



The Time Witness

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CONNEMARA.
Ye tall dark cliffs, ye desert peaks
That crown the desolation!
What mystic voice among you speaks,
Ye tombstones of a nation?
I think, as on your towers I gaze,
I hear the ancient story,
And fancy summons back the days
Of long departed glory.

Ye never looked on cringing slave,
Or him that wore a halter;
Here was the temple of the brave—
And ye were freedom's altar!
Vast solitudes of moor and fen,
I hear a death note knelling—
Where is that warrior race of men,
Or where the peasants dwelling?

A fearless hero on you incline,
That never fled from battle,
And here the lordly peregrine,
And there the kingly eagle.

O'er lake and moorland, far and wide,
The curlew's note is sounding,
And down the mountain's riven side
The catarract is bounding.

There, by the stream, the heron feeds,
Secure from man's aggression,
And here the mallard holds the reeds
In undisturbed possession,
On yonder crags the falcons sit,
Where dashes down the Eriff—
No Ballif there can serve the writ
Of Ian floor or of sheriff!

But all in vain I seek the hand
Of chieftain or of vassal;
For what is lordly in the land,
Save Henry's princely castle?
Yes, they are gone beyond the main—
O'Donnell, Blake, O'Hara—
Marshals of France, grandees of Spain—
But lost to Connemara!

MICHAEL DWYER, THE "WICKLOW OUTLAW."

A LIFE OF DARING AND ADVENTURE

HIS GREATEST PERIL AND HIS WONDERFUL ESCAPE

The history of Ireland during the long struggles of her people against oppression and persecution, is rich in instances of personal daring and bravery. The warfare of those days in Ireland was not confined to the operation of regular armies; on the part of the natives it often assumed the character of what is now known by the Spanish title of "guerrilla warfare," and this was a mode of action which afforded great scope for the display of the courage, the skill, and the powers of individuals.

In modern armies the great majority of the combatants are reduced to the position of "machine-men." One mind moves an enormous mass of men, and works them according to rules which are continually becoming more precise and rigid—hundreds of thousands of men are all brought down by strict discipline to the same dead level of "conscious automata." All must stand and move together in the ranks. The brave men and the timid; the strong man and the weak, the intelligent man and the stupid, deliver their life at the word of command, and take equal chances of being shot down at any moment. This, which is the most scientific, is also the most effective system of military action. No number of loose, unconnected, and disciplined bands, though every man amongst them should have the heart of a hero and the strength of a giant, could stand against any of those great masses of well-trained, splendidly armed, and ably directed troops which constitute the European armies of the present day. "Guerrilla warfare" appears, therefore, to be a thing of the past; but time was when it was common in Ireland and elsewhere. From the date of English invasion down to the period not very remote, the resistance of the Irish people to their foreign foes, was usually of an inter-

mittent and irregular character, blazing out now in one part of the country and again in another; sometimes under local chiefs, fighting to hold their own; sometimes under the leadership of dispossessed Irish gentlemen—torries and rapparees as they were called—striking for vengeance upon their despoilers. In such a state of things the daring brain, the stout heart, and the strong arm came into play, and adventures equalling if not transcending the wildest flights of romance were of frequent occurrence. Stories of these bold deeds—some of them joyous and triumphant, others tragic and sorrowful—attach to many a scene in Ireland, and are kept ever fresh and green in the memories of the peasantry.

The leafy glens, the mountain passes, the wild ravines of the picturesque and beautiful county Wicklow have a full share of them, and the date of some of the latest comes very near our own times. For, leaving behind us the days when the gallant sept of the O'Tooles and the O'Byrnes made that part of the country too hot for English undertakers, and swept occasionally in avenging raids down on the Pale and up to the very gates of the Castle of Dublin, we have still before us the events of the years 1798 to 1803, when the hills and vales of Wicklow were the scenes of many memorable deeds of patriot valour, and when all Ireland, and England, too, was made to ring with the name and fame of the bold "Wicklow Outlaw"—the indomitable Michael Dwyer.

In giving to our readers a brief sketch of the career of this brave man, we deem it unnecessary to say much regarding the origin of the insurrection in which he bore so gallant a part. All Irishmen who know anything of the history of their country, know that the Irish people in those days rose against a system of oppression which was too much for human nature to bear. The noblest, the purest and the bravest spirits in the land refused to submit to it any longer, and preferred to engage in a struggle for Irish freedom. Michael Dwyer was one of those men. He belonged to the class which felt the weight of England's persecuting laws most grievously—the Catholic small farmers of Ireland. He was of the old race which was trampled, and the old faith which was banned; but the taint of slavery never touched his soul. The God-given instinct of liberty was strong within him. His spirit was free as that of the eagle. He knew his country was in bondage and had a right to freedom, and when he learned that her sons were about to rise and make at least a gallant effort to shake off the yoke that shamed and galled them, he resolved that he would do one man's part at all events in aid of that rightful endeavor.

