

# 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 XXVII.—(Continued.)

In these, Cormac was quickly arrayed, and, as the old, bespattered trowsers were drawn on, he could not help smiling at the great change they effected in his appearance. The old coat and vest were also speedily put into use, and an old bruised hat completed his attire. He certainly had a changed appearance; and, as with heavy heart he bade his kind hostess adieu, the young fellow announced his intention of accompanying him a part of the way.

After repeated blessings and prayers for his safety, he was prepared to start upon the road, promising that if ever he possessed the power of rewarding his friends for their kindness to him in the hour of his need, he would do so. "Never mention it, my child," said the old woman; "sure, if more I could do for you, wouldn't I do it, with a thousand welcomes! May God take care of you and spare you, is my hearty prayer;" and the tears fell fast from her eyes, as she shook his hand warmly at parting.

#### CHAPTER XXVIII.—CORMAC'S SURPRISE—THE INTERVIEW WITH MRS. FLYNN—A CORDIAL GREETING.

"Why do we meet? 'tis to repeat our vows, both night and day, To dear old Ireland—brave old Ireland; Ireland, boys, hurrah!"

Cormac found himself wonderfully refreshed by his short stay in the widow's cabin. Bitter as was the news he had learned, it partly relieved his suspense, and he found that he could travel much better than he had at first expected.

Nothing transpired for the first four or five miles on the journey, and Cormac besought the young man who kindly accompanied him, to return, assuring him that now, as he was in a part of the country which he knew pretty well, he could proceed alone.

Reluctantly the young man consented. "If I thought," he said, warmly, "that any danger was likely to come across you, I would not think of parting with you; but, as it is, you are probably as safe alone."

"I thank you from my heart, my good fellow," said Cormac, in reply, "and have but to repeat the assurance I gave your kind-hearted mother, that I hope one day to be able to repay your kindness."

"Not another word, Captain," replied the young man, taking Cormac by the hand. "I only wish that every man who grasped a gun or pike in behalf of his country's cause, was half as good a man as you."

Cormac returned the compliment, and they separated.

As he trudged along, sometimes briskly, and sometimes in a halting manner, when he met any one on the road, Cormac could not help surveying himself, and giving a melancholy smile, as the thought crossed his mind of the manner in which Kate would receive him if she saw him in his disguise.

About an hour after he had parted with his friend, a countryman, riding in a cart, overtook him, and kindly invited the "old man" to take a seat beside him.

Cormac excused himself on the ground that he would not be able to climb into the cart. "We can soon arrange that for you," said the countryman. "Sure, I can help you in, poor old fellow;" saying which, he dismounted, and assisted Cormac into the vehicle.

The pair drove on together for a considerable distance, without exchanging many words. Cormac's companion showed some anxiety to engage in conversation, but he himself, troubled as he was with a constantly recurring cough, such as any old man might not feel ashamed of, betrayed no such anxiety. In fact, he made it appear that the jolting of the cart, and the stress of coughing, were as much as he could reasonably be expected to endure.

"These are rather hasty sort of times," said the driver.

"Yes," replied Cormac; "things are a good deal dull, but the want of rain is chiefly the cause. The hay crop in particular."

"Oh! I don't mean that at all. I mean the country is a good deal disturbed of late."

"Ugh—I know—to be sure—to be sure," groaned the old man, following up his not very interesting reply by a series of hard, dry coughs.

"Do you belong to these parts?" inquired Cormac's companion, with a dry sort of leer.

"Aye, aye; to be sure. All parts are alike to the poor. God help them."

"There's no call for people to be poor here, were it not for the d—d rascally rebels, who won't be at peace."

Cormac's cough was evidently getting worse. "Do you see that pair of trees over there, my old friend?" asked the countryman, pointing toward two stately ash trees in an adjoining field.

Cormac looked up, and casting a glance around him, said, "Where?" as if he had not paid sufficient attention to what was said.

"Over there, in the field we are just passing."

