



# DIARY OF THE SIEGE OF LIMERICK

BY SAMUEL MULLENAUX, M.D.

## INTRODUCTION BY LARRY WALSH

Samuel Mullenau's *A Journal of The Three Months Royal Campaign of His Majesty in Ireland Together, With a True and Perfect Diary of the Siege of Limerick* (printed for P. Lee, London, 1690), has been accepted as the journal of an eye-witness to the events described (Lenihan; Simms, 1967; Berresford Ellis, 1976). It is not: rather it is a hastily produced propaganda pamphlet, compiled in London by a person who had not been present.

Much of the text is taken, word for word, from the *London Gazette*, organ of the government, with occasional insertions in, and slight alterations to, that text. So, was Mullenau a correspondent of the *Gazette* on the Irish front? It takes only one significant error regarding a fact, which would be known to a person present, to show that he was not. There are several such in Mullenau's diary of the siege. In relation to Lt.-Gen. Douglas rejoining the army from Athlone, the *Gazette* (No. 2583, 11-14 August), reporting a dispatch from the camp at Golden Bridge of August 5 (probably that of Robert Southwell, whose exact words are reproduced, to the Earl of Nottingham, dated 4 August, with a postscript of the 5th) states: 'And Lt.-Gen. Douglas is about 7 miles off, so he will soon overtake us'. The next issue had no Irish reports, and the *Gazette* has nothing more about it. Mullenau, calculating that it cannot take Douglas long to travel seven miles, boldly states in his diary under 5 August: 'and this evening Lieutenant-General Douglas joined us from Athlone'. However, unfortunately for Mullenau, Douglas was delayed, and rejoined the army at Caherconlish, not Golden, on the evening of 8 August (Story, 8 August; Southwell to Nottingham, 10 August; Würtemberg to Christian V, 12 August).

Reporting the decamping from Limerick, the *Gazette* (No. 2591, 8-11 Sept.), quoting a Whitehall source of 10 September, states: '... the army decamped and marched off in very good order ... towards Clonmel, from whence a strong detachment was ordered towards Cork

# JOURNAL OF The Three Months Royal Campaign OF His MAJESTY IN IRELAND Together, With A True and Perfect Diary OF THE Siege of LYMERICK.

By Samuel Mullenau, M. D.

LONDON: Printed for P. Lee in Westminster-Hall, near the  
Common Pleas, M. DC. XC.

*Title page of Mullenau's Journal and Diary.*

and Kinsale'. Mullenau, under his diary entry of 31 August, uses exactly the same words, but adds that the detachment was 'under the command of Lt.-Gen. Douglas and Maj.-Gen. Kirk'. Mullenau, who was under the impression

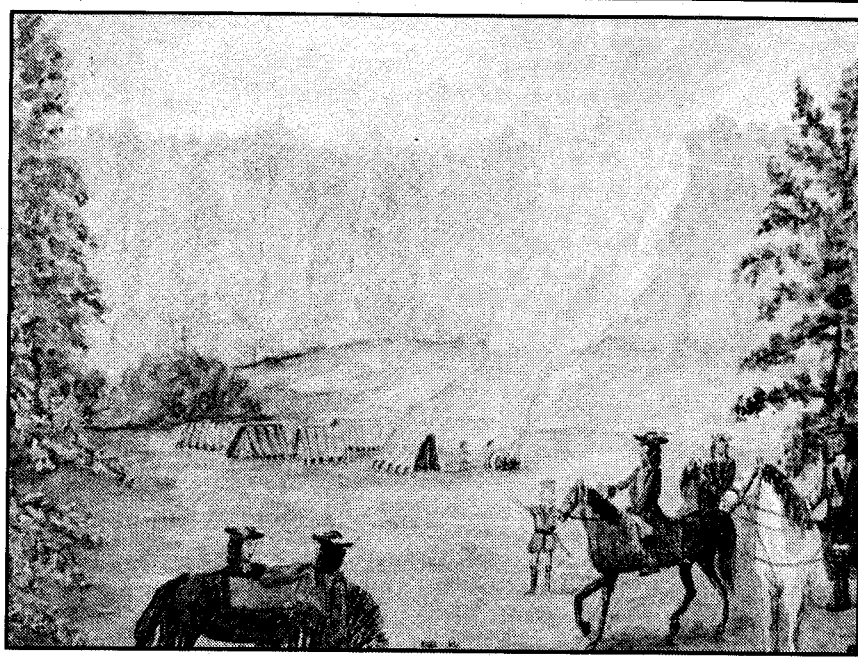
that the army was at Clonmel, and that William was still with it (whereas the army was at the time only as far as Caherconlish, and William was already at Waterford), did not know that William had left specific orders that Douglas

was to be in command of the detachment to protect Ulster and cover Dublin (Württemberg to Christian V, 12 September), and that he left for the north on 7 September.

