



DIARY OF THE SIEGE OF LIMERICK FROM CONTEMPORARY SOURCES

BY LARRY WALSH

THE SOURCES

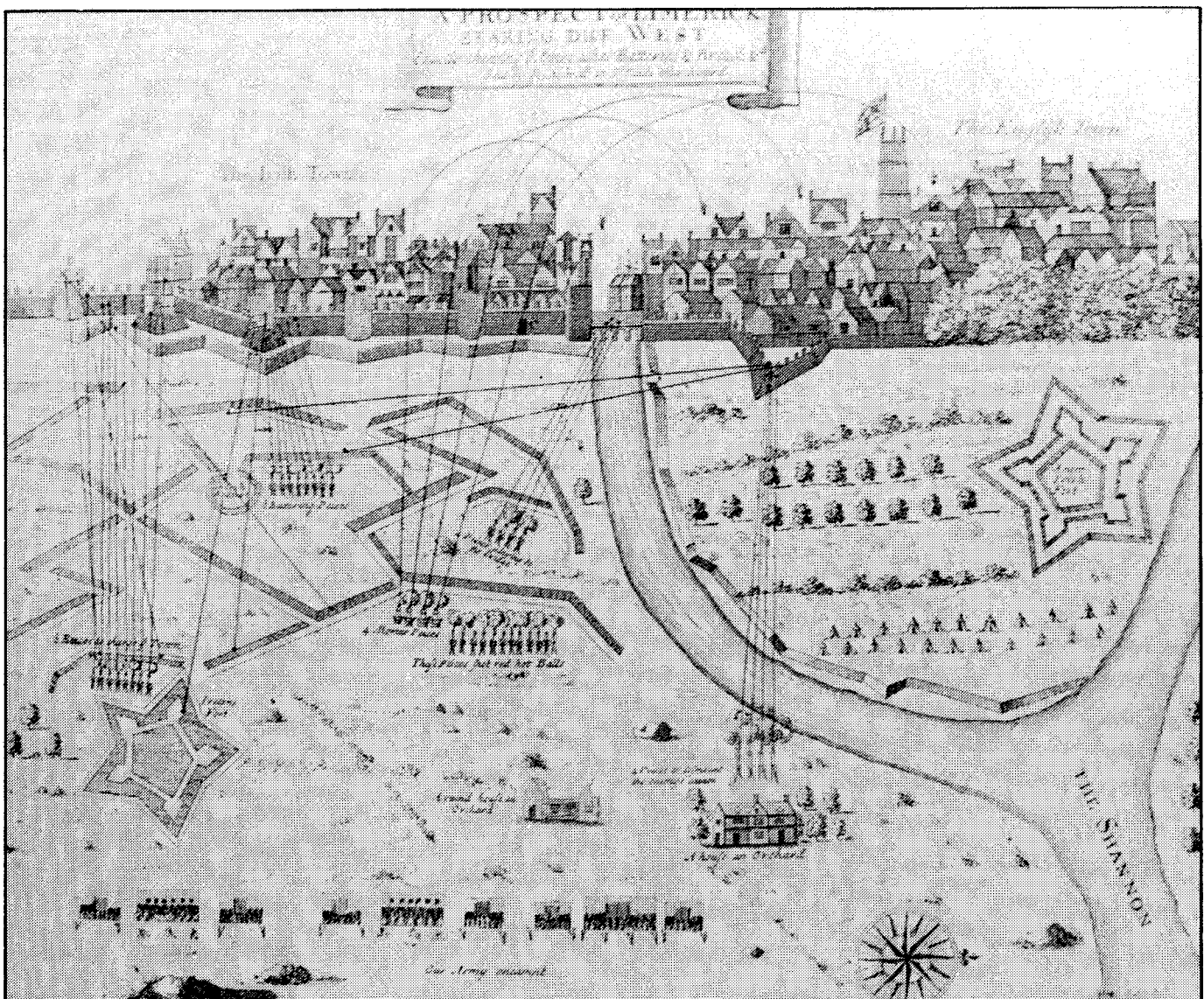
JACOBITE

1. Duke of Berwick.
2. French correspondence
(Boisseleau, Lauzun, La Vigne -
Sheila Mulloy, *this Journal*)
3. Jacobite Narrative.
4. Charles O'Kelly.
5. John Stevens.

WILLIAMITE

- A. Colonel Thomas Bellingham.
- B. D. Campbell.
- C. Andreas Claudianus
(John Jordan - *this Journal*)
- D. Dr. George Clarke.
- E. Rev. Rowland Davies.
- F. Danish Force
(Württemberg, Stein, Munchgaar)
- G. Fleming manuscripts.
- H. Jean Payen de la Foulereuse.

- I. Rev. Theophilus Harrison.
- J. London Gazette.
- K. Samuel Mullenau.
- L. Robert Parker.
- M. Sir Robert Southwell.
- N. Robert Stearne.
- O. Rev. George Story.
- P. Dutch sources
(Pieter Tesch - *this Journal*)



*A prospect of Limerick Bearing Due West, Exactly shewing ye Approaches, Batteries & Breach etc.
1690 from Story's 'Continuation', 1693.*

Tues., 1 July, 1690

Battle of the Boyne. Jacobite forces fled in confusion, losing tents, baggage and many weapons, except for the German regiment of Zurlauben in the French service, which covered the retreat and drew off their cannon.⁽⁵⁾

Wed., 2 July

500 of Zurlauben's regiment, mostly Germans, deserted and joined the Williamites. They had been taken prisoner by the French the previous year.⁽⁶⁾

Sat., 5 July

Williamite army camped at Finglas.⁽⁷⁾

Sun., 6 July

Jacobite forces in considerable numbers⁽⁴⁾ began arriving at Limerick to find that all accommodation in the city was taken up by the principal officers.⁽⁵⁾ William attended service at St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.⁽⁶⁾

Mon., 7 July

Finglas declaration by William, offering protection to Jacobite tradesmen and farmers who returned to their work, but excluding the landed class, the last date for compliance being 1 August.^(3,6)

Wed., 9 July

Douglas ordered towards Athlone, and the rest of William's army started towards Limerick.^(3,6)

Fri., 11 July

The Williamite army marched to Kilcullen, Co. Kildare. William ordered that a soldier he saw robbing a poor woman, and several others guilty of similar offences, be executed on the following Monday.⁽⁶⁾

Sat., 12 July

The Jacobite army camped three miles to the east of Limerick.⁽⁵⁾

Sun., 13 July

Jacobites spent the day building huts, due to the loss of baggage at the Boyne.⁽⁵⁾

Mon., 14 July

Review of Jacobite army by Brigadier Wauchop. The Grand Prior's regiment, which had 800 men at the Boyne, now had 300, of which 100 had no weapons, and 50 had broken weapons.⁽³⁾ The Williamite army marched to Timolin, Co. Kildare.⁽⁶⁾

Tues., 15 July

The Williamite army marched to Castledermot, Co. Kildare. 1000 horse and dragoons were sent to secure Wexford, which had been deserted by the Jacobites.⁽⁶⁾

Wed., 16 July

Some Jacobite regiments decamped and moved into Limerick, 4 regiments and the French in the city, the others



*Portrait bust of William III in 1691 by J.H. Brandon.
Ulster Museum, Belfast.*

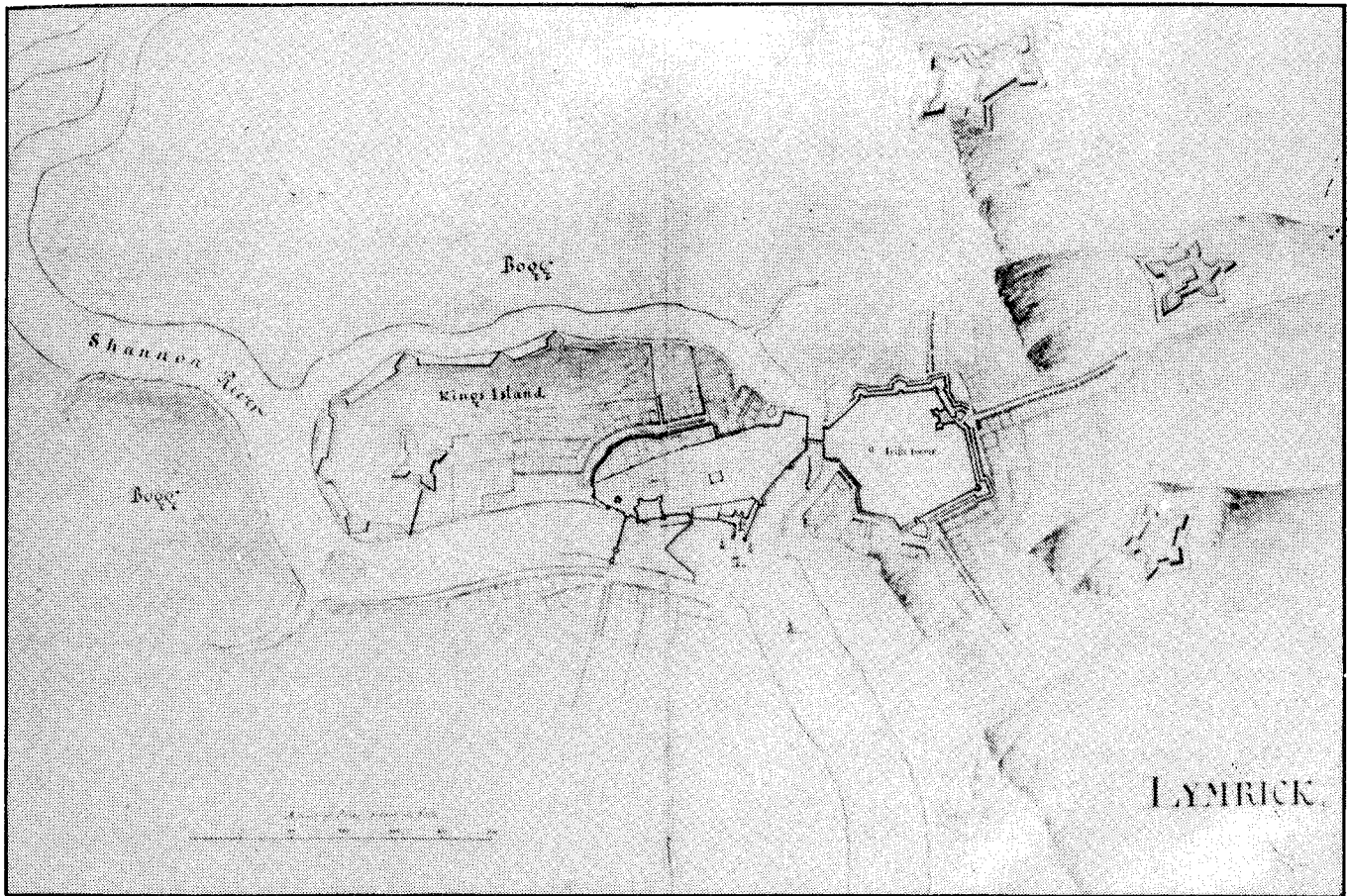
marching through. A plan to seize the weapons of the French was foiled by Tyrconnell.⁽⁵⁾ James had written to Tyrconnell from Kinale giving him power to make peace with William or to continue the war.⁽³⁾ At a council of war, Tyrconnell proposed to negotiate terms with William. This was opposed by many officers, and it was resolved to hold out to the last. Tyrconnell then proposed to hamstring all the horses and withdraw all the army to garrisons. This, too, was opposed, and Tyrconnell's authority greatly undermined.⁽⁵⁾ Dysentery was prevalent among the Danish infantry.⁽⁶⁾