"Aye, aye; bonnie fine trees, true enough," remarked Cormac, in a most decidedly careless sort of tone.

"Yes, bonnie fine trees you may call them, my good old fellow," replied the driver, giving a crack with his whip. "Them's the trees where I helped two troublesome customers to their death a day or two ago."

"Indeed," remarked Cormac.

"Yes, sir," the other continued; "a short rope and a good strong bough, for every rebel, is my motto; and if his majesty's gallant fellows, or our own loyal-hearted yeomanry, who are out scouring the country to-day, can lay hands on one or two more of the blackguards, I wouldn't mind giving them a helping hand at the same work over again."

"Oh, a sad, sad thing to take away life in such a manner!" quietly remarked Cormac.

"Nothing sad about it. It is the duty of every loyal man, at a time like this, to shrink not from the performance."

"Of acting the hangman," suggested Cormac, anticipating what the other was about to say.

"Yes, my good friend, even to perform the unpleasant duties of that same limb of the law."

"Bad work, bad work!" continued Cormac, half heedless of the other's remarks.

Just then a patrol of soldiers came in sight, and Cormac half doubled himself up where he was sitting, and became afflicted with a strange wheezing sound in his throat.

He was evidently uneasy, and wished from all his heart that he were a mile or two out of sight of the red-coats just then.

As they came forward, the soldiers halted, and the driver pulled up the horse.

"Any luck to-day, boys?" was the question asked.

"Och, aye; the devils ain't luck," was the answer, and Cormac recollected the sound of a voice which he had heard before.

"Wha'll thae auld gingerly loon be aside ye there?" inquired the same speaker, who evidently was acquainted with the driver.

"Oh, only an old man travelling a bit of the road, and as the cart was empty, I gave him a lift on the way."

"You should aye act wi' great caution," said Sandy, peering into Cormac's face, rather keenly. "These are nae the sort o' times to show muckle kindness."

"True, quite true; but just you catch a chap like me nodding, and I'll give any man of you leave to call me a fool."

"Nae doot o't; ye'll no' likely hae a bit o' bladderskin about ye," exclaimed Sandy.

"Would a whole one not be as good as a bit of one?" said the countryman, stooping down, and poking among some hay in a corner of the cart.

A small jar of whiskey was produced from its hiding place, and immediately handed to the soldiers.

It was common in those days to employ soldiers as revenue police when not engaged on other duty, and the request about the "bit of a bladderskin," referred to this practice.

"A weel," sighed Sandy, applying the jar to his lips. "Here's that His Gracious Majesty, our guid King Geordie may live tae see the last o' every rebel kicked out of his do-meenions."

The Scotchman's companions were nothing loth to drink any toast, so long as they had the means of anything stronger than water in which to drink it.

After several congratulations, none of which sounded very musical in the ears of Cormac, the soldiers went on their way.

Having taken their departure, the companion of Cormac offered him a drop of what remained in the jar. Cormac declined, but the other insisted that it would do his cough good.

Rather than appear unfriendly, Cormac applied the jar to his lips, and, in doing so, thought he observed the driver lustily engaged in pulling off his coat; then lifting his hat suddenly, and pulling something off his head, instantly replaced the hat. Handing back the jar, he thanked the driver, and, although not caring to gaze too intently into his face, was sure that he observed some kind of a change in the owner of the cart.

"Take another drop," said the driver; but the request was politely refused.

"Then here's your very good health, Cormac, my boy; and many happy and better days to both of us!" Saying which, the driver of the cart took a long pull from the jar.

Cormac certainly heard him, but did his ears deceive him? How could he tell? He muttered something like thanks, and bethought himself of jumping out of the cart, and proving how an old man, with a bad cough, could cover a certain amount of ground in a given time. Then those trees to which his companion alluded! that allusion was not calculated to compose his nerves. All these thoughts flashed quickly through his mind, only to be dissipated and laughed at, as Israel Milliken held forth

his hand, to be tightly grasped by Cormac, who suddenly found out the true character of his companion.