There are several other minor errors indicating copying from the *Gazette*, e.g. 11 August spent in visiting the several posts, instead of investing them, and repetition of the probable printer's error in the *Gazette* (1-4 Sept.) placing Nenagh two miles from Limerick (Mullenau, 23 Aug.). Mullenau has the council of war which decided to raise the siege taking place on the 30 August, instead of the 29th. His report of a deserter telling that the Irish lost 300 men on the day of the taking of the redoubt on 20 August, which both he and the *Gazette* give under the 25 August (*Gazette*, 1-4 Sept.), is reported by Story on the morning of the 21st. His report on the 18 August that their own troops firing on one another was prevented by the extraordinary care and diligence of the officers, not mentioned in the *Gazette*, is a deliberate lie: Story (18 August) and Southwell to Nottingham (22 August) report casualties due to the English and the Danes mistaking each other for the Irish in the dark, as a result of which William ordered the change of duty to take place in daylight. A number of author's or printer's errors indicate haste in production, e.g. 27 August, 'having gained the counterscarp' they 'mounted the counterscarp', meaning the breach, and in September, on the 7th, being Sunday ... Monday 7th ...

Mullenau was not familiar with the geography of the route to Limerick. On 6 August, he has 'the infantry taking their way by a place called Sallywood, and the cavalry marched the other road by way of Cullen'. In fact, Sallywood is marked on a contemporary map by A.H. Jaillot, spelled 'Sallawhood', two miles to the east of Cullen on the same road. Rowland Davies (7 August) gives it as 'Sola Wood More'. It no longer exists as a town or townland name, but is preserved in the parish name 'Solloghmore', Co. Tipperary.

Mullenau's pamphlet is probably the earliest of a series of propaganda booklets, which use almost identical text, designed to promote William's reputation as a great general and minimise the shame of the failure to take Limerick, attributing the sole reason for the withdrawal to the change in the weather. W. Griffyth's *Villare Hibernicum: being an exact account of all the provinces, counties, cities, archbishoprics, bishoprics, towns, castles, fortifications, garrisons, and most considerable villages and places of strength which have been reduced by his majesty's arms since his first landing in Ireland, with an impartial journal of the siege of Limerick, and of the martial actions of the loyal army since the king's return to England, as also the siege and surrender of Cork and Kinsale* uses exactly the same text as Mullenau to the 31 August, with only some changes of spelling, taking the diary up to the end of September, again using the *London Gazette* as the source. The earlier section of this book is simply an alphabetically arranged list of



*Sarsfield's camp in Ballyhourigan Wood. Painting by Ann O'Keeffe.*

placenames, designed, by their volume, to impress. Griffyth's book was licensed to be printed on 29 October, 1690, indicating that Mullenau's was produced about mid-September, certainly before the Sept. 18 issue of the *Gazette*, which reports Douglas departing for the north. Text in Mullenau and not in the *Gazette* is lifted from earlier booklets, e.g. *The History of the Wars in Ireland between their Majesty's Army and the Forces of the late King James ... December, 1688, to August, 1690*, which takes the account to the 5 August. Story, in the preface to his 1691 edition, dismisses these booklets: *Nor do I pretend to write a complete history of the war. That I leave to men of better judgements, and more happy opportunities, so that if this prove not advantageous, yet I hope it will produce what may, by inviting some more skillful hand to undertake the work, nothing of this kind being as yet abroad, except some little pamphlets, writ at random, by those that (it seems) never saw that nation.*

Who was Samuel Mullenau, M.D.? None of the secondary sources consulted for this journal provide any details. The author of the biography of William Molyneux (1656-1698), of Dublin, in the *National Dictionary of Biography*, states that the book is wrongly attributed to him. William, a philosopher, was dismissed by Tyrconnell in 1688 from his post as joint chief engineer and surveyor of the king's buildings on account of his religion, and, fearing persecution of Protestants, moved to Chester in January, 1689, for two years. His brother, Sir Thomas (1661-1733), a highly educated man with an active interest in every branch of learning, graduated M.D. from Trinity College in November, 1687, and in 1718 was appointed physician-general to the army in Ireland, and in 1725, state physician. He, too, moved to Chester, returning after the battle of the Boyne

to Dublin, where he practised as a physician. It is highly unlikely that he is the author, although J.G. Simms (1969, p.276) inserts 'recte Samuel' after 'Thomas Molyneux' in his reference to a journal of a *Journey to Connaught, 1709*. The editor of the *Journey*, A. Smith, states that it is in the handwriting of Thomas, whose papers are preserved in Trinity College, and the journal shows a wide range of interests, geology, archaeology, natural history, agriculture, etc. Simms is undoubtedly mistaken in attributing it to Samuel. The graduate list of Trinity College has no other Molyneux, M.D., and their only Samuel Molyneux graduated BA in 1708.