So he gave heart and hand to the cause of the United Irishmen, and he soon became the leader of a daring band and a terror to the royalist party in the county Wicklow. He was just the man for any sort of bold adventure—provided only that it was also an honorable one; for Dwyer was a man of simple and virtuous habits, and was as generous and hospitable and humane as he was brave. He was of stalwart frame, fully six feet high, large chested, strong limbed, fleet of foot, and agile as a greyhound. He knew every mountain pass, every rock, every stream, every bush, almost in his native county; and there was not a peasant home within its bounds in which Michael Dwyer was not known and loved. And the group of gallant fellows he gathered about him were, for the most part, worthy such a leader.

A narrative of the many dashing feats performed by Dwyer and his men would fill a very portly volume. The royal troops never dared to face them unless when they had vastly superior numbers on their side; large bodies of them often fled pell-mell from the onslaught of his small party of hardy mountaineers. Miles Byrne, one of the leaders of the insurrection, and afterwards *chef de battalion* in the service of France, has given, in his highly interesting Memoirs, the following account of his first meeting with the gallant Dwyer in the pass of Glenmalur:—

"I saw the brave and intrepid Dwyer here for the first time. He had already acquired a great reputation in those mountainous districts, for every time that the cavalry attempted to reconnoitre the position near the entrance of the glen, he was sure to be on their flank, or in an ambuscade before daylight, waiting their arrival; and as both he and the men, who generally accompanied him, were of this county, and marksmen, they took delight in terrifying the cavalry, who instantly wheeled about and fled the moment a shot was fired at them. So by Dwyer's bravery and exertion in this kind of skirmishing with the enemy, we were in perfect safety during the night, to repose and recover from our fatigues of the county Wexford campaign."

Many were the hair-breadth escapes of this bold "outlaw" from surprises planned by his enemies, and from treacheries attempted to be practiced on him more than once by some faithless members of his band. On one occasion he escaped capture by sitting between a mountain torrent and the rocks over which it tumbled in a sheet of spray; at other times his places of refuge were caves in the mountains, the entrances to which were hidden by shrubs and moss. The government scouts were never able to catch him, nor their gunsmen nor swordsmen to hurt even a hair of his head.

The *Dublin Liberator* Magazine of November, 1808, a time when Dwyer was still in arms, had an article on "Dwyer, the Irish Desperado," and his men, in which the writer said: "It must be a matter of astonishment that an active powerful and vigilant government could never entirely succeed in exterminating this banditti from these mountains, however difficult or inaccessible they may at first sight appear."

The rebel, who is intimately acquainted with the topography of the place, has his regular videttes and scouts upon the *qui vive* in all the most advantageous points, who, on the appearance of alarm, or the approach of strangers, blow their whistles, which resound through the innumerable caverns, and are the signals for a general muster of those hardy desperadoes. They are generally superintended by the chief himself, or by his brother-in-law, of the name of Byrne; a determined fellow, in whom alone he places great confidence. They are both great adepts at disguising their faces and persons, and are thought to pay frequent visits to the metropolis.

But his narrow escape from capture was as follows. One evening he was met in the glen of Emall (also called Imate) by a soldier named Cameron, who was one of a party employed in his pursuit, but who entertained a friendly feeling for the gallant outlaw.

"Mind yourself to-night, Dwyer," whispered Cameron; "our men are close on your track, and expect to have you in their hands before morning."

Dwyer's party on this occasion consisted of only ten men. Six of these he sent to a house in the south end of the glen, while he himself with three companions, named Samuel McAllister, John Savage, and Patrick Costello, took refuge in another not far distant.

Before morning the soldiery had found out their place of concealment. One party of Highlanders and another of English soldiers, formed a cordon around the house; loaded their muskets, fixed their bayonets, and stood prepared to effect the capture of the rebels, dead or alive.

Then their captain shouted to the outlaws a summons to surrender in the King's name!

Dwyer replied from one of the windows of the house:—"We came into this house without asking leave of the honest people who own it, and no harm should be done them. Let them pass unharmed through your ranks, and then I will tell you what I and my men will do."

Colonel Macdonald, who was in command of the military, agreed to this proposal. He felt quite sure that he had Dwyer and his band now in his power, and that was all he wanted.