"Gracious heavens! Who would have thought it was you, Milliken?" exclaimed Cormac, suddenly cured of his cough.

"Or, rather, who in the name of this good day would have thought it was you, Cormac?"

"But you see you were the first to recognize me. I need not ask if you knew me when you first saw me."

"Certainly, I knew you; but allow me to give you full credit for your disguise. I don't mean the old garments alone, but the character of the old man was well sustained. One thing only you forgot: your hair should be unattended to, and your face a little less acquainted with water, considering the means that an old man like you, you know, could be expected to have, roaming over the country."

"And you almost instantly recognized me."

"Not instantly. Believe me, my good fellow, I should never have known you, but for young Barney, who helped to deck you out."

"You know him, then?"

"Know him, yes; a finer fellow, nor any honest, can't be found in these parts."

"He is, indeed, a kind, brave-hearted fellow."

"But the soldiers, Cormac? You forget what danger we were both on the point of encountering there, my boy."

"No, far from it. I was just about to ask you if they knew who you are?"

"One of them knows."

"The Scotchman!" half shouted Cormac, in amazement.

"The very same," answered Milliken; "a good loyal-hearted fellow, who would sell His Most Gracious Majesty, and the half o' his dominions, for a year's pay!"

Milliken then rehearsed, to Cormac's astonishment, the fact of his being out for the past week, in company with some others, on the search for McCracken. During one of their patrols, they fell in with Sandy and a companion. After some conversation, a proposal was made, which both soldiers swore to abide by; it was that they should render all the assistance in their power to help in discovering McCracken's whereabouts. One hundred pounds was paid to each of them, and a like sum was to be given them in the event of their being successful.

"But the Government reward is likely, nay, is sure to be larger than that; and should these villains succeed in finding out McCracken's whereabouts, rest assured they would be the very first to claim the reward and give him up to the government."

"Decidedly so. We know all that," continued Milliken; "but our object was to bribe them to give no attention to those who were really on the look-out for McCracken. Besides, we had them sworn to fulfill their contract under pain of death."

Milliken continued to inform Cormac of many matters with which the latter was unacquainted. He had borrowed the horse and cart from a friend, carried a disguise about with him, prominent among which was a delightful wig of red, unkempt hair. He was about proceeding toward Belfast, when he learned from friend Barney, that Cormac was gone on his way to meet with Mullan and Dolan at Roddy Flynn's. He then and there changed his mind, and turned to overtake him, affirming that had it not been for the information he had received, he would never have been able to recognize Cormac.

Both had many things to relate to each other, and the time wore on pleasantly enough, without any further adventures, till they reached the house of Roddy Flynn.

Arrived there, Milliken bawled out to bring some water to his horse. The order was obeyed, slowly enough, by Roddy's wife. As the horse was engaged allaying his thirst, Milliken, who had assumed his disguise, kept up a running banter with Mrs. Flynn.

"Any loiterers hereabouts?" he inquired.

"Deed no, sir. It's a poor, lonesome district, and few call this way."

"That's the very thing induced me to make the inquiry," said Milliken. "Yet this is just such a place as one would select for concealment," he continued, partly addressing Cormac, and the good woman at the same time.

"Of course you can make a meal ready for us?" inquired Cormac.

"I don't think it, sir," she replied. "Besides, there is no one in the house but myself; my old man is over in the field beyond."

"Oh, nonsense!" said Milliken; "didn't we hear several voices just as we pulled up?"

"Certainly," responded Cormac.

Mrs. Flynn was no adept at dissimulation, and sharply told the strangers "it was none of their business what they heard;" saying which, she retired into the house.

Milliken and Cormac dismounted, laughing heartily as they did so.

In a few minutes the disguises were thrown aside, and both Milliken and Cormac were heartily and warmly received. Pat Dolan and John Mullan had greatly improved. Their injuries were severe enough; Pat's especially.