Thurs., 17 July

Quarters were assigned in the city, in

some houses one company, in others two. St. Mary's cathedral, in the hands of the Catholics, was later used as a store for meal. St. Munchin's church, much decayed, was first used as a workshop for gunsmiths, later as a military store. St. Francis' Abbey was mainly in ruins, but the church was used by the friars.⁽⁵⁾

The citadel at John's Gate, with a stone half-moon outwork, was weak and had only a few small pieces of artillery. Tanyards lined the east wall of Irishtown, which was four feet thick. Outside the wall of Irishtown was a considerable suburb, with many fine houses, and a greater population than both the walled towns together. These were all levelled, and many gardens and orchards



Map of Limerick, late 1690.

destroyed, this work being done by the French. The length of the wall had no outwork, so work on the construction of a covered way with three or four little bastions, with slight lines of communication between them, was begun. A large but slight hornwork was built in front of Mungret Gate, and to the east of the town, opposite the south-east tower, two small redoubts were cast up, and one of unmortared stone opposite St. John's Gate. 1200 men began the work this day.⁽⁵⁾ The city walls were of quite good masonry, 25 to 30 feet high, 4 to 5 feet thick on top, with a 3 foot walkway, but with no rampart behind. The Irishtown was commanded by higher ground all around within half a cannon-shot. The river could be forded at many places at low tide.⁽²⁾

The Williamite army marched to Kells, Co. Kilkenny.⁽⁶⁾

Fri., 18 July

Work on the defences continued, the French demolishing the suburbs, taking the timbers into the town. They also knocked the parapets off the citadel, and replaced them with a sod-work capable of taking six or seven cannon.⁽⁵⁾

The Williamite army marched to Bennetsbridge, Co. Kilkenny.⁽⁶⁾

Sat., 19 July

The grenadiers prepared palisades. All

officer's horses were priced and taken for army service.⁽⁵⁾ William dined at Kilkenny Castle with the Duke of Ormonde.⁽⁶⁾ Cavalry, under Count Schomberg,⁽⁶⁾ occupied Clonmel,⁽⁷⁾ which the Jacobites had abandoned⁽⁶⁾ (on the 20th⁽⁶⁾).

Sun., 20 July

Defence work continued.⁽⁵⁾ The Williamite army marched to Rossenarra, Co. Kilkenny.⁽⁶⁾

Mon., 21 July

The work continued. Because of the hot weather, the men were relieved more often.⁽⁵⁾ William's army marched to Carrick-on-Suir.⁽⁶⁾

Tues., 22 July

Palisades were collected from woods near O'Brien's Bridge.⁽⁵⁾ A detachment from William's army under Kirk went to Waterford.⁽⁶⁾

Wed., 23 July

A detachment (under Sarsfield⁽¹¹⁾; under Lauzun and Tyrconnell⁽²⁾) went from Limerick to relieve Athlone.⁽⁵⁾

Fri., 25 July

Waterford garrison marched out with arms and baggage to be conducted to Mallow.⁽⁶⁾ The French had 11 ships close to Limerick, and 22 more farther down towards the sea.⁽⁷⁾

Sun., 27 July

William left for Dublin, intending to return to England due to reports of a French landing there.⁽⁶⁾ His horse camp marched through Clonmel and four miles further towards Golden, Co. Tipperary,⁽⁶⁾ the infantry to within two miles of Clonmel.⁽⁷⁾ There were many sick among the Danes – the hospitals were full – the reasons being the long marches and the bread, which was not sour, but too sweet, to which they were unaccustomed.⁽⁷⁾

Tues., 29 July

Lauzun and 1,000 French musketeers, who had been detached towards Athlone, arrived back in Limerick.⁽²⁾ William's army camped at Golden.^(1,8)

Thurs., 31 July

The Irish detachment sent to Athlone arrived back in Limerick.⁽⁵⁾ As there were not enough mills in the town to provide a third of the bread needed by the garrison, some hand-mills, half broken, were being distributed to each company.⁽²⁾ Relations between the Irish and the French were very bad – the French feared the Irish as much as the Williamites, and four or five English Jacobite officers were continually conspiring against them.⁽²⁾

William was at Capelizod hearing petitions.^(4,9) As his army had only one



month's supply of bread, stocks were ordered to be sent from England.^(M) His horse camp was near Golden.^(E)

July, undated

French money, amounting to 100,000 livres,⁽²⁾ and over £30,000 of James',^(D) together with money, plate and valuables belonging to Lauzun, Tyrconnell and others,^(D,M) was sunk in an overladen boat taking it from the town to a French ship.^(2,D,M) Tyrconnell sent his wife to France.⁽⁴⁾

Fri., 1 August

Jacobite regiments were reviewed on King's Island. The troops expected pay, bread rations and regulation of quarters, but nothing happened.⁽⁵⁾

Lauzun inspected the fortifications and declared them untenable.⁽⁴⁾ William left Dublin to rejoin the army^(A,J) (on the 2nd^(O)). A party of Inniskilling and Danish horse advanced within sight of Limerick, and brought back an account that the Irish army, consisting of 27,000 men, had retired over the Shannon on hearing of the approach of William's army.^(K) William renewed and extended the Finglas declaration (to 25 August^(M)), adding that foreigners opposing him could have passes to return home, or to go elsewhere.^(O)

Sat., 2 August

Cavalry and dragoons were marched from Limerick towards Athlone. The French left for Galway, to the great satisfaction of all.⁽⁵⁾

The Williamite army was still at Golden,^(O) and was rejoined by the regiments sent to Waterford under Kirk^(D) (on the 4th^(K)). A deserter reported that the French, 3500 strong,^(K) had left,^(D,EJ,M) taking 8 cannon,^(J,K) that there were only three provision ships at Limerick quay, and that there was great want of twenty^(M) more which had long been expected.^(J,M) The Jacobite army was reported as being 25,000 strong, but badly armed, and in a deplorable condition; Tyrconnell, rather than Sarsfield and other officers, was reported to be for holding out.^(O)

Sun., 3 August

Advice about the approach of William's army was received in Limerick.⁽⁵⁾

Mon., 4 August

The Irish infantry, which had been camped three miles to the east of the city, marched through to King's Island, bringing with them materials for huts. Work on the defences continued day and night.⁽⁵⁾ William rejoined the army at Golden.^(3,EO)

Tues., 5 August

Work on the defences continued.⁽⁵⁾ A party of William's horse was sent to reconnoitre towards Limerick.^(RO) It was reported that there were only three Irish regiments in Limerick, and a small camp

outside the town, and that many had left for Kerry.^(O)

Wed., 6 August

Review of Grand Prior's regiment 446 privates, 543 in all, but of these many were sick, and many without weapons. Few other regiments had as many.⁽⁵⁾ William's army advanced to Sallywood.^(M,O)

Thurs., 7 August

William's army advanced to Caherconlish.^(J,M,O) The Irish dragoons retired, burning the countryside as they went,^(5,J,O) including crops, and poisoning standing water.^(F) In the afternoon, William rode out to reconnoitre the approaches to Limerick, and, as it was dark and raining, came within pistol-shot of an Irish post; after one discharge, they retired.^(F)

Sarsfield was sent for, and resolved to defend the town. The infantry manned the town, with three regiments guarding fords. The cavalry was nearby on the Clare side.⁽⁴⁾ Work on the defences continued all night.⁽⁵⁾

Fri., 8 August

Early in the morning (1 a.m.^(O)) 1100 (1200^(F)) of William's horse and foot went out to see where the camp should be sited.^(F) They advanced within cannon-shot of the town,^(J,O) and were seen on a ridge overlooking the town.⁽⁵⁾ They met little opposition^(O) – there was a small skirmish with Luttrell's cavalry, in which two Williamites were captured, 3 or 4 killed, and one Irish wounded.⁽⁵⁾ (They returned about 10 a.m. without achieving their objective, due to a thick mist and Irish forces lining the road.^(F)) About 7 p.m.,^(J) William, with officers and 300 (200^(O)-horse, left and came near the town, within two and half miles,^(J) meeting a party of Irish horse, which retreated.^(O) The Irish were so near they could hear them talking^(J) (shouting insults^(F)). There was some cannon-fire from the town.^(O)

A Protestant clergyman came out from the town and reported that the Irish army was about 45,000 strong, of whom 25,000 were armed as soldiers, the rest peasants armed with pikes, scythes etc.^(F) In the evening Douglas with his army rejoined William^(3,EM,N,O) (on the 5th^(K)).