The family of the house, young people and old, were allowed to pass through the lines, and when that was done the voice of the Colonel was again heard calling on Dwyer to surrender.

"No!" shouted Dwyer. "Fire away! There are a hundred of you against four of us, but we will never surrender. We will fight until we die!"

No sooner was the word spoken than a volley of musket-balls was poured upon the door and into the windows of the house. The "outlaws" replied, taking sure and steady aim, bringing down a man almost with every shot."

"Come, Cameron," said one of the officers to a member of his company, who he thought appeared to be shirking the battle, "come to the front, sir, and do your duty!" The man thus addressed stepped forward, loaded and fired rapidly as he could into the house, and ere long fell dead, pierced by a bullet from one of the four brave defenders. It was Dwyer's good friend of the previous evening who thus met his fate.

While the firing was going on, one of Dwyer's companions, Samuel McAllister, received a musket ball in the arm which broke the limb, and he was thus disabled from taking any further part in the conflict. Still his three undaunted comrades kept up the fight.

The degree of bravery possessed by the attacking party may be estimated from the fact that all this time they did not attempt to force their way into the house thus resolutely defended by this heroic little party.

At last those cowardly assailants betwought them of a stratagem. It was to burn the house about the outlaws, and thus force them either to perish in the flames or run out upon the circle of bayonets that surrounded it.

The thatched roof of the dwelling was set on fire, and as it blazed brightly the soldiers set up a mingled cheer of triumph. Now, they thought, the final hour of the famous Wicklow leader had arrived, and they were to have all the glory of his death or capture.

The heat from the burning roof became intense.—There could now be no doubt in the minds of Dwyer and his party that they should either dash out among the soldiers or be burned to ashes in the flames that were rushing and roaring around them. But was not death just as sure to meet them in one case as the other? For the soldiers, expecting every moment to see them rush from the house, had ceased firing, and held their muskets loaded and their bayonets at the charge, and all stood prepared for immediate action.

In this desperate emergency an idea worthy to be classed among the brightest inspirations of valor, took possession of the mind of the disabled hero, McAllister.

"Dwyer," said he, "I am disabled, and useless, and my death is certain, but I yet may be the means of saving the lives of yourself, Savage and Costello. Let the three of you lie flat upon the floor. Put a musket into my hand, open the door, and I will stand right in front of it. Every man of those outside will at once fire at me. Then before they have time to reload, do you spring up and rush out, and there is at least a chance that you may be able to dart through them and make good your escape."

Truly a heroic notion, worthy of the palmy days of Greek or Roman bravery, worthy of any age, or race, or country.

After a moment's consideration, this self-sacrificing proposal was accepted.

McAllister opened the door and stood, a distinct mark for his enemies, amid the fierce light of the burning dwelling. Immediately the whole party fired, and his corpse fell, riddled with many bullets.

Dwyer and his two companions at once rose from the ground and rushed upon the soldiery. Savage and Costello were struck down by the bayonets of their foes, but Dwyer, with his clubbed musket, felled to the earth the two or three men who stood in his way, dashed past them, and made for the fields. He had not gone many paces when he slipped and fell. This, although it enabled one of his pursuers to get near him, proved to be the saving of his life, for, as he tumbled to the ground a whole flight of bullets which had been fired after him passed over his head, all but one, which came so near as to tear the collar of his shirt. He was closely pursued for several miles, and saved himself by plunging into the River Slaney and swimming across it—a feat his pursuers were afraid to attempt.

And so Colonel Macdonald and his men were obliged to return to Dublin with the news, that the bold "Wicklow outlaw" Michael Dwyer, had once again defied, insulted, fought with, and escaped from the armed forces of his Britannic Majesty.

The most effective way for a boy to learn a bee sees—by just putting his finger into the hive.

THE CURATE OF SAN PEDRO.

One fine evening in the year 1815, the aged curate of San Pedro, a village some leagues distant from Seville, returned extremely fatigued, to his poor dwelling, where he was expected by the Senora Margarita, the worthy and aged housekeeper.

Whatever poverty one is accustomed to meet within the interior of a Spanish dwelling, one could hardly help relish the utter want of comfort which apparently prevailed in the habitation of the good priest; in fact, not the slightest pretension to ease contrasted with the nakedness of the walls and scantiness of the furniture. Dame Margarita was finishing her preparations for supper, which consisted of a mysterious dish of olla-podrida, in which the remains of the dinner, dignified with the name of ragout, were seasoned or disguised, with the most possible skill. The curate eagerly inhaled the flavor of the alluring dish, and said—"Heaven be praised! here is an olla-podrida which verily makes the mouth water. Indeed, comrade, you must give more than outward thanks at finding such a supper at your service."