John Mullan was even better than Cormac had dared to hope.

They had one and all many things to talk over, but Milliken insisted that he must leave. "Sure you came in to get a meal," said Roddy's good-hearted wife, "and you can't think of going till you get the best the house affords."

There was nothing for it but submission, and Milliken postponed his departure till he had partaken of the hospitalities of Mrs. Flynn.

#### CHAPTER XXVIII.—DEATH OF M'CRACKEN AND MUNROE — "O, GIVE US BUT ONE TRIAL MORE."

"O, give us but one trial more, And count the men on either side; Two to one we'll give you o'er— But let the ground be clear and wide."

After wandering about for some weeks, McCracken found that his continued safety depended on the merest chance. By his advice, those of his friends who had stood by him, and were willing to do so till the last moment, had left his company, and he was now alone. Once he received word from a poor old woman, who had concealed him for some time, that parties of soldiers were constantly seen about the mountains. Accordingly, he thought fit to leave that part of the country, and did so. His determination was, if possible, to reach the sea-shore, and depend on chance for a passage across the channel to France. His funds were at the lowest ebb, and he had no means of communicating with his friends, to get his purse replenished. One day he was observed by a couple of yeomanry, who evidently knew him, and he had, in consequence, a hard race for his life. At another time, on turning into a by-road, in order to allow a number of country people to pass by, he encountered two patrols, and was pursued and fired at. These reverses disheartened the fugitive, and rendered him nervous and timid. At length, being worn out with constant vigilance and want of rest, he entered a house and made his case known, depending on the honor of the people in whose hands he placed his life. This was a step generally successful in the case of others, for the people were seldom, if ever, known to betray the trust reposed in them. In the midst of all sorts of disasters, the Irish people have ever and always proved their honor and devotion to whoever was so circumstanced as McCracken. Unfortunately for him, the place which he had entered belonged to an Englishman, who, after receiving from the noble outlaw all he possessed in money and clothing, immediately gave information to the authorities, and the Commander-in-Chief of the "rebel" forces of Ulster was taken prisoner.

Both Munroe and McCracken were hanged and quartered!

England has often seen danger in the corpse of an Irish "rebel," and that may probably account for the inhumanities perpetrated on the bodies of the dead.

Talk of mercy! England knows nothing of that term in her treatment of Irishmen, especially when an attempt has been made by the latter to slip the bonds in which they live.

It is, probably, a good thing after all, that Irishmen have so many examples of hangings and quarterings kept constantly before their eyes. Such lessons not easily forgotten, and should never be forgotten until the cause which called them forth shall triumph. Then, and not till then, shall Irishmen mix forgiveness and forgetfulness together.

Word had been brought to the party at Roddy Flynn's of the execution of both these men. They expected as much some day or another, but still the news fell like a thunderbolt in their midst. They were grieved and saddened beyond measure.

"The blow is heavier than the death of my son," said Pat Dolan.

There was no reply to his remark; for, hide it as he might, Dolan felt keenly the loss of his boy, and Ned's heart refused to be comforted since the death of his brother.

John Mullan still endeavored to sustain the spirits of all around him. His good nature shone forth stronger, if possible, whenever he observed a tinge of sadness in his friends.

He bantered Cormac on several occasions, by relating his fancies as to the future career of Kate O'Neill, whom he prophesied would be the mother of lots of "rebels."

"And I'll be godfather to the whole of them!" cried out Roddy Flynn.

"Just if it's pleasing to me," said his better half.

"Come, Mullan," said Pat, "give us a song, old boy. We weren't beaten after all."

"With pleasure," said John; and, after shifting his seat so as to see all the company, he commenced to the tune of *Viva La* :—

"O, GIVE US BUT ONE TRIAL MORE.

"O, give us but one trial more, And count the men on either side; Two to one we'll give you o'er— But let the ground be clear and wide.

"Deck yourselves in armor bright, Raise your blood-stained flag on high— And then we'll show you how to fight, Before we show you how to die.