Work on the defences continued,⁽⁵⁾ building the stone redoubt opposite St. John's Gate and the farther of the two redoubts to the east.⁽²⁾

Sat., 9 August

Early in the morning (by 5 a.m.^(O)), William's army decamped, sending as an advanced party 3 squadrons (200^(O)) of horse and dragoons with 1000 foot. At 6 o'clock, they found the Irish on a hill three miles from the town.^(O) The Irish retreated hedge by hedge.^(5,O) lining each and firing, but without determination,^(F) while the Williamite pioneers levelled the hedges and ditches as they advanced. By

about 11 o'clock, they had advanced to nearly a mile from the town,^(M) and at half a mile came to a pass between two bogs, full of hedges and ditches, which the Irish lined with musketeers. There was some skirmishing between the cavalry, with little loss to either side. The Williamite army was formed into a line with the cavalry in the centre, and advanced hedge by hedge. After an hour's fighting,^(O) the Williamites reached Singland hill, which the Irish could have held for a long time, but were soon chased out.^(5,O) The Irish, now under the shelter of cannon-fire from the town, stayed overnight between Singland and the town⁽⁵⁾ (they were driven back to the counterscarp from the trenches and bushes there^(F)). The Irish had fought better than expected.^(M) (Their officers could not get the men to stand their ground^(F)). Williamite losses in this were less than 12,^(O) (Danes, 30 dead and wounded^(F)), Irish losses none⁽⁵⁾ (over 250 killed^(K)). Irish cannon now began firing, killing several Williamites as they marched in. Four cannon (five 12-pounders⁽²⁾) were set up at Cromwell's fort and fired on the town. By 5 o'clock, the Williamites were all in, encamped within cannon-shot of the town. The Danes camped on the left [towards the Shannon], where they found a ringfort, supposed to have been built by their ancestors, of which they were very proud. From there they fired cannon (four 12-pounders⁽²⁾) on the Irish entrenched in front of the town.^(O)

At 6 o'clock, William sent a trumpeter with a summons from Southwell to Boisseleau, the governor, to send out some officers to hear what terms William was willing to offer. Boisseleau replied, to Southwell, that he would best earn the esteem of the Prince of Orange by a vigorous defence of the forces entrusted to him by the king. The reference to William as Prince of Orange, rather than king, irritated.^(3,EM,O) Boisseleau gave the trumpeter a guinea to drink to the health of William.^(F) Berwick, Sarsfield, Dorrington,⁽³⁾ Dominick Sheldon,^(M) Luttrell and Wauchope were in town when the reply was sent; Tyrconnell was at the camp in Clare.^(D)

Towards evening, William sent a party of dragoons to view the ford over the Shannon at Annaghbeg, near Plassey, where the Irish had 6 regiments of foot, 3 of horse and 2 of dragoons posted behind a breast-work on the Clare side. These fired on the party, but missed.^(J,M,O)

Cannon-fire was exchanged between the town and the camp until dark, killing and wounding about 30 in the camp.^(M) (Not more than 30 Williamites were killed and wounded in the days' action.^(O))

The garrison was given out as 15,000 to encourage the Irish and intimidate the Williamites, but was actually not more than 10,000, including a considerable number unarmed.⁽⁵⁾ Another estimate gave about 8,000.⁽³⁾



Patrick Sarsfield, Earl of Lucan (c.1650 - 1693). Print by J. & M. Tiliard, after a watercolour miniature by Lady Margaret Bingham (later Countess of Lucan) (fl. 1760 - 1814).

Belderg O'Donnell, a descendant of the Gaelic Earl of Tyrconnell who was reared in Spain, had arrived in Limerick and prophesied that the English would be stopped at Singland hill.^(M,O)

Sun., 10 August

Early in the morning, 8 squadrons of horse and dragoons and 3 regiments of foot^(O) (about 5000 men^(J,M)) under Ginkel and Kirk crossed the Shannon at An-naghbeg without opposition.^(3,4,B,D,E,F,J,K,M,O) (The Williamites never dared to send any party over the river^(I)). Tyrconnell had ordered the troops guarding the ford to withdraw and march to Galway.⁽⁴⁾ The

river was lower than in living memory, reaching the infantry to their pockets. At 8 o'clock William himself went over,^(J,M) and travelled a mile towards Limerick on the Clare side.^(M) Berwick ordered the corn within ten miles of the city destroyed as a result of the crossing.⁽³⁾ A deserter reported that most of the Irish cavalry and some foot were at Sixmilebridge, and a party was sent to find them,^(O) but they had taken alarm, and Tyrconnell and Lauzun went overnight to Galway (to arrange transport for the French^(O)), leaving the cavalry halfway between Limerick and Galway.^(4,O) An entrenchment was built at

the ford to keep it continuously open.^(I) The Danish Adjutant-General, Walter, was shot from behind while riding from there to the camp.^(I)

Cannon-fire was exchanged between the town and batteries at Cromwell's fort and the Danish camp on a hill opposite the SW tower (called the Ball tower) of the Irishtown, with little loss to either side. Two or three cannon-balls went through the Capuchin chapel at Palmerstown during mass,⁽⁷⁾ and shots from the town flew over the Williamite camp.^(M) The Irish looked at the enemy camp through telescopes (multiplying glasses).⁽⁵⁾

A French deserter went into the town and reported the movement of William's artillery train, and the layout of the camp at Singland.^(O) As a result, Irish cannon-fire caused great damage, killed and maimed several, killed two of Prince George's horses and hit his tent, and splintered four flagstaffs.^(I)

That night was stormy, and a tremendous disturbance arose between the town and the Williamite camp, the Irish ringing bells and the English shouting insults, thinking a sally was coming.^(C) Sarsfield went to the horse camp, was given 500 horse and dragoons, and crossed the Shannon⁽³⁾ at Killaloe.^(I,M,O) Notice was received in the camp that the desertion of the ford the previous night was for some exploit by Sarsfield.^(M) The artillery train had reached Cashel.^(O)

A deserter from the town reported the strength of the garrison as 14 regiments of foot, 3 of horse and 2 of dragoons.^(O) The wall of the town was strong,^(M,O) with, on the inside, a vast ditch and a huge bank of earth and stones.^(O) The earthworks were skilfully made.^(M) On the other hand, the wall was weak, with only a toy of a palisade outside, and no rampart inside.⁽³⁾

Mon., 11 August

Early in the morning, the Irish cannon-fire was so hot and accurate that some sections of the army were forced to move.^(5,O) They also fired towards William's tent, killing some men. Six 12-pounders were planted at Cromwell's fort, which dismounted one of the best Irish guns on the spur in front of the citadel, and did some damage in the town.^(O) The Williamite fire suddenly stopped.⁽⁵⁾

William and the senior officers rode upriver to reconnoitre where ships could pass in and out. The Williamite left flank was two miles from the river, and grenadiers were detailed to man the hedges between. The Irish attacked them, and they charged one another for an hour until William withdrew. One Dane and 8 Irish were shot in this.^(F)

In the morning, Manus O'Brien^(O) reported that Sarsfield had crossed the Shannon.^(B,F,M) He was not taken much notice of at first, but later William

ordered 500 horse (600 plus 200 dragoons^(P)), under Sir John Lanier, to meet the artillery train, then on its way from Cashel, and expected to be within three miles of Dromkeen by night,^(B) and escort it, but for some reason it was 1 or 2 at night before they left.^(O) Lanier made many unnecessary stops on the way.^(L)

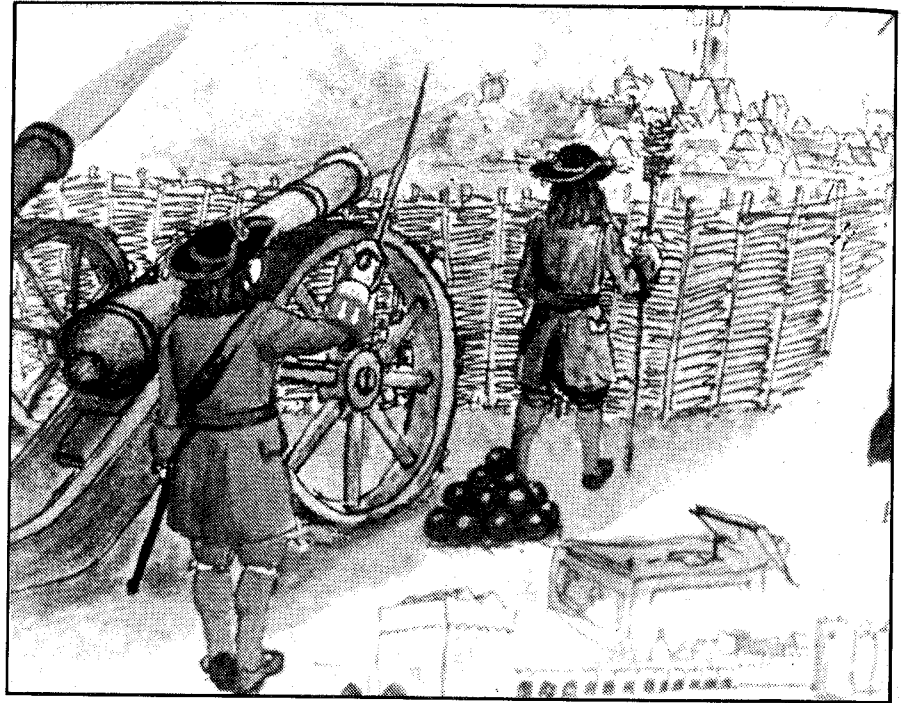
Supplies of bread and meat had not yet arrived at the camp.^(B)

