Prayer without good works," said Brigid O'Hara, "don't avail much."

"There are those living," replied Father John, "who would quickly venture to dispute the term 'good,' to the work you are at present engaged in performing."

"There were those," replied Brigid, "who could see no good even in Him who was the essence of every good itself."

"Well done, Brigid," said Kate, "that finishes the whole business; but Uncle John is not one of those who believe we are not engaged in a good work."

"Far be it from me," said the kind old man, "and I only wish that every girl in the Province of Ulster, could claim kindred in patriotic intention, and act with the girls I see before me."

"And, oh! how I wish from my heart, that every girl could boast of an uncle like mine," exclaimed Kate with wonderful animation.—"Then, indeed, would our young men and maidens be animated with one love and one hope in the impending struggle."

"The sentiment is well expressed, and does credit to the speaker," said Cormac, as he entered the place, accompanied by John Mullan and Mike Glinty.

Mike had guessed the route the young men were taking and followed them.

Kate and Brigid were startled, and hastily rising from their seats, endeavored to conceal the work they had just then finished.

"We expected you had gone to Belfast, and would not return for some time," said Brigid, addressing John Mullan.

"No," he answered, "Cormac took that job into his own hands, and has fulfilled his mission."

"We heard all about it," Father John declared. "And what arrangement have you made concerning the safety of Mackenzie?" he asked.

Cormac informed him, adding, that the leading men of Belfast were so pleased with what occurred, that they left the entire arrangement and management of Mackenzie to himself, and those who belonged to his party.

"He is a bad man, full of evil intentions," said the priest. "Many a sorrow he has brought into the homes of the poor, and I myself would advise his strict detention, but that no harm should come to him," kindly added Father John.

"He-he bib-bib-burn-n-ned poor-r sis-sis-Sally's house, fiff-fiff-for cie-cie-calling him a brute," said Mike, quite fiercely.

"Oh, many a home he left desolate, poor fellow," replied the priest, laying his hand familiarly on Mike's shoulder. "But we must not think too much of these things, for there is a Power before which Mackenzie and all such must one day render an account."

"Aye! bib-bib-but th-th-that day did-did-don't frighten Mackenzie, nin-nin-nor Fleming, fiff-fiff-for the day is tit-tit-too far off," remarked Mike, looking steadfastly on all around him.

"I don't know," said Father John, "whether I should mention that Kate and Brigid were preparing a little surprise for Cormac and John, and for Mike too," the priest added, anxious to conciliate the outspoken poor fellow, whose heart beat as warmly as that of any present.

"Oh, nonsense," cried Kate, "never heed Uncle John. He only wants to create expectations in your mind, Cormac. We were but amusing ourselves. Brigid was anxious to—"

"Oh, Kate," remonstrated Brigid. "It was you who first thought of it. Now wasn't it, Father John?" she said, appealing to the clergyman.

"Upon my word," rejoined the latter, "if there is any difference as to who thought first of the work, I don't know it; both have shown the same anxiety regarding it, and both have wrought at it with a will."

"You but stimulate Cormac's curiosity and my own," said John Mullan. "At first I imagined that you had some little feast prepared for us."

"There now, I knew it," said Father John. "Get ready, girls, quick; spread the table, and Mike and I shall see that the kettle soon boils."

Mike at once busied himself, and in a few minutes Kate had the table set. Tea was speedily prepared, and our party was shortly afterwards enjoying the hospitalities of Father John's humble board.

After tea, Kate produced a beautiful green flag, the result of her own and Brigid's handiwork.

"Oh, hokey — by the Lord!" rapidly exclaimed Mike, with unusual fervor, and the speaker sprang to his feet, dancing around the room and gesticulating in the most singular manner.

Kate and Brigid could not help laughing at Mike's antics.

As the flag lay unfolded before them, with a beautiful harp wrought in yellow silk on the

green field, and surrounded with shamrocks beautifully interlaced, Cormac and John were equally struck with admiration.