At these words of the host, Margarita raised her eyes and beheld a stranger whom the curate had brought home with him. The housekeeper's placid face was suddenly discomposed, and assumed a mingled expression of wrath and disappointment. She cast a withering glance upon the unknown, and then upon the curate, who lowered his eyes and said in the subdued voice of a child when he hears his parents censure. "Surely when there is meat enough for two there is also enough for three; and you would not wish that I should leave to die of hunger a Christian who has not eaten for two days?"

"He a Christian?—he his more like a brigand!" muttered Margarita, as she left the room.

The curate's guest, during this inhospitable scene, remained standing motionless near the entrance. He was a man of huge size, half clad in rags and soiled with mud, whose coal-black hair, bright restless eyes, and the rifle which he carried in his hand, might inspire but doubtful interest.

"Must I then go away?" said he.

The curate answered with an emphatic answer. "Never shall he whom I invited beneath my roof be driven away; and never shall a fellow-creature be unwelcome to partake with me my humble fare. Put aside your rifle, let us implore a blessing, and to table."

"I never part with my rifle," said the stranger. "As the Spanish proverb says, 'Two friends are only one. My rifle is my best friend, and I will keep it between my knees. For though you are willing to let me enter your home, and quit it at my leisure, there are others who may think to make me go against my will, and possibly head foremost."

The curate of San Pedro was certainly a man of good appetite, but nevertheless, he stood astonished at the stranger's voracity, who besides devouring the olla-podrida, left nothing but the crumbs of an enormous loaf weighing many pounds. While eating thus, too, he ever and anon cast around uneasy looks, and started nervously at the most trifling noise; and once, indeed, the wind having suddenly and violently closed a door behind him, he sprang to his feet and cocked his rifle, as if determined to sell his life as dearly as possible; but quickly recovering himself, he again took his seat and continued his repast.

"Now," said he, with his mouth still full, "you must complete your kind reception, I am badly wounded, and for eight days my wound has not been dressed; give me, therefore, some old rag, and I will relieve you of my presence."

"I do not wish to be relieved of it," replied the curate, whom his guest, in spite of his uneasiness, had amused with his careless conversation. "I am something of a surgeon, and you will have to dress your wound neither the village barber, nor his dirty bandages." Saying these words, he took from a closet near a surgeon's chest, supplied with every requisite for an operation.

The stranger's wound was deep, a musket ball having perforated the thigh; and the unhappy man could never have pursued his journey, unless he had been endowed with more than human energy.

"You cannot proceed to-day," said the curate, probing his wound with an amateur's satisfaction. "You must spend the night here; and a good sleep will recruit your strength, diminish the inflammation, and permit the flesh to heal."

"I must proceed to-day, instantly!" said the stranger. "There are those who wait for me," continued he, with a scornful sigh. "There are those who expect me!" he added, with a ferocious smile. "Let me see—have you done with your dressing? Yes! I am sure of it; I feel as easy and as light as if I never had been wounded. Give me a loaf! repay yourself for your hospitality with that gold, and farewell!"

The curate repelled the money with disdain. "I am not an innkeeper; my hospitality is not bought and sold."

"It shall be as you please, mine host excuse me—farewell!"

So saying the man took the loaf, which by her master's order, Margarita had brought with a sorrowful face; and in a few moments the tall form of the stranger disappeared through the foliage of the woods around the house, or rather, but of the curate.

An hour after this a brisk discharge of musketry was heard within the forest and the stranger re-appeared before the cottage of the curate, with the blood streaming from a new wound in his breast. He had the ashy paleness of a dying man.

"Take this," said he, presenting to the curate a purse full of gold. "My children—in the cave—near the river!"

He fell. Spanish gendarmes immediately appeared with carbines in their hands, and meeting with no resistance from the wounded man, immediately secured him. They allowed the curate to put the first dressing on his fearful wound; but in spite of the good priest's observations on the danger of removing one so severely hurt, they lifted the sufferer into a cart, and carried him very unceremoniously off to prison.

"Never mind," said they; "let him die; for by that or by the rope his affair is settled. He is the renowned brigand Jose!"

Jose thanked the curate by a nod of his head, and asked for a glass of water. Then as the curate bent over him, and held the water to his lips, "You know," said he, in a faint voice.