Tues., 12 August

About 1^(P) or 2 o'clock^(M) in the morning, the artillery train was blown up by Sarsfield at Ballyneety. The escort, 80 troopers and 12 fusiliers^(M) (about 100 calvary^(B); about 60^(N)), had turned the horses out to grass, and posted little^(O) or no^(B) guard. The train consisted of about 60 (100^(M)) wagons and carts^(M) laden with 12,000lbs (100 barrels^(B)) of powder, 3,000 cannon-balls, spades, eight 18-pounder guns, a great quantity of match, grenades and carcasses, bridge boats made of cork and tin,^(M) some (brass^(B)) money^(B) and three days' supply of bread (no bread^(B)) for the army, drawn by 500 artillery horses.^(P) The escort, including wagoners, women and children^(A,B,J,K,L,M,N) (women and children thrown alive onto the fire^(O)) were slaughtered to the total of 50,^(E,J) 60,^(B,O) 80,^(M) Davies^(B) the only one of these to visit the scene, does not mention women and children. Captain Poultney, in charge of the convoy, escaped through a corn field, and Meesters, [the Dutch comptroller of artillery], particularly enquired after by the Irish, by falling into a bed of nettles.^(M) About 40 troopers survived, and 20 more were hoped for.^(M) Sarsfield told the only prisoner taken that if he had not succeeded in the raid, he would have gone to France.^(O) The carriages and stores were piled up, the guns filled with powder and their muzzles put in the ground, and the whole lot fired with a tremendous explosion. The boats were slashed, but repairable.^(M) Only two of the guns were split.^(O) Some carts and wagons were untouched,^(M) and the money was left^(B,E,I) (was taken^(B)). All the horses (500^(P)) were taken,^(O) and three standards captured.^(P) (The horses were not taken – nothing was carried away^(O)).

Albert Cunningham's Inniskilling dragoons were nearby, and, advised by a deserter from Sarsfield,^(M) met the Irish and killed about 17^(E,M,O) (20^(P)), the rest escaping. (There was no Irish loss^(L,N)). Lanier's party of cavalry saw them escaping, but went the wrong way to cut them off, (held off to let them pass^(B)) and Col. Villiers did not meet them at O'Brien's Bridge.^(E,O) Lanier was suspected of treachery,^(L) and was seriously reprimanded and degraded.^(N) (The raid was on the 13th^(B)).

As soon as the news was received in the camp, Scravenmore with 1000 horse was sent across the Shannon, but came back at midday without having met anything.^(P)



Williamite cannon-fire. Painting by Aidan O'Sullivan.

During the day, wagons and horses from the camp were sent to fetch what could be salvaged,^(B,O) and replacement cannon were ordered from Carrickfergus, to be brought to Waterford by sea^(M) – 14 battering cannon, 60,000 lbs of powder, 6000 tools and 1000 balls for each gun had already arrived there, but would take 8 days to transport to Limerick.^(P)

Castleconnell surrendered (for want of water^(B)), after the firing of 60-70 shots^(P) (without firing a shot^(N)), and 118^(P) (200;^(B) 120;^(O) about 140,^(J) men, well clothed and armed,^(P) were taken prisoner. The castle was garrisoned, and blown up on the raising of the siege.^(O) Some of the prisoners were to be hung as an example^(B) – one prisoner, who said that his commander should be hung for surrendering, was made to stand with a noose around his neck while the garrison marched past him, and was then hanged.^(P)

The Williamites planted several more cannon, and there was brisk firing from both sides.^(O) (There was no fire from the enemy this day: the Irish fired whenever the enemy came in range^(B)). Most of the hedges and orchards near the camp were cut down for fascines.^(O) The army, especially the Danes, were plundering the countryside, regardless of the religion of the victims.^(M) Food and drink were scarce and expensive in the camp.^(B)

Many advised against attacking the city, because of its strength, with an army both in it and beside it, but because the Irish were poorly regarded, William was determined. If bad weather set in, Limerick and the country would be invincible.^(P)

Wed., 13 August

A party of 300 foot on garrauns was sent to mount guard at Ballyneety.^(M) Sarsfield was reported to be still abroad, putting the bread-carts in danger.^(M)

There was no fire into the town. The unarmed men were building a square fort with bulwarks, one of them with a platform for 3 or 4 cannon, in front of the Englishtown to cover the Williamites outside Irishtown, and others put up breast-works where the Abbey river was considered fordable. A review was made of troops not on duty – it was found that there were sufficient for only one relief force, so the troops were on duty every second day.^(B)

Irish cannon-fire was hitting the Williamite camp, killing about 80,^(M) and shot a tent less than 20 yards from William's.^(M) He was persuaded to move his back,^(E,M) but it was still within range.^(M)

Because of Adjutant-General Walter's injury, Würtemberg had difficulty with orders, which were all given in French or English^(P) – his native language was German.

Thurs., 14 August

About 2 or 3 o'clock, the Williamites fired furiously at the citadel for about two hours, killing 7 or 8, and wounding the same number. The Irish cannon replied, and believed they dismounted the Williamite cannon.^(B)

William rode out to observe the city, and became separated from his escort, accompanied only by Count Schomberg and one other.^(M) William was dismounted when a party of Irish cavalry



Godert de Ginkel, first Earl of Athlone (1630 - 1703). Mezzotint by John Smith, after the portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller, 1695.

approached, and had to be sworn at by Schomberg's equerry to get him to see the urgency of the situation.^(H) Schomberg had his horse shot from under him.^(E,G,M)

The Irish made a sally, but were repulsed leaving 20 dead.^(C) William sent orders to England for a squadron of ships to come to the Shannon.^(M) Sarsfield re-crossed the Shannon at Portumna with the captured draught horses.^(D) A Protestant captain deserted from the town and reported the garrison to be 14,000 men, but not all armed.^(F)

Fri., 15 August

Two or three Irish in the trench below the north wall of the Irishtown were killed by rebounding cannon-balls.^(S) Several prisoners and some spies were taken by the Williamites, and two were hanged.^(C) William issued a proclamation on the payment of tithes as a result of complaints from the north. The intact cannon from Ballyneety were brought to the camp^(E,G) (and mounted, on the

16th^(F)). The left flank of the camp was moved to invest the town more closely, and the Danes were now stationed by the river. Reports were received of strong parties of Irish crossing the river, and Ginkel and Lanier were detailed to cover all convoys.^(F)

Sat., 16 August

The Irish unarmed men were employed fortifying the Englishtown, and knocking the battlements off the walls [of Irishtown], as the splinters struck off by cannon-balls were wounding people.^(S) Ginkel left the camp with a strong party^(E) [for Nenagh]. A French^(C) major deserted the town, and reported that the Irish intended defending the town to the last.^(F) Four troopers (trumpeters^(P)) and a quartermaster, Protestants,^(P) deserted from Sarsfield, and reported that Sarsfield was in Clare with 300 men^(P), and that the Irish at Galway would not allow the French into the town.^(C) Some Irish platoons advanced towards the

Danish camp, where there were bushes, and were charged, in which a Danish sergeant was killed. Orders were issued and preparations made for the opening of trenches the next day.^(H)

Sun., 17 August

The day was quiet.^(S) The Irish cavalry, under Berwick and Sheldon, were believed to be at Loughrea, Co. Galway, to meet Sarsfield,^(H,M) and planned to go into Leinster. The Irish garrison was estimated at 12,000. The army was plundering the countryside for want of pay.^(M)

About 9 p.m.,^(H) the Williamites began their trenches. About midnight, they advanced against the fort in front of St. John's Gate and the furthest out of the two redoubts to the east.^(M,O) At the fort, the Williamites were twice repulsed, until the garrison was ordered to withdraw.^(S) Those caught in it were killed by knocking on the head,^(C,O) in spite of asking quarter, in revenge for the killings at Ballyneety.^(A,F,G,I) At the redoubt, the garrison fled at the first charge, (having fired a heavy volley^(P)), led off by the officers, leaving their weapons behind.^(S) Three Williamite battalions then advanced openly to within 80 yards of the covered way, and were fired on from the counterscarp and the walls, and made to retreat.^(C) An unsuccessful attempt was made to retake the redoubt^(S) – four Irish battalions drove back the workmen and Bellasis's regiment, many of whom threw away their arms, but the situation was restored by Würtemberg.^(F)

The trenches were advanced to within 150 paces from the counterscarp,^(M) those on the right (English) shallow due to rock^(D) (The other regiments cannot work like the Danes^(F)). William watched the action, staying out until two^(M) or three^(E) in the morning.

The Irish were not skilful in taking aim.^(M) Boisseleau was a skilful commander, and the generality of the Irish officers resolute and brave enough.^(M)

Casualties: Williamite, 14 dead and wounded in taking the forts, 15 wounded in the trenches,^(M) 1 dead and about 12 wounded in the trenches,^(D) 1 dead and 2 wounded.^(E)

Irish, 200 dead,^(E) 80 in one fort.^(A,C)

Mon., 18 August

A new battery was planted below Cromwell's fort,^(S,O) which from dawn fired four cannon at the platform in front of the SE tower^(S) [Black Battery], which was thought to have dismounted some Irish cannon.^(E,O) One ball, after glancing along the town wall, broke the legs of 3 men in the ditch, and another killed one man.^(S) Firing by both sides continued all day.^(O) The replacement artillery from Waterford arrived.^(E)

At night (between midnight and 1 a.m.⁽²⁾) the great^(M) redoubt was attacked (without much effort^(S)), but found too high and strong to be taken, so trenches

were driven towards it.^(M) The attackers were ordered to lie on their arms, and some fell asleep. The Irish saw this and attacked. The English retreated in confusion, rallied and fired, but on the Danes, who returned fire, with the Irish firing on both. This continued for about two hours, until the mistake was discovered and the Irish driven back into town.^(O) About 25 (20^(A)) Williamites were killed and wounded, mostly by their own men.^(M) (While the redoubt was being attacked, the Irish cavalry, and infantry,⁽²⁾ made a sally, and the Williamites were driven back, with 100 dead and wounded, the English in great confusion, throwing away their muskets, to be found later by the Danes^(P)). Nine soldiers and one officer were taken prisoner by the Irish.⁽²⁾ As a result, changes of duty were ordered by William to take place during the day.^(A,B,D,E,O) (This incident did not happen – it was prevented by the diligence of the officers^(K)). The town was alarmed, and the whole garrison at the ready all night.^(S)

Tues., 19 August

The Williamites dug a trench parallel to the counterscarp from the farther redoubt towards the [Abbey] river.^(S) Their battery fired on the wall, and from Cromwell's fort into the town. A cannon-ball from the town almost hit William near Cromwell's fort.^(O) The trenches were secured and deepened,^(D) and preparations made to attack the redoubt again.^(M)

At night a battery of 3^(D) or 4^(M,O) 24-pounders was planted near the SE angle of the wall.^(O) (In the morning, two Irish forts were taken, and cannon moved near the town wall, with many killed on both sides^(E)).