It is possible that the series of hastily produced 'diaries' of late 1690 are all the work of the same person writing under various pseudonyms in a government propaganda office.

#### SOURCES

*National Dictionary of Biography; Catalogue of Graduates ... in University of Dublin*, (Hodges, Smith & Foster, Dublin, 1869); Anon., *History of the Wars in Ireland ... Dec. 1688 - Aug. 1690*, (London, 1690); P. Berresford Ellis, *The Boyne Water*, Hamish Hamilton, 1976; Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Finch Mass*, ii, 1922; W. Griffyth, *Villare Hibernicum*, (London, 1690); M. Lenihan, *History of Limerick*, (Mercier Press, Cork, reprint, 1967); *London Gazette*, August-September, 1690; J.G. Simms, 'The Siege of Limerick, 1690', in E. Rynne (ed.), *North Munster Studies*, (Thomond Archaeological Society, 1967); J.G. Simms, *Jacobite Ireland, 1685-91*, (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1969); J.G. Simms and K. Danaher, *The Danish Force in Ireland, 1690-91*, (Irish Manuscripts Commission, Dublin, 1962); A. Smith (ed.), 'Journey to Connaught, April, 1709, by Dr. Thomas Molyneux', in *Irish Archaeological Miscellany*, i, 1846; G. Story, *Impartial History*, (London, 1691).



# THE DIARY

**H**is majesty receiving an express at Chapelizod from the camp that the enemy had drawn together most of their scattered troops about Limerick, were grown very impudent, and seemed to have new life and vigour put into them upon his majesty's retiring from the camp, and that they were resolved to make a desperate defence of the city of Limerick, whenever besieged, on which his majesty altered his resolutions, resolving to return to the camp, the better to dispose of things for the pushing on of the siege, and sent orders to Lieutenant-General Douglas to march from Athlone and join the Count de Solms.

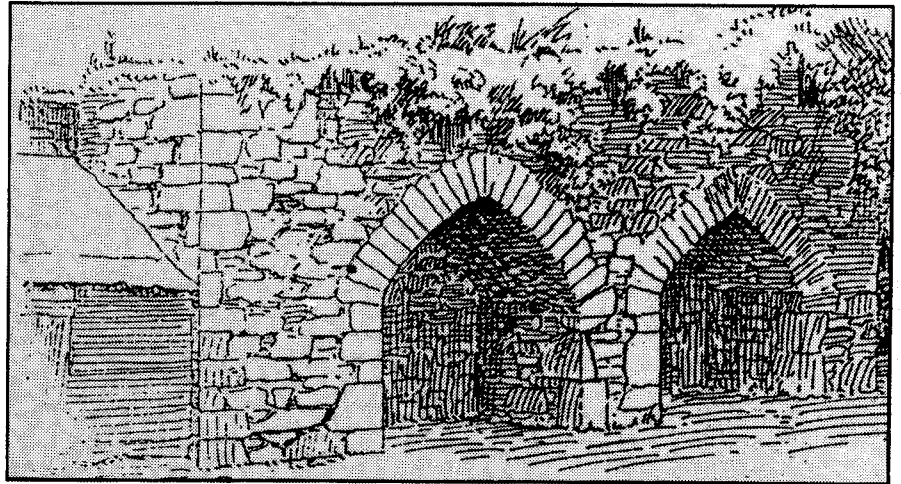
On **July 27th**. We marched from Carrick, under the command of the Count de Solms, his majesty, as aforementioned, having left the camp, and came the same day to the town of Clonmel, which is eight very long miles. This place seems to be very strongly situated, and doubtless might have held out for some time, had it been garrisoned by any but Irishmen.

The **28th**. We marched seven miles farther, and the next day, being the **29th**. we encamped at a place called Golden Bridge, which is about 23 miles from Limerick. Here, as soon as we arrived, we had the confirmation that the French had possessed themselves of the city of Limerick, and that they would not suffer any of the Irish forces to come into it, having turned out those few that were in garrison there. On the **30.** and **31.** we lay quiet in our camp, and refreshed ourselves.