The curate answered him by a sign of intelligence. As soon as the convoy had departed, the aged curate, in spite of the exhortation of Margarita, who insisted strongly on the danger and uselessness of any such attempt at night, crossed a portion of the woods, in the direction of the ravine. Arriving there he found the corpse of a woman who had been killed in all probability by some random shot.

A child was in her arms, and another at her side, a boy about four years old, who was pulling his mother's sleeves in order to awake her. He believed her to be only asleep.

You may judge of Margarita's surprise, when she saw the curate return with the two children.

"Saints of Paradise! what do you intend to do with them? We have to-night scarcely enough for our own supper, and here you bring two children with you. We shall be obliged to beg from door to door, both for ourselves and them. And what are they? Vagabond's children—gipsies or robbers—may be worse! I am sure neither of them has been baptized!"

At this moment the nursing began to cry.

"And how are you to nurse that child? We have not the means to engage such a nurse as the little, motherless creature wants. He must be brought up by hand, and you know not the bad nights he will occasion. But you will sleep easy while I—just look! the child scarcely six months old! Happily there is a little milk that I can warm for him."

And forgetting her impatience in her pity, she took the infant from the curate's arms, rocked him in her lap, and covered him with kisses. Then placing him gently near the hearth, she knelt down at his side, and warmed a vessel full of milk.

When the infant had been fed and put to sleep, Dame Margarita turned her attention to the other. The curate's great care served as an excellent bed; and when all her arrangements were completed, the good housekeeper listened to her master's account of the manner in which he had found the children, and how they had been consigned to his care.

"That is all very well," said Margarita; "but the important thing is to know how we are to nourish them. They are so—"

The curate opened his Bible, and read in a loud voice: "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."

"Amen," said Margarita.

The day following, the curate committed to the grave the body of the woman whom he had found near the ravine, and read over her the burial service for the dead.

It was just twelve years after this, that the curate of San Pedro, who was now seventy years of age, sat one day before his cottage door warming himself in the sun. It was winter, and this was the first time, for two days, that a ray had broken through the clouds. At the good man's feet, reading aloud, was a boy about twelve years old, who cast from time to time a glance of envy upon a tall and robust youth of sixteen years, who was industriously engaged in the culture of the little garden of the paragon. The old housekeeper, Margarita, now blind, was listening to the child's voice.

At this moment the rattling of carriage wheels was heard, and the boy shouted for joy—"Oh! what a fine coach!"

The next instant a magnificent equipage advanced along the road from Seville, and stopped before the curate's door. A servant in rich livery approached the master of the house and requested a glass of water for his master.

"Carlos," said the old man to the youngest of the boys, "give a glass of water to this seigneur, and a glass of wine too, if he will condescend to take it. Make haste!"

The nobleman opened the carriage door and alighted; he was a man apparently about fifty years of age. "Are these your nephews?" asked he of the curate.

"They are dearer than that; they are my children—my adopted children."

"How is that?" asked the stranger.

"I will tell you, senor, for I have nothing to conceal. On the contrary, poor, old and inexperienced in the world as I am, I need a counsellor to advise me how I may secure the future welfare of these two young men." And he related their history as we have given it already.

"What do you advise me to make of them; asked he, as he concluded his story."

"Ensigns in the royal guard; and in order that they may support their rank, it will be advisable to allow them an annuity of two thousand pistoles."

"I asked for advice not a jest, sir," replied the curate.

"Moreover you must have your church rebuilt, and near the church we must erect a comfortable paragon. What say you to that, uncontentious pious, and truly good man? I am Don Jose della Ribera, who was twelve years ago Jose the brigand I escaped from the prison whither they dragged me. Times of revolution are times of astounding changes; and from the chief of robbers, I have become the chief of a party. Behold me now powerful! You were my host, and you have been a father to my children. Ah! let me embrace them." He stretched forth his arms and the two youths threw themselves upon his breast. For some moments there was silence of emotion; then came tears, and half-uttered explanations. At last the stranger grasped the hands of the curate. "Well, my tried friend," said he, "do you accept my offer! The curate turned to Margarita, and said, "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."

"Amen," said the old dame; she wept tears of joy at the happiness of her adopted children, and then tears of sorrow, that she was so soon to part with them.

One year afterwards, Don Jose della Ribera and his two sons assisted at the consecration of the church of San Pedro, one of the finest edifices that adorn the environs of Seville.

Did you ever know a country town that hadn't the best brass band in the State?

The editor who said his mouth never uttered a lie, probably spoke through his nose.

Tailor measuring fat customers—"Would you hold the end, sir, while I go around?"