Wed., 20 August

In the morning (from daybreak to 1 p.m.⁽²⁾), the Williamites fired from Cromwell's fort and the new battery against the redoubt^(S,D) (Yellow Fort^(E)), and by 3 p.m. in the afternoon, had tumbled a good part of it.^(G) At 2.30 p.m.,^(P) (2,^(G,O,P) 3^(B,M)) in the afternoon, on a signal of three guns,^(G,J) it was attacked with 120^(D,F) (100;^(M) 150^(P)) grenadiers, with 100 more in support, 200 fusiliers and 2 battalions of foot (600 men^(M)), using 4^(P) scaling ladders,^(D) carried by 16 men; in addition, 200 men were detailed carrying fascines and hatchets or shovels, and 200 more carrying woolpacks (made by the Dutch engineer, Meesters^(M)) as cover. The redoubt was mounted on the second (third^(S)) attack,^(O) when it was abandoned for no reason.^(S) The Irish fought well.^(G,H) 60-70^(P) Irish in the fort were killed (42;⁽²⁾ 150;^(A) 60;^(D) 40;^(P) 44;^(M) no Irish losses^(S)), and a Captain Barrett, after pleading for quarter and offering information, with 12 others^(O) was taken prisoner,^(A,E,EM,O) with some escaping to the town. The town side of the fort, which was open, was

secured from shot from there with faggots^(D,M,O) – fire from the walls and the counterscarp delayed the occupation of the redoubt, and 150 musketeers were sent out from the town to line a curtain opposite it to prevent its occupation.⁽²⁾ During the action a quantity of powder blew up in an Irish battery nearby^(D) [Black Battery?]. There were five large bombs in the fort, of which two had been fired.^(M) Capt. Barrett was questioned by William^(P) and said that there were several mines laid, with stones covering them to protect them from bombs, and that the garrison was about 10,000^(G) – 39 battalions formed into 13, and 1,200 horse and 1,000 dragoons.^(P)

An hour later, the Williamites were informed from the town of an impending sally,^(O) which was made, at 5 p.m.,^(D) from East Watergate with all the horse, a party of dragoons on foot, and a body (4 battalions^(P)) of foot^(S) (3 battalions of 1800 men, 3 squadrons of horse, nearly 200;^(M) 2000 in all^(P,P)). Two battalions and the horse came up to the newly-taken fort, and there was furious fire from the fort, the trenches and the town walls. The Irish foot did not perform as well as expected, but the dragoons killed many Williamite cavalry before being forced to retreat, firing as they came.^(S) Williamite cavalry were at the counterscarp for over an hour, expecting a fresh sally,^(M) and lost many by fire from the walls.^(D) The second sally, by 2 battalions of foot, would not advance into danger.^(M) The Irish had fought better than expected by the Williamites.^(M) The action lasted until 7 o'clock.^(P)

Casualties: Williamite cavalry: more than 100 killed and wounded;^(P) 21 killed, 52 wounded;^(O) 64-65 killed and wounded.^(M)

Infantry: 300 killed and wounded;^(P) 58 killed, 140 wounded, excluding the Danes;^(O) 100 killed and wounded;^(M) 200 killed at the fort, and many wounded, 100 killed in the sally;^(P) 100 killed and wounded, plus officers,^(G) 40 lost at the fort.^(P)

Irish: 102;⁽²⁾ considerable;^(S) 500;^(A,G) about 300.^(J,O)

At night, trenches were made to the redoubt, which was 150 paces from the wall, and a battery for four 24-pounders made beside it. Also, a trench 200 paces long was dug to a bog to the north, which crossed two roads, thereby protecting the Williamites from any further sallies.^(D,M)

Casualties at night: 14 killed and wounded.^(M)

Sarsfield, at Loughrea, Co. Galway, issued an order to Lord Dillon to demolish Roscommon castle and the fort of Coole [Dillon Papers, NLI microfilm p.5312]

Thurs., 21 August

The town was alarmed about 1 or 2 a.m., and the garrison was at arms in the street until day. At 2 a.m., there was heavy fire

from the walls and the counterscarp, and some Irish ventured out, but soon retired.^(D) The Williamites were working through the night, bringing in faggots to protect the trenches, which they carried on towards the [Abbey] river.^(S,D)

In the morning, two drummers deserted the town and reported 300 Irish casualties the previous day (on the 25th^(J,K)). Later, 2 cornets and 4 trumpeters came out. The deserters reported the garrison to be above 6000, plus about 800 French returned from Galway; that they had enough provisions, but were short of salt, had enough powder for a 3-week siege, and were lifting the street paving to lessen the effect of bombs.^(G)

Major Margetson was killed in his tent by a cannon-ball from the town.^(B,O) (He was hit on the hip and stomach on the 17th, and died on the 21st^(E)).

Between 3 and 4 p.m., the Irish made a sally, but were driven back with considerable loss within a quarter of an hour. They fired on the fort taken the day before, so that the Williamites could do nothing but shelter behind blinds.^(G)

At 5 p.m.,^(M) the new battery of 24-pounders (five 24-pounders and one 26-pounder⁽²⁾) at the redoubt nearest the SE corner began to fire on a tower (the SE tower, over the Black Battery^(E)) and badly damaged it.^(D,M) The Irish hung woolpacks over the walls.^(E)

At night, the trenches were mended, redoubts were built to the left and right of the great one taken on the 20th, to protect the trenches, and batteries were raised for 12 guns of 18- and 24lbs to fire on the wall 150 paces away. The Williamites were on alert all night, expecting a sally, and the Irish kept up a heavy fire.^(P) 10 men were killed or wounded in the trenches during the night.^(M) The town was not disturbed.^(S)

Fri., 22 August

About 5 a.m., the Irish made a sally, but retreated in less than a quarter of an hour.^(A)

From dawn,^(S) 8 guns, mostly 24-pounders,^(O) (4 guns^(S,E,G)) battered the tower at the SE corner of the wall. William himself was in the trenches, and sent drink to the gunners.^(E) About noon,^(S) the upper part of it fell onto the Black Battery, burying many there^(E) (at 5 in the evening, to a great shout from Singland hill,^(M) before Würtemberg was relieved about 4p.m.^(P)), the remainder of the tower still as high as the wall.^(S) After this, some shots were fired at the middle tower of the east wall (beating it down,^(O) making good progress on it^(M)), at the lower part of the SE tower,^(S) and at the citadel.^(G) Those firing from the SE tower were reported to be friars.^(B) The Irish began building a retrenchment inside the wall where the breach was to be made.⁽²⁾

Some deserters reported that the Irish were demolishing Ball's Bridge, and building a fort by the waterside in Enghishtown, so it looked as if they were



going to retreat to there. Several of the replacement guns, and some mortars,⁽⁶⁾ arrived from Waterford, and the rest were expected the next day.⁽⁷⁾

In the evening, William sent a drummer to the town with offers of mercy,^(8,9) or else to expect nothing but fire and sword.⁽¹⁰⁾ He had been persuaded, reluctantly, by his officers to fire bombs and carcasses into the town,⁽¹¹⁾ which happened for the first time this night,^(12,13) without causing much damage.⁽¹⁴⁾

[About 22-24 August], a convention of Irish general officers was called at Galway by Tyrconnell, who produced a letter from James containing orders that such of the army as were willing to join him in France should take advantage of the French fleet in Galway, and the rest could submit to William. This was spoken against by Sarsfield. During the convention, a letter was received from Boisseleau saying that the enemy had gained the outworks and was battering the walls, and requesting relief from the cavalry. Sarsfield resolved to march straight away to Limerick, but Tyrconnell decided to lead the relief force himself, and was accompanied by Lauzun.⁽⁴⁾ A report in the Williamite camp said that Tyrconnell had persuaded the French to return three regiments to Limerick.⁽¹⁵⁾

Sat., 23 August

The Williamites spent the whole day battering the east wall beside the demolished tower with six cannon from the farther redoubt, and also fired on the citadel. Splinters of stone and cannon-balls killed some and wounded many because the ditch was so narrow and close to the wall. Little or no damage was done to the citadel and south wall, but on the east the top of the wall was shaken⁽⁵⁾ (partly beaten down⁽⁶⁾).