**August the 1st**, a detached party of the Inniskilling and Danish horse &c. marched from our camp and advanced within sight of the enemy near Limerick who, upon the approach of the advanced parties, were in great consternation; and they brought an account that the gross of the Irish army, consisting of about 27,000 men, were (upon hearing of the advance of our army) retired from beyond the Shannon.

**August 2.** Advice was brought into the camp of the surrender of the town of Youghal.

**August 3.** A deserter came into our camp from Limerick, and told us that yesterday morning, the 2nd instant, he



*Sallyports in the city wall in the grounds of St. Mary's Convent.*

saw the French infantry march out of the town, about 3,500 strong, with eight field pieces, (leaving several of their engineers and other officers in the town), and that the common report was that they were going to Galway to embark there for France, that being a more convenient port for their taking shipping than Limerick, Galway being but nine miles from the mouth of the bay, and Limerick is sixty, and that as soon as the French had quitted the place and were marched out, three regiments of Irish auxiliaries, under the command of Col. Luttrell, marched in and took possession of it. This advice afterwards confirmed, as well by our parties that had been sent out, as by other deserters.

**August 4.** The regiments that were sent to reduce the town of Waterford and fort of Duncannon, under the command of Major-General Kirk, joined our camp.

**August 5.** A detachment of six hundred horse were sent out from our camp to reinforce the garrison of Youghal and prevent any design the enemy may have upon it; and this evening Lieutenant-General Douglas joined us from Athlone.

**On the 6.** Our army, consisting now of 38,500 effective men, decamped from Golden Bridge, and marched in two bodies towards Limerick, the infantry taking their way by a place called Sallywood, and the cavalry marched the other road by way of Cullen.

**On the 7th**, about noon, we came to a

place called Caherconlish, which is between five and six miles from Limerick, and the horse and foot joined in one body again, and in the afternoon some small detached parties were sent to observe the posture and motions of the enemy; but on the approach of our men, the enemy retired in great precipitation from place to place, and in the night burnt a great many small houses and cabins within three miles of the town; and this evening was held a great council of war in the presence of his majesty, where resolutions were taken to attack the Irish forces early the next morning, which were encamped and had entrenched themselves in all the defiles leading thereto, having first ploughed up the ground, made great numbers of small forts, threw timber and trees across, and did all that possibly could be done to obstruct the king's forces; leaving the hedges, gardens and other places for five miles together, with musketeers, in the nature of an ambuscade.

**On the 8.** At one in the morning, his majesty sent out 900 horse and 200 foot detached out of the regiments of Oxon, Trelawney, Cutts, Lanier, Lloyd and Danes, under the command of the Heer Bentinck, Earl of Portland, and Brigadier Stuart &c., who advanced within cannon-shot of the town, notwithstanding the opposition made by three regiments of the enemy's foot, one of horse and another of dragoons, who stood but one firing, tho' they had the covert of the



hedges, through which they fired. About four hours after, this detachment returned to our camp and gave the king an account of the posture the enemy were in. And about seven o'clock his majesty went himself with a fresh party of 200 select horse, being accompanied with Prince George, Major-General Ginkel, the Heer Overkirk and other great officers, they approached within two miles of the town. The enemy were come so near with some of their outguards that we could hear them talk with their damned Irish brogue on their tongues, but they were separated from us by a bog, which was very deep, and so situated that we could not possibly attack them. This night it was resolved at a council of war that the army should march towards the town in order of battle, for we understood, as you heard, that the country being very close and full of hedges and ditches, the enemy had lined them to defend the approaches to the town. Accordingly the next day, being the 9<sup>th</sup>, our whole army decamped by five in the morning, Col. Erle leading the van, with 200 horse and dragoons, and 1000 chosen foot out of all the regiments in the army, both English and foreigners. Upon our approach we found the enemy drawn up within two miles of the city of Limerick, whereupon Col. Erle ordered his advanced troops to make a halt until the rest were come up. Then our horse pushed them for near a mile; their horse at first made a show as if they would make vigorous resistance, and stood our first charge, but soon afterwards gave way, when they threw themselves behind the hedges, and fired so from thence that our horse could not come up to them. Upon which we brought some small field pieces to fire upon them, and at the same time the 1000 detached foot were ordered to attack them. Accordingly, about one o'clock, Col. Erle led on his foot, who ran on with that bravery, tho' the enemy made a great fire through the hedges, and continued this sort of fighting for two hours, advancing within 400 yards of the town, and possessing themselves of two advantageous posts, called Ireton's fort and the Old Kirk, and such was the bravery, courage and resolution of our men that their officers could hardly stop them there, notwithstanding they were told it was his majesty's express order. Then the besieged began to fire from the town with their great guns, which killed us some men, but in all this day's action we had not above 35 killed and wounded, tho' above 250 of the enemy were killed in their several retreats, among which were several officers of note, besides divers taken prisoners. Our pioneers were employed most part of the afternoon in levelling the great number of trenches the enemy had cast up for their defence.