"We'll bear our breasts before your steel,

Our hearts our ramparts in the fight; While Heaven looks on, we'll make you feel The pith and power of Irish might.

"O, give us but one trial more, And take the odds, for armed we'll be: Then down upon your ranks we'll pour, Like waves from out a shoreless sea.

"You knew our strength in days gone by, You felt it, too, on many a field; And shall again—please God on high— Our country's cause our only shield.

"O, give us but one trial more, We ask it—nay, for it we kneel! But not as we have knelt before, But here—behind our serried steel.

"Whene'er again we bow the knee, It will be at the word—'Prepare!' To make your riders backward reel, And with our death-shouts rend the air."

The simple strain produced its natural effect. The minds of one and all reverted to the part each had taken in the battles of their country.

"But they'll never give one trial more," said Pat Dolan, addressing the singer.

"They haven't given one yet," replied Mullan. "We got a chance, and took it."

"And the plan will be, to make our chances surer of success in time to come," said Cormac. A conversation took place as to the best means of insuring a continuation of the safety of those present.

The Government was losing no opportunity to find out the places of concealment of those who had taken an active part in the rebellion.

Cormac and Mullan maintained there was but one course open to them—emigration.—Pat's heart was, as he expressed it, in the Old Land, where his gallant son had fought and fell.

"And as for the old woman and myself," said Roddy Flynn, "we shall lay our bones together, if the soldiers quietly permit us."

No word had been obtained from Father McAuley's; and both Cormac and Mullan were anxious and uneasy on that account. It was probable that none of them knew whether their friends outlived the battles in which they were engaged.

Cormac suggested that all should endeavor to make their way to the vaults at Shane's Castle, as, in that case, they would be nearer their friends, and their chances of safety secured.

Pat Dolan would not listen to this proposal. The chances were that Fleming either had found out the place, or would succeed in so doing. Besides, that part of the country was too close to those places where the English soldiers were encamped. Any place in the immediate vicinity of Antrim or Randalstown was dangerous, especially to those who were known to have been residents in that quarter.

Milliken advised that John and Cormac should go with him en route to Belfast. There was danger in the presence of three men together, but there was also some chance of safety in their strength of numbers. He was sure if he had the two young men in the neighborhood of Belfast or Carrickfergus, they might easily escape to Scotland, from which place they could sail for America as soon afterwards as convenient.

This plan was looked upon as the most feasible, but Cormac would not listen to it at that time. He openly avowed his motive.—He wished to see Miss O'Neill, and to learn that there was no probability of anything happening to her in the event of his departure. It is needless to say that John Mullan was of the same opinion, and earnestly seconded the views of Cormac.

Milliken shortly afterwards took his leave. He was not certain if he would ever again have the happiness of mixing with any of his friends then present. One thing only he was certain of: as long as he lived he would bear a kindly recollection of them one and all.

The parting with Milliken was enough to try the nerves of the strongest among that party of refugees. He was well beloved by them all, and he, in his turn, had always shown the warmth of his affection for them. True, they differed in religion, but, on the question of their country, they were ONE in heart and soul.

Brave and gallant Milliken! no truer heart than thine ever beat in the breast of an Irishman!

Israel Milliken lived to a good old age.—Nearly fifty years subsequent to the date of our story, the stately form of Milliken might have been seen, as he wended his way through immense crowds to take his post as chairman at the Repeal meetings held in Belfast. His hair was long, and as white as snow, which gave him quite a patriarchal appearance.

The chair used on such occasions was of carved oak. It had seen some duty in '82, having been used at the Volunteer meeting in Dungannon. Israel used to lay his hand upon it, keep gazing at it for a moment or two, then shake his head as much as to say: "You and I, old chair, have seen the time—we two belong to a past age." In his old days he was a man of few words, but always earnest and sincere; and if, as often happened, any speaker alluded to the affair of '98, the spirit of the old man waxed warm, as the memory of those days