"There may be many such like" exclaimed Cormac, "unfolded in the presence of the blood-stained flag of our enemies; but this one shall be dyed in gore ere it falls into the hands of a foe of Ireland."

"To that, I say, Amen!" cried John Mullan.

"Tit-tit-ten Amens," echoed Mike, touching the flag with his finger gently, here and there, and expressing his admiration of it after his own fashion, but in a manner to indicate his feelings.

"I only hope," Father John remarked, "that there will come a day when Ireland will indeed have a flag of its own, acknowledged and saluted in every clime, and floating proudly on every sea."

"And such a day we should hopefully fight for!" said Brigid O'Hara, with her hand uplifted.

Cormac was delighted, and John was overjoyed.

"It would be a grievous pity to receive such a present, and from such a pair of girls, without others to be present," said John; "and if you have no objection, Father John, I shall go off for a while and return with a company of musketeers and pikemen, as fine a body of brave fellows as twenty parishes round about can produce."

"Ha, ha!" cried Brigid, "that, now, is something like you. Of course, Father John will consent, for we'll all consent, and Miss O'Neill will present the flag."

Kate could not help laughing at the animation of Brigid.

Father John had no particular objection to offer, and John Mullan started off, accompanied by Mike.

Pat Dolan, Phil and Ned, Peter Mullan, and all those who could be gathered at a short notice, were speedily collected by Mullan, and being informed of the business for which they were required, soon put themselves into order, and with John at their head, marched in military style toward Father McAuley's.

The boldness of John in venturing on giving permission for flutes and drums to be used, had the effect of collecting a larger number than he had anticipated. He did not even think of this part of the programme when he left Cormac, and, accordingly, could not tell whether it would be agreeable or otherwise.

Young men belonging to the organization heard the sound of the drums, and many of them hastened to join their comrades, not a few believing that the long promised hour of a call to arms had then arrived. Such were speedily informed of the nature of the business going forward, but their spirits were nothing damped by the intelligence.

On they came, with hearts buoyant, and with firm and steady tread.

Arrived at Father McAuley's, John drew up his men with the sharp command "Halt!"

Kate and Brigid, Cormac and Father John, came forth, and were received with two thundering cheers.

Kate stepped forward, leaning on Cormac's arm. Her face was flushed, and her eye gleamed with unweaned brilliancy.

Taking the flag in her hand and unfolding it, another and more thrilling cheer broke forth as the men beheld their own immortal green!

"My brave countrymen," said Kate, with a voice trembling with emotion, "with heartfelt pleasure and pride, I present you with this token of love and hope, the joint work of Miss O'Hara and myself. We cannot share your fortunes, in the hour of peril, when confronting the enemies of our country and race. Let this standard remind you that the daughters of Ireland will pray, with heartfelt earnestness, that it may never be lowered or dishonored while it waves in the presence of a foe."

Cormac received the flag amid reiterated cheering.

Father John, whose eyes were moist with tears, spread forth his hands, and implored a blessing on all before him. The men uncovered their heads and knelt, while the aged priest besought the blessing of heaven on every enterprise intended to benefit their country.

Cormac returned thanks for the men. He doubted not but that the flag presented to them under such favorable circumstances, would often lead them to victory!

John Mullan also addressed a few kindly words to his comrades, and the body of men separated, the flag being entrusted to the keeping of Pat Dolan's sons. Shortly afterwards John and Cormac took their leave, Kate's hand resting softly in Cormac's, as he took his leave.

CHAPTER XXIII.—PAT DOLAN'S MISSION—GENERAL ORDER FOR THE RISING—CORMAC'S WISH REALIZED.

"What deeds we vowed to the dear old land!  
What solemn words we spoke;  
How never we'd cease, or sleep in peace,  
Till we shattered the stranger's yoke;  
And not with a storm of windy words,  
But many a soldier stroke."

With the rank and file of the United Irishmen, all went bravely on. Nothing could daunt them in their arduous and toilsome work. In

the majority of cases, they knew little, if anything, of the leaders of the national movement. Whatever they did know, was from report and conjecture.