Between 6 and 7 in the evening, his

majesty ordered a trumpeter to be sent with a summons to the town, and, as the deserters have since informed us, a great part of the garrison, with some of the officers, were for capitulating, but Monsieur Boisseleau, who is governor, Duke of Berwick and Col. Luttrell &c. resolutely opposed it, making a speech to the garrison of the great divisions there were in England, and that 50,000 French had made a descent, and said the Prince of Orange would be obliged to draw off his army on a few days to defend the kingdom of England, and thereupon prevailed upon them to stand to their arms. The trumpeter was sent back with this answer from Monsieur Boisseleau the governor, *that as King James had entrusted him with that garrison, he would recommend himself to the Prince of Orange by a vigorous defence.* About eight at night the king went to his camp a little mile from the town, having been on horseback from four in the morning, giving the necessary orders and exposing himself amidst the greatest of dangers, wherein his royal highness the Prince of Denmark did everywhere accompany his majesty. The cannon ceased not all the while to play from the town, several of the shot coming over his majesty's tent, and some falling near it. The same evening a party of the Royal Regiment and other dragoons was sent to view the ford at Annaghbeg, a place about two miles above the town, where six of the enemy's regiments of foot, three of horse and two of dragoons (commanded by Berwick and Luttrell) were posted on the other side of the river with a breast-work to cover them, who all fired upon our men, but being such extraordinary marksmen, they neither killed nor wounded any of them.

The enemy being thus posted so very advantageously that we expected to have met with great difficulties and opposition in passing the river, which is very rapid, and the bottom stony, but the enemy in the middle of the night abandoned their station with great precipitation, so that Lt.-Gen. Ginkel and Major-General Kirk, who were commanded by the king with a detachment to force their way over, passed the river the next morning early, being the 10<sup>th</sup>, with about 5000 horse, foot and dragoons, selected out of the several regiments, the horse and dragoons first, and the foot afterwards, who went almost to the middle in water, and yet the river is shallower now than has been known for many years. About eight o'clock the king went over in person, accompanied with his royal highness the Prince of Denmark, and the Heer Bentinck, Earl of Portland, and Monsieur Overkirk &c., and three regiments of foot, with some pieces of cannon, were posted there. About four in the afternoon, his majesty, upon the information he had received by some deserters that the Lord Tyrconnell was with a small camp about six miles from

Limerick in the road to Galway, sent out a party of horse, under the command of a lieutenant-colonel, to get a farther account of them, but they were retired from thence before our men came up. We had likewise an account this night brought to our camp by a deserter that the Count de Lauzun lay with his men near the city of Galway, the people there refusing to receive them into the town.

The 11. was spent in visiting the several posts and giving the necessary orders about the siege.

The 12. His majesty commanded Brigadier Stuart, with a detachment and four pieces of cannon, to go early this morning and attack Castleconnell, which is of considerable strength, situated on the Shannon, about four miles from Limerick. There were in it above 140 men, commanded by Captain Barnwell, who had refused to surrender upon the summons sent him the night before, but no sooner saw the cannon but submitted at discretion.

The same day advice came into our camp that General Sarsfield, with 5 or 600 horse and dragoons, passed the Shannon nine miles above Limerick, had about two that morning surprised, near a place called Cullen, eight pieces of our cannon of 18-pound ball, which were coming with some wagons laden with powder and ball from Kilkenny, under the guard of a squadron of horse and a small party of foot. The enemy killed all they met, men, women and children, in all about sixty, the rest escaping; the women and children that belonged to the wagoners and gunners they murdered most barbarously in their beds; they blew up the powder, which burst two of the guns, the other six, with the pontoons, being left entire and fit for service, and they likewise burnt some of the carriages. Their haste and disorder was so great that they could carry nothing away with them, but left behind them several things untouched, as also the carriage horses, which were loose at grass. Sir Albert Cunningham, with part of his regiment of Inniskilling dragoons that lay not far from thence, being timely alarmed by a deserter, marched immediately towards the enemy, charged them, killed about twenty, with a major and a captain, and pursued them as far as was safe. Sir John Lanier, who upon the news of Sarsfield's march, was by the king's order sent from the camp with a detachment of horse, came within three miles of them, and being informed of what had happened, struck off to Kilcullen Bridge to cut off their retreat, but the enemy retired by the way of Athlone. This accident hindered us five or six days, which we spent in preparing our batteries, and put all things in a good posture for a vigorous attack on the town.