Towards evening (afternoon⁽⁵⁾) a drum was sent by the Williamites⁽⁵⁾ and a truce arranged for the burying of the dead,⁽¹⁰⁾ who had lain on the ground since the 20th.⁽⁵⁾ A French officer, who had been pinned under his horse since then, was found alive, who Story heard recovered, but who died.⁽¹⁶⁾

An Irish prisoner claimed to be French, because it was said in the town that William would have all Irish prisoners hanged, and that the Danes treated them very badly – the Irish were told this to make them fight better.⁽¹⁷⁾ Deserters reported that the town was short of cannon-balls, and gave an English shilling to anyone who brought one in, and ones they were firing were blacksmith-made.⁽¹⁸⁾

84 prisoners, including a priest,⁽¹⁹⁾ were brought in from Nenagh castle, (the castle was taken on the 25th⁽¹⁹⁾) and a dragoon was hanged for desertion.⁽²⁰⁾ William was reported to have promised his soldiers the plunder of Limerick.⁽²¹⁾

The Williamites worked all night in the trenches, with the Irish firing on



Statue of Patrick Sarsfield by Brid Ní Rinn, Limerick County Council.

them from the walls. Many carcasses, bombs and red-hot balls were fired into the town, which knocked two large houses and set fire to some thatched stables, which made a great show of fire,⁽⁵⁾ interpreted by the Williamites as a magazine of hay^(11,K,M,O,P) – this made it too bright for the workers in the trenches.⁽¹⁷⁾ About 60 Danes were killed or wounded, and the Danish adjutant-general, Walter, died of his wound received on 10 August.⁽¹⁸⁾

Sun., 24 August

At dawn it was seen that the Williamites had brought their trenches to within 50 paces of the counterscarp on the east, and were raising a new battery at the nearer redoubt,⁽⁵⁾ within 60 (80^(K)) paces of the wall.⁽²²⁾ Brisk firing from the farther one all day⁽⁵⁾ only knocked the top of the wall off.⁽²³⁾ The Irish fired along the length of the trenches with four light cannon from the Englishtown. A sergeant deserted the town and reported the garrison as 12,000.⁽²⁴⁾

At night, the trenches were brought to within 20 yards of the counterscarp,⁽²⁵⁾ and the town was fired, but soon quenched.⁽²⁶⁾

Mon., 25 August

From early in the morning fire from the new battery (of 12 guns⁽²⁷⁾) began to make a considerable breach in the wall. The Irish hung woollacks over the wall in an attempt to dampen the effect of the cannon-balls. William sent down drink to the gunners, which made them ply their work.⁽²⁸⁾ Many cannon-balls, aimed to take the top off the wall, flew over the town into the hornwork in front of Mungret Gate.⁽²⁹⁾ Another battery of two cannon (four cannon⁽³⁰⁾) 300 yards [towards the Abbey river] from the trenches,⁽³¹⁾ at the bottom near a bog,⁽³²⁾ fired on the Franciscan chapel outside the Englishtown wall, where the Irish had three (four⁽³³⁾) cannon⁽³⁴⁾ which flanked the Williamite trenches, and also fired on Ball's Bridge.

An entrenchment was being made in the town covering the intended breach, with a few pieces of cannon.⁽³⁵⁾

From the morning (until nightfall,⁽³⁶⁾ 3 in the afternoon⁽³⁷⁾), there was a heavy downpour of rain, leaving the trenches 2ft deep (full⁽³⁸⁾) in water.⁽³⁹⁾ Many got out of the trenches, and as a result over 30 were killed or wounded.⁽⁴⁰⁾ The rain dampened Williamite spirits, and the

officers thought that they would have to draw off if it continued. William enquired about shipping, as if thinking of returning to England. The evening was clear, with red sky.^(M) (Not a drop of rain fell for above a month before, or for three weeks after the siege^(N)). The rain collapsed the trenches to a great extent, and so deepened the morass between the wings of the camp that no communication between them was possible, and the left wing, posted beside the river, was ordered to move.^(P)

At a council of war that night (on the 26th^(B)), an attack was postponed until the 27th, as the breach was not wide enough – some were for postponing it longer, but this could not be done, as ammunition was running low.^(C) William promised command of the attack to Würtemberg.^(F)

Printed copies of the Finglas declaration, extending its terms to 1 September, were sent into the town.^(M) These were republished in the town, substituting threats for the advantageous conditions to frighten the inhabitants, and had the desired effect of enraging them, particularly the women, against the English.^(H)

Bombs etc. were again fired into town at night, which did not do much damage, but burnt a thatched mill near the citadel, at which the Williamites raised a shout, which soon died with the flames.^(S) The trenches were brought to within 30 yards of the counterscarp.^(J,P)

Tues., 26 August

From daybreak, fire from about 20 cannon from several batteries^(C) made the breach, at the southernmost part of the east wall, 20 paces wide, the rubble filling the counterscarp, so there was no problem in crossing. They also levelled the palisades^(I) and the glacis of the covered way, leaving a plain passage to the breach.^(S) At a meeting with William, Würtemberg protested that the counterscarp was too close to the wall to maintain a lodgement, as they would be vulnerable to stone-throwing – he recommended enlarging the breach so as to make a general assault on the town.^(F)

At night, bombs etc. (only a few^(S)) were fired into the town.^(C)

Wed., 27 August

In the morning cannon-fire was directed at Ball's Bridge and at the breach, which was widened to 30 paces (42 yards⁽²⁾), and the ascent made plain^(S) (12 yards, and pretty flat^(O)). A deserter from the town, an officer, undertook to return into the town and distribute genuine copies of the Finglas declaration.^(H)

About 2.30 p.m., the order was given to attack the counterscarp. Würtemberg again protested to William, and recommended that the breach be enlarged so that 16 men could enter abreast, and that the attack should be made with fresh men, not those who were fatigued from duty, but William wanted the English to make the attack to prevent jealousy.^(F)



Count Meinhard Schomberg (1641 - 1719). Mezzotint by John Smith, after Sir Godfrey Kneller. National Gallery of Ireland.

All (half^(N)) the grenadiers in the army, about 500, went into the trenches to make the first attack, supported by one battalion of the Blue Dutch on the right, and five regiments (the Danish Funen battalion and the Brancenburgers^(P)) towards the breach.^(C) Douglas commanded, with orders to possess and maintain the counterscarp. William, attenders and high officers went to the hill near St. Patrick's,^(B) where they had a full view of the action.^(H)

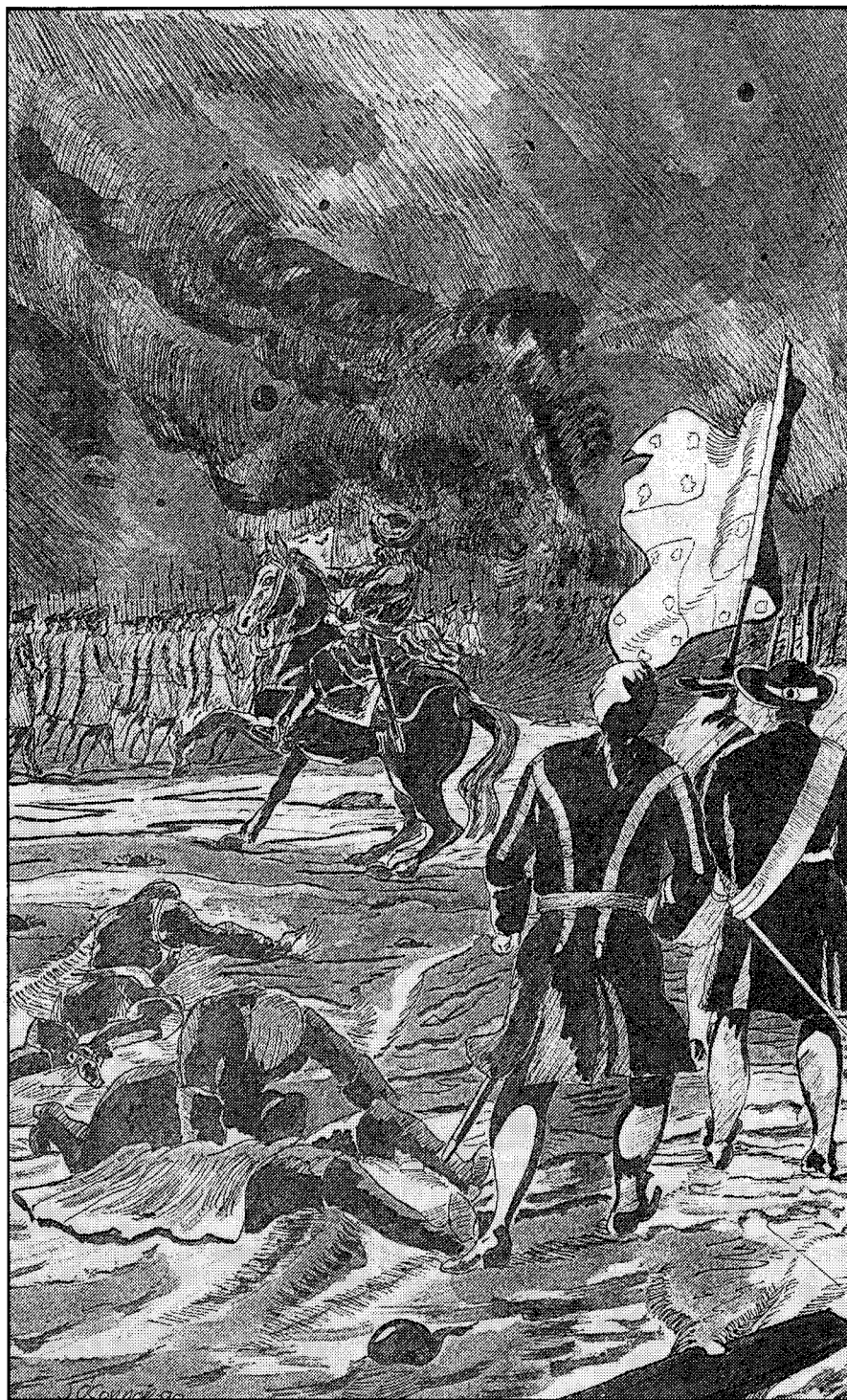
About 3.30 (between 1 and 2 p.m.⁽²⁾), the signal was given by the firing of three cannon. The grenadiers leaped from the trenches towards the counterscarp, firing their guns and throwing grenades. The Irish fired great and small shot as fast as possible (their fire was so heavy that few experienced officers had ever seen the like^(P)), until the grenadiers got on the counterscarp, when they fled, leaving their weapons behind, through the