Some of the heaviest blows sustained by the imprisonment of the leaders, were either unknown, or carefully concealed from the mass of the people, lest the knowledge should discourage them.

Russell, who was originally intended to head the forces in Down, was imprisoned in Newgate, Dublin, with Emmet, McNevin, Sweetman, O'Connor, Jackson, Bond, and others. But the most fatal blow to the whole organization was the capture and death of Lord Edward Fitzgerald.

Up till within a few days of the rising in Antrim, it was not known, only partially, that Henry Joy McCracken was to be commander of the insurgent forces. Independently of this, however, the men intended for the field kept steadily at their drill.

There was a dangerous lull, or cessation, in the outrages committed by the yeomanry.—Many of the soldiers who had been living at "free quarters" on the farmers, were recalled to the camp at Blaris Moor, others to Belfast, and some to Antrim.

This proved that the Government were in some way or other in possession of the secrets of the insurgents.

Cormac Rogan had had another interview with McCracken, and received from him an appointment as captain in the Randalstown district.

Cormac, in his turn, appointed Pat Dolan and John Mullan to commands in the same companies with himself. By instructions from headquarters, he was to place a secret guard on the vaults adjoining Shane's Castle, and to point out the place to Colonel Samuel Orr, as soon as the latter would call upon him. This officer was brother to William Orr, then lately executed at Carrickfergus.

About a fortnight after Cormac's appointment, he was privily waited on by the Rev. Mr. Porter, accompanied by Orr, and some other leading rebels.

Pat Dolan and John Mullan were commissioned to proceed with a guard to Mr. Porter's residence, where his servant-maid would point out to them the hiding-place of two pieces of cannon, six-pounders, which had been concealed in his mecting-house.

Dolan proceeded on his mission carefully, and succeeded in passing through Antrim town to the appointed rendezvous with his supply of artillery. This was a hazardous undertaking; but Dolan showed not only his pluck, but displayed his wisdom in the necessary arrangements.

When he got possession of the field-pieces, he had them carelessly thrown into a cart, with a few farming implements along with them, and about as much hay as would feed a horse. He sent his men forward in twos and threes, detailing them to certain positions on the outskirts of Antrim. Having carefully placed a pair of loaded pistols in a belt, which he wore concealed under the waistbands of his trousers, he flung off his coat, and throwing it into the cart, sprang in himself, and applying the whip, proceeded on his way.

On he went, quite boldly, as if engaged in his daily occupation. A less daring course would doubtless have subjected him to suspicion, perhaps worse.

He shortly afterwards arrived safely with his charge, and, by instructions, deposited them in a place of safe keeping. McCracken's previous imprisonment threw the government authorities completely off their guard, so that they never dreamed that he would endanger his safety so far as to hold the position he then held.

In his efforts to have some of the Armagh Orangemen punished for their barbarous conduct toward poor and offending Catholics, he earned the ill-will of the magistracy.

This rather urged him on to his patriotic course, and filled him with the strongest desires to overthrow the galling despotism under which his country labored. He was now busily engaged in concentrating his forces, and giving directions to all under his command how to act. He encouraged them by every possible means within his power, while he himself was encouraged by his noble-hearted sister, and other members of his family.

With the keen eye of a commander, fitted in every respect for the due performance of the responsible duties devolving upon him, he saw the necessity of making a bold dash in the first place on the town of Antrim. That town was garrisoned by the Royalists, and was supported by the garrison at Belfast and Blaris Moor. So long as Antrim was so held, there was no probability of the Insurgents making a good stand at the beginning of their campaign; or, of co-operating with those in Derry and Donegal. Antrim must, therefore, fall at the outset.

McCracken accordingly made known his views to the rebel leaders. Some were satisfied of the correctness of his views; others were not very sanguine of the success of an attack on such a stronghold, and recommended a desultory warfare at the beginning.

The majority, however, yielded to his plans,