August 14 - 16<sup>th</sup>. [News from Youghal, and issuing of a proclamation relating to tithes].





*Wall-plate showing the Sarsfield statue, made in Czechoslovakia, 1918.*

On the 17th, the whole day was spent in making the necessary preparations and getting all things ready for the opening of the trenches, which in the evening was put in execution. The trenches were opened with seven battalions, consisting of English, French and Danish infantry, commanded by the Prince of Würtemberg, Lieutenant-General, Maj.-Gen. Kirk, Maj.-Gen. Tettau, and Sir Henry Bellasis, Brigadier. We advanced this night about 300 paces, and took two redoubts from the enemy, from whence they might have disturbed our workmen.

The 18th, about 10 at night, the trenches were relieved by Lt.-Gen. Douglas, my Lord Sidney and Count Nassau, Major-Generals, and Brigadier Stuart, with seven battalions of foot, and this night we made our regular approaches towards another strong redoubt of the enemy's, notwithstanding the night was exceeding dark, that had it not been prevented by the extraordinary care and diligence of the officers, our men had certainly fallen foul on one another, through mistake.

The 19. The trenches were relieved by the Prince of Würtemberg, Lieutenant-General, Major-Generals, Kirk and Tettau, and Sir Henry Bellasis, Brigadier, and we continued our approaches

towards the said redoubt, which the king gave order should be attacked the next day.

The 20. The trenches were relieved by Lt.-Gen. Douglas, my Lord Sidney and Count Nassau, Major-Generals, and Brigadier Stuart. The signal was given by three guns about two in the afternoon, when our men that were detached for this service, to the number of about 150 (choice select men), besides officers, immediately fell on, and with extraordinary courage entered the fort and drove out the enemy, killing about 40 of them. After we had been about half an hour in possession of the fort, the enemy made a great sally, horse and foot, in all about 2000, but they were so warmly received by our men that, after a short dispute, they were beaten back, our horse pursuing them to the very walls of the town.

The 21. We carried on our trenches and finished them to that degree, so as to hinder any more sallies.

The 22. We raised a battery of eight guns and [of] 20-pound ball, and two of 18, against the enemy's high towers, from whence they fired upon our men, and we have quite levelled them. The night following we threw great numbers of bombs and carcasses into the town, and burnt many of the houses.

The 23. This morning one of Galmoy's troopers came over to us, and brought with him a boy and four very good horses. About noon, two captains, a lieutenant, a priest and seventy common soldiers of the enemy were brought in prisoners from Nenagh, a considerable castle two miles from our camp, where Gen. Ginkel marched with 2000 horse, 600 dragoons, a regiment of foot and two guns. The castle endured a siege of 24 hours and then surrendered on discretion. This afternoon two Frenchmen came over to us, and brought with them two as good horses as any in our army. They gave us an account that the rogues in the city are in a miserable condition for want of bread and drink, but that meat is plenty among them. This night, about 7 in the evening, we played furiously into the town with our bombs, red-hot balls and other fire-engines, which fired the town in several places; one fell into their great magazine of hay, which was consumed, and several houses burnt, the fire lasting there about six hours; another set fire to a place near the church, which was not consumed till five the next morning, and as that was quenched, we fired another place, which was blown up by the enemy.

The 24. This morning our guns fired very briskly at the walls, but being too far off, did little execution, so that two new batteries were this day made within 80 paces of the wall, and our trenches were carried on, by the indefatigable labour of our men, within pistol-shot of the counterscarp, and our guns were carried this night down to the said batteries, first against the wall, of eight half-cannon, the other of two 18-pounders against the King's Island. This night a deserter came over to us, who says our fire utensils and great shot have done them much damage, destroying at least 30 people.

The 25. This morning about break of day, we began to fire from our new batteries against the wall, but it rained so hard till 3 in the afternoon that our men could not work the guns. However, on any intermission of the rain, our guns played violently against the walls, and from three, we fired at least 300 shot with good success against the wall. Had not this day proved so wet, we had stormed the counterscarp; however, we advanced our trenches within 30 yards of the ditch. A deserter that came out of the town informed us that the day we took the redoubt, the enemy lost above 300 men.

The 26. We widened the breach we had made the day before in the wall of the town, and beat down part of the enemy's palisades on the counterscarp. This night we set fire to the town again, which burnt very vehemently. A deserter gives us an account that Col. Dorrington, Col. Gar. Moore, Sir Maurice Heustas and Col. Luttrell were killed in the sally.