breach,^(F,H,O,P) (where the flags of the regiments of the Grand Prior, Slane and Boisseleau had been raised⁽²⁾), and up the ditch towards St. John's Gate,^(2,S,L) where they were eventually stopped by the dragoons stationed in the outwork at the citadel and made to turn about and face the Williamites coming behind.^(S,I,L) The initial firing was not heard at Mungrat Gate,^(S) where the Lord Prior's, Slane's and Boisseleau's regiments, joined as one because of the weakness of each, were waiting to take up duty in the hornwork. They were suddenly ordered to man the walls at St. John's Gate, but on their way, Boisseleau came running up and ordered them to light their matches and go to the breach, where they found the Williamites already inside, between the retrenchment and the breach, with about 20 over the retrenchment into the streets. At first they thought the Williamites were their own men fleeing from the counterscarp,



because of the similarity of the uniforms, red coats, until they saw the green boughs in their caps, instead of the white paper in the Irish. An officer was on the breach crying that the town was theirs.⁽⁵⁾ The three regiments lined the retrenchment, were ordered not to fire until the compound was full,⁽³⁾ (no cannon was to be fired until the Williamites crowded on the breach⁽²⁾) and when they did, supported by three cannon, one 36-pounder and two 24-pounders,⁽²⁾ firing cartridge-shot^(2,0,F) and iron chains,⁽²⁾ it was so rapid that the compound was soon cleared, but more kept coming in.⁽⁵⁾ Such sharp firing so continued and so levelled had not been known.⁽⁴⁾ Meantime, most of the inhabitants of Irishtown fled over Ball's Bridge, and one regiment attempted to, but was stopped by the guard at the bridge shutting the gates against them,⁽⁵⁾ and marched back to the breach, but not before the initial heat was over.^(5,0) The Irish on the wall did not retreat under heavy fire from 18 cannon and muskets: 200 were killed or wounded there, and their positions filled by willing soldiers.⁽²⁾

This stage lasted about an hour, with great slaughter of the Williamites.⁽⁵⁾ The supporting regiments, having no orders to proceed, stopped at the counterscarp,^(A,B,D,E,F,G,H,I,K,M,O,P) where they were vulnerable, as the counterscarp and covered way were so close to the wall.⁽¹¹⁾ Würtemberg sent to William for permission to make a general assault, but received no reply.^(14,M) When the numbers coming in were lessening, Lt.-Col. de Beaupre of Boisseleau's regiment leaped over the retrenchment and made for the breach (where he was killed⁽²⁾), followed by many. Fighting at the breach continued with sword and musket-butt,⁽⁵⁾ with 400 unarmed men of McMahon's regiment,⁽²⁾ and women,^(H,O) throwing stones and broken bottles from the walls onto the Williamites below. Cannon-fire from the battery at St. Francis' Abbey, and another at the Augustinian chapel near Ball's Bridge [behind the former Treaty Press premises on George's Quay] scoured the counterscarp and the trenches.^(5,0) Another battery fired from the citadel swept the approach from the south.⁽⁵⁾ Würtemberg again sent to William, but, urged by Count Solms,^(F) he replied that it was too late.⁽¹⁴⁾ The Williamites under Cutts and the Danes attacking towards the citadel and St. John's Gate were held back by the Irish in the outwork and from the wall^(2,0) (because they were not sufficiently engaged^(F)), and in the heat of the action, four barrels⁽²⁾ of powder at the Black Battery, occupied by the Brandenburg regiment, blew up, throwing men, stones and faggots into the air,^(5,0) killing more than 30.⁽²⁾ This was thought to be a mine,^(2,A,E,F,G,J,P) almost entirely destroyed the regiment,^(F) and caused panic flight.⁽⁵⁾ The Irish dragoons in the outwork, under Brigadier Talbot, (500 men⁽¹⁾) were



*The Williamites march towards the Breach, 27 August, 1690.
Painting by John O'Connor.*

ordered to go out and retake the covered way,⁽²⁾ which they did, re-entering the town at the breach, where they posted themselves.⁽¹⁾ A quarter of an hour later, the Williamites were driven from the counterscarp by pike and sword⁽²⁾ (retreated to the trenches, because their ammunition was running out⁽⁰⁾ and night was falling^(F)). It was lucky that the Williamites had not attacked the hornwork at Mungret Gate at the same time, as the cavalry there had fled down to the river, thinking the town lost.⁽⁵⁾

There had been continual fire from 3.30 until after 7 p.m. (6.30⁽¹¹⁾), and a continuous cloud of smoke reached to a mountain six miles away [Keeper Hill].⁽⁰⁾

(The grenadiers were led up the covered-way towards St. John's Gate, instead of mounting the breach, which was neglected.⁽¹⁾)

When the action was over, William went to his camp very concerned.⁽⁰⁾ If Würtemberg had been in command, the town would have been taken.⁽¹⁴⁾

Casualties: Williamite: 2000 killed,⁽¹⁾



2000 killed and wounded;⁽²⁾ at least 2000 killed, not counting wounded;⁽³⁾ at least 3000 killed (prisoners and deserters reporting 3000 killed and wounded);⁽⁵⁾ Over 1000 English killed and wounded, 400 Brandenburgers;⁽⁶⁾ 1000 killed and wounded;⁽⁶⁾ Danes, 136 dead, 305 wounded, total 441, English, French and Dutch, 1,883 killed and wounded;⁽⁶⁾ 1500-1600 killed and wounded, including 432 Danes;⁽¹¹⁾ 1000-2000 killed and wounded (estimate);⁽¹⁴⁾ 500 killed, 1000 wounded, excluding grenadiers and foreigners, who lost at least as many⁽¹⁰⁾ [= c.1000 killed, 2000 wounded]; 400-500 (700⁽¹⁰⁾) killed and wounded since the beginning of the siege.⁽¹⁷⁾

Irish: Less than 400 killed;⁽¹⁾ not more than 100;⁽³⁾ less than 500 killed and wounded;⁽⁵⁾ 1,400 [in the siege], too high an estimate.⁽¹⁷⁾

Thurs., 28 August

Overnight all was quiet. The trenches were repaired, as they had been destroyed by the men, up to their knees in water, climbing in and out of them. About 10 a.m. Count Solms went to Würtemberg in the trenches and asked whether or not the siege should be raised. He replied that the size of the batteries should be increased and the breach enlarged. Solms said that that there were no more cannon-balls – the last convoy had brought only unfilled bombs, which were of no use, as there was only one mortar.⁽¹⁷⁾

William sent a drummer to arrange a truce for burying the dead,⁽³⁾ but the Irish would not allow it^(15,16) – Boisseleau agreed to a truce, but would not allow the Williamites to come closer than 20 yards to the counterscarp, and their dead would be brought to them there;^(2,17) the tone of his note was regarded as arrogant, so the Williamites would not accept his conditions.⁽¹⁷⁾

The soldiers hoped for a second attack, but ammunition was low.⁽¹⁰⁾ Würtemberg was for an immediate second attack, but neither William nor the general officers, with whom he consulted,⁽¹⁴⁾ were in favour.⁽¹¹⁾ William instructed Southwell to order his ships at Dublin to go to Waterford.⁽¹⁴⁾ (William wanted to renew the assault, but could not persuade his men,⁽³⁾ although he offered to lead them himself⁽¹⁴⁾). The Williamites continued battering the wall to enlarge the breach towards the south angle, knocked part of the tower,⁽⁵⁾ and fired on Ball's Bridge so that it was dangerous to cross.^(2,5) Several were killed in the counterscarp by splintering stones.⁽⁵⁾ Many wagons and carriages carried the sick and wounded towards Carrick-on-Suir and Clonmel. It rained,^(14,16) all day.⁽¹⁶⁾

At night the Williamites advanced their trenches by only ten yards, as the Irish fired on them ceaselessly all night.⁽²⁾

Sarsfield was reported to be gone to Galway.⁽¹⁾

Fri., 29 August

The Williamites continued cannon-fire on the breach, which they widened to 40 paces. One cannon-ball cut the drawbridge chains on Ball's Bridge.⁽⁵⁾

The Irish sent out some prisoners to be exchanged, one of whom, who had been taken in the assault on the 27th, reported that Boisseleau said that if the attack had been pressed home, the town would have been taken.⁽¹⁷⁾

The night (and day^(14,15)) was cold, dark and rainy. Irish cannon and small shot fired from the walls all around through the night, and there was much railing between the Irish and the Williamites, who were so close that they could hear each other over the storm.⁽⁵⁾ At a council of war, it was decided to raise the siege,^(18,19,20,21,22,23,24) due to rain^(14,15) which had been falling for three days, inundating the camp,⁽¹¹⁾ and the shortage of ammunition caused by Sarsfield's raid,^(19,20) and the cannon were drawn off during the night.⁽²⁰⁾ This decision greatly affected William.⁽¹⁷⁾ 'If the Sarsfield disaster had not occurred ... the operation might easily have succeeded'.⁽¹⁷⁾

Sat., 30 August

There had been a great silence from the trenches in the early morning, and at daybreak it was seen that they were empty. At first it was thought to be a stratagem to draw out the Irish, but when seen that it was not, they went out into the trenches, and stripped the dead (31st⁽¹⁰⁾), but the clothing was of poor quality, old and coarse, and had lain for two days in the dirt and rain. Over 1000 picks, spades and shovels were found, and many bales of fine flax, used instead of woolbags. Three cannon at Cromwell's fort still fired on St. John's Gate, but were eventually drawn off. Some Williamites still in the trenches fired on the Irish, who made a sally, but Williamite reinforcements came.^(5,17) The Irish destroyed the Williamite works,^(2,5,10) but were very disorderly, and would have been in great difficulty if the Williamites came back.⁽⁵⁾