The 27. The king ordered an attack to be made on the counterscarp, which was begun about three in the afternoon. A detached party of grenadiers made the onset, and was seconded by other detachments, who went on with that heat and courage, that having gained the counterscarp and a fort which the enemy had under the walls, instead of lodging themselves there, as they were ordered to do, and not to advance any further, they mounted the counterscarp, following the Irish that fled that way, and some were entering into the town; but the enemy being entrenched behind the breach, and having planted cannon against it, they were cut off. The fight lasted three hours, during which the enemy were still supplied with fresh men, and they sprang a mine in the ditch, but with little effect; but in conclusion, our men having lost the opportunity of lodging themselves, it was thought fit to retire to our trenches. What men we have lost in these several actions we cannot precisely say, but by the best computation and nicest scrutiny of the most intelligent observers, its thought we may have lost about 700 killed and wounded since the beginning of the siege.

The 28. At night we advanced our trenches about 20 yards, notwithstanding it had rained most part of the day; it continued to rain all this night, and all the next day to the 30th, almost without intermission: on which a council of war being called, where, as is said, the following reasons (among others) being urged, his majesty thought fit to give order for the raising the siege.

First, 'That the rain that had fallen, and in all probability was likely to fall, would in a little time so moisten the ground about Limerick, that it would be impossible to draw off the cannon and heavy baggage'.

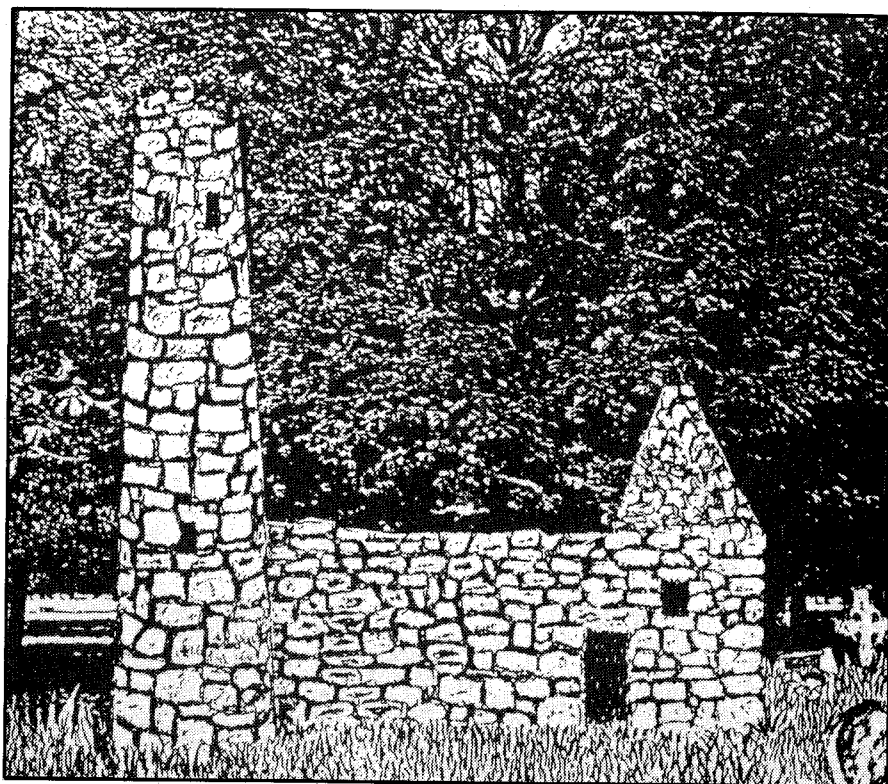
Secondly, 'That the river Shannon began so to swell, that if they did not suddenly pass the same, the communication with the other part of the army would be cut off'.

Thirdly, 'The watery season would undoubtedly bring the country distemper on our army, and so more die of it than by the hand of the enemy, in the same manner they did the last campaign at Dundalk'.

Fourthly, 'That the garrison of Limerick being very numerous, if they abide any assault (which on the account of the weather must be made with great disadvantage) we should lose a great many men'.

The 30. In the afternoon the cannon and heavy baggage were sent from the camp.

On the 31. 5000 horse being ordered for a rearguard to repress any sallies, the whole army decamped, and marched off in very good order, and without any disturbance from the enemy, towards



*St. Patrick's Church (the Old Kirk) Singland. Sketch by Kevin Hannan from a 19th-century drawing.*

Clonmel; from whence a strong detachment, under the command of Lt.-Gen. Douglas and Maj.-Gen. Kirk, was ordered towards Cork and Kinsale. His majesty having given the necessary orders, disposed the army, and named the Lord Sidney and Thomas Coningsby, esquire, to be Lords Justices of Ireland, went, accompanied with the Prince of Denmark, to Duncannon fort.

And on the 5. in the afternoon, (the wind proving fair) they embarked, and sailed out of the bay of Waterford, accompanied with three yachts, two men-of-war and several small tenders.

On the 6. about five in the evening, his majesty arrived safely in Kings-Road: his majesty being come ashore, lay that night at Kings-Weston, not far from Bristol.

On the 7. being Sunday, in the morning his majesty went to Bath, and lay the night following at the Duke of Beaufort's at Badminton.

Monday 7. [sic.] his majesty lay at the Duke of Somerset's at Marlborough.

Tuesday 8. his majesty lay at the Castle of Windsor.

Wednesday 9. About four in the afternoon his majesty came to Kensington, attended by the great officers of the court, and other persons of the chiefest quality, who went to meet him.

His majesty was received in all the places he passed through with most zealous demonstrations of duty and affection, and joy for his safe and happy return.

#### POSTSCRIPT

'Tis equally hard to determine whether his majesty in the action of the Boyne, or in his decamping before Limerick, has showed most of a general. In the one he gave inimitable proofs of his courage and bravery, and to it alone we owed the victory. But in rising before Limerick, when three of the four elements conspired to the utter undoing of his army if he had stayed, he has given yet a nobler proof of a consummated prudence, wariness and conduct, seldom or never to be found in company with so boundless a courage. In this he has imitated Zenophon's *Cyrus*, who valued himself more upon the title of the 'Father of his Soldiers' than all the great names his Persian admirers bestowed upon him, and who was heard often to say *he had rather save one of his men than cut off a thousand of his enemies*. One of the greatest men of the last age, in his dying advice to his son, who was to succeed him in the kingdom of Spain, tells him 'Tis one of the truest politics of a king or a general to know the critical moment wherein 'tis fit to abandon the enterprise, for want of which foresight on the one hand (adds Philip II) the greatest misfortunes have befallen them: as on the other hand the exact observance of it has produced, in the end, the greatest and happiest advantages. Thereafter he gives his son several incident circumstances that ought to determine a king or a general when 'tis time to leave off the present execution of a design, whereof



George, Prince of Denmark (1653-1708), by Pieter Schenk, after Sir Godfrey Kneller. National Gallery of Ireland.

this is one: When nature and things not in our power do concur to render the attempt either impossible of itself, or not able to counterbalance the expense, though it should succeed. One would almost think that in these words Philip, by I know not what instinct, should have meant this advice to the great-grandchild of his inveterate enemy, William of Orange, rather than to Philip the III, for it meets in every act with his majesty's case before Limerick. It was the swelling of the Shannon, the falling down of the buckets of heaven, the nature of the soil and the approaching season of the year, all of them things not lying within our power, that rendered the enterprise upon Limerick either impossible, or if at all successful, not capable to counterbalance the certain inconveniences and losses that must have attended it.

'Tis certain that in all the actions of the war, there is none wherein a general has occasion to show more of his wisdom than in besieging of towns, and to determine whether to continue or raise a siege, many times is the truest touchstone of his skill, both in war and politics. How many dismal examples could there be instanced from the Greek and Roman historians of continuing a siege too long, in spite of just reason to the contrary. A famous instance of which we have in the preceding age, which occasioned the loss of a battle to the French army, of the Duchy of Milan to the French crown, and of his liberty to a French king. Francis I, having forced his passage into Italy in order to recover his pretended right to the Duchy of Milan, he came at first to lay siege to the strong

castle of Pavie, with a very brave and numerous army. At first the enterprise seemed very favourable, but a little after, partly by the swelling of the river, partly by the continual rains, and partly from the season of the year, the French army began to diminish daily, and then the hopes of taking the town every day grew less. Notwithstanding all these circumstances, which ought in reason to have determined Francis I to raise the siege of Pavie (as the very like has wisely determined his majesty to raise that of Limerick), that prince would not be prevailed with, by all the insinuations of his best officers, to give it over for that juncture. In short, he lay before the town till he was forced to a battle, the most fatal the French have fought near these three ages, in which he was taken prisoner, and had the mortification to be carried to Madrid in that quality.

#### APPENDIX

### The Siege of Limerick, as Reported in the London Gazette

The *London Gazette*, newspaper of the British royal court, was first issued on 14 November, 1665, titled the *Oxford Gazette*, as an outbreak of plague had forced the court of Charles II to move from London. It was issued twice weekly, and with the twenty-fourth issue became the *London Gazette*. Its first editor was Henry Muddiman, a schoolmaster turned journalist, who operated from the office of a secretary of state under the scrutiny of a Surveyor of the Press who also had a monopoly of