About noon, 1500 reinforcements (1,200 fusiliers, or dragoons, with a great quantity of supplies⁽²⁾), armed with firelocks, which had been sent for to Galway, arrived.⁽⁵⁾ Boisseleau sent word of William's departure to Tyrconnell and Lauzun, who were ten miles from Limerick, and they arrived in town at four in the afternoon.⁽²⁾

The cannon (and hospital⁽¹⁶⁾) were drawn off to Caherconlish by oxen, because of the loss of the horses to Sarsfield. The ground was soft due to the rain, which was heavy this day – fear of inability to move the cannon was one of the main reasons for raising the siege.⁽¹⁰⁾ William spent the night at Cullen.⁽¹⁴⁾

Boisseleau reported casualties during the whole siege to have been more than 5,000 Williamites and 1,062 Irish soldiers, plus 97 officers, killed and wounded.⁽²⁾

Sun., 31 August

All the Williamite army went off, with a guard of cavalry behind,⁽¹⁰⁾ but there was no trouble from the Irish,⁽¹¹⁾ who followed only at a long distance.⁽¹⁷⁾ (1500 Irish sallied out to attack the rearguard, but were led into a trap, with 700 killed and 200 made prisoners⁽¹⁰⁾). The Irish unarmed men and several detachments brought in a great quantity of faggots and about 30 large baskets of earth which the Williamites had left, and put them in the breach. Many grenades and bombs had been left behind buried, with a train to explode them, which, when it exploded, alarmed the Irish⁽¹⁰⁾ (Found unexploded⁽⁵⁾). What could not be taken away was burned, and the camp levelled.⁽¹⁷⁾ (The field hospital was burned down deliberately^(2,5) with about 300 wounded in it⁽⁵⁾).

Three Irish prisoners were taken, who reported that, at the end, they had been short of powder and bread.⁽¹⁷⁾

William spent the night at Clonmel. On his way there he met the money on its way to the army.⁽¹⁴⁾

Mon., 1 September

The army remained camped (arrived⁽¹⁵⁾) at Caherconlish, and the artillery moved on to Cullen.⁽¹⁰⁾ William arrived at Waterford.^(14,16)

The Irish continued to bring in faggots, demolish the Williamite works and clear the rubble from the breach. Prisoners were sent out to bury the Williamite dead.⁽⁵⁾

Tues., 2 September

The army moved on to Cullen^(10,11) (on the 4th⁽¹⁵⁾). Many Protestants, with their cattle and baggage, came along with them.^(11,12) Deserters reported that Boisseleau had left to go to France, and that the Irish cavalry was at Loughrea, but some said that it had crossed the Shannon under Sarsfield.⁽¹⁰⁾ Intelligence received by the Irish reported the Williamites still at Caherconlish, with the sick and wounded, the heavy baggage and the artillery sent ahead. Duty was relaxed, with only 70 per battalion on, instead of all.⁽⁵⁾ A Williamite party viewed Lough Gur, but decided not to garrison it, and a party was sent to Kilmallock to bring off the Protestants.⁽¹⁵⁾

Wed., 3 September

A general review on King's Island was called off due to very bad weather.⁽⁵⁾ The Earl of Portland was sent back to the army from Waterford, supposedly to reconcile disputes among the senior officers.⁽¹⁴⁾

Thurs., 4 September

The Irish infantry drew out for review by the Duke of Berwick, now Lieutenant-General and Governor-General of Ireland, but were discharged due to bad weather.⁽⁵⁾ (It did not rain for a month before, or three weeks after the siege⁽¹¹⁾).



The Lords Justices came to the army camp at Cullen, and money was received, which had been scarce all the campaign.⁽⁴⁾

Fri., 5 September

William sailed from Duncannon at 4 in the afternoon^(1,M) (on the 3rd⁽¹⁾).

Sun., 7 September

The army marched to Tipperary (on the 6th^(B)), having blown up Cullen castle. The Lords Justices went to Dublin.^(C) William landed at King's Rode, near Bristol, at about 7 p.m., and spent the night at Robert Southwell's house at King's Weston.^(1,M)

Douglas, with his own and other regiments, left Tipperary towards winter quarters in the north.^(1,F,J,C) Anthony (John⁽¹⁾) Hamilton was reported to be governor of Limerick. The progress of the army was slow because of shortage of horses to pull the cannon.⁽¹⁾

Mon., 8 September

400 (300^(B)) foot and 500 (300;^(B) 600^(B)) horse were sent from Tipperary to Kilmallock. The garrison of 200 surrendered on summons,^(1,C) and left for Limerick without arms or baggage, with their hands in their pockets.^(B) It was decided not to garrison it, as it was too extensive and badly damaged, but to demolish more of it.^(B) A party from Ginkel's regiment was sent to guard Thurles.^(B)

Thurs., 9 September

The Kilmallock garrison arrived back in Limerick.^(B) The French were reported to have embarked at Galway, and 10 French ships came into the Shannon.^(D) Douglas camped near Thurles, so that it was difficult for the guard to preserve it from plunder.^(B) Danish officers and soldiers were falling sick and dying at a great rate. If the amnesty was extended to the landed class, the war would soon be ended, but the English were eager for the confiscation of the Catholic estates.^(F)

Wed., 10 September

Douglas marched on towards the north.^(B)

Thurs., 11 September

The main reason for raising the siege was shortage of ammunition, but it was not allowed to say this.^(F)

Fri., 12 September

Tyrconnell and the French sailed from Galway.^(B)

William told Constantijn Huygens to write to Prince van Waldeck saying that the reasons for raising the siege were the continuous bad weather and the loss of men in the assault on the breach, that the city could still have been taken if they had made the right preparations, and that, as it had not been God's will to finish the work, one had to be patient.^(F)

Sat., 13 September

7 regiments of foot, 4 of horse and 2 of dragoons under Kirk marched towards Birr to protect it from Sarsfield, then at Banaher, Co. Offaly with 5000 horse, foot and dragoons. 1200 horse and dragoons and 2 regiments of Danish foot under Scravenmore and Tettau left for Mallow on their way to Cork. Deserters reported the departure of the French from Galway, leaving their sick on shore.^(C)

Sun., 14 September

Stevens viewed the ground where the Williamites had camped. 10-12 tons of Kilkenny coal were found where their forges had been, and about 400 bombs and carcasses, and many cannon-balls, were found buried. He saw the ruin of the hospital, which had burned down – he thought deliberately – with about 300 disfigured bodies, some who had been trying to get out of the three doors, and others who had gotten out lying dead in the fields. Many crows and ravens had grown fat and tame as domestic fowl.^(B)

Kirk's party camped near Thurles.^(B) The remainder of the Williamite army moved on the Cashel and dispersed to winter quarters.^(C)

Mon., 22 September

A Catholic gentleman, who had been sent to Galway on the 8th to see if the Irish would be willing to make terms, returned to the Williamite quarters and reported that he had sounded out most of the leading officers, all of whom said that if the terms of the amnesty were extended to include retention of their estates and civil liberties as under Charles II, they would submit. A courier was sent to London to report this – a stroke of the pen could end the war, and if William wishes to help his allies he will have to give it.^(F)

Tues., 23 September

Berwick had written to Count Solms that he understood that Irish prisoners would be sent to the West Indies, and in retaliation Williamite prisoners would be sent to the French galleys. It was replied that no such thing had been thought of.^(F)

Sun., 28 September

Cork surrendered. The garrison was transported to England. One vessel blew up and sank in the harbour.^(B)

Mon., 29 September

Four battalions of foot marched out of Limerick and camped near Cromwell's fort. The regiments were weak, so several were put together to form battalions. One battalion had no arms at all, and very few had swords. The weather was very wet and stormy, and, as there was little straw for roofing, the men lay on the wet ground.^(B)

Tues., 30 September

News of the capture of Cork was received in Limerick.^(B)

Sat., 4 October

Brigadier McGillicuddy's and Lord Kenmare's regiments of foot left Limerick for Kerry.^(B)

Sun., 5 October

Kinsale surrendered. The garrison of 1200 was allowed to march to Limerick with arms and baggage.^(B) Lord Slane's regiment left the Irish camp.^(B)

Mon., 6 October

Several regiments marched south from Limerick, camping for the night at Sixmilebridge, Co. Limerick.^(B)

Tues., 7 October

The regiments continued to Kilmallock. Most of the inhabitants had fled, and there were few provisions – the men subsisted on cabbage from the gardens. The Duke of Berwick arrived in the evening.^(B)

Wed., 8 October

Parties were sent out from Kilmallock to bring in tools. The Duke of Berwick went out with the cavalry, but met no enemy.^(B) (I had drawn together between 7 and 8000 men and advanced on the side of Kilmallock with intent to succour the place: but the enemy's troops in that quarter being all joined, I found myself so inferior in number that I contented myself with observing them⁽¹⁾).

Fri., 10 October

Four battalions of foot went out to a hill at Kilmallock for review by the Duke of Berwick.^(B)

Sat., 11 October

The battalions left Kilmallock, leaving detachments to burn the town. The cavalry did the same to Charleville (the finest castle in the country^(B)) and wasted the countryside. There was a violent storm of wind and rain.^(B)

Wed., 29 October

The Duke of Berwick had done damage to the country to the value of several millions, and burned down more than 12 towns and many beautiful castles – a message was sent to him that, if he continued, Irish prisoners, including officers, of whom there were great numbers, would be burned alive.^(B)

The Catholic gentleman who had been negotiating with the Irish on behalf of Ginkel had returned with power of attorney from the Irish government, which consisted of twelve men, nine of whom declared that, if aid did not come soon from France, they would submit, provided that their estates would be retained and religious liberty as under Charles II restored. Ginkel sent him to Lord Justice Sydney in Dublin, who, in turn, sent him with his chamberlain to William.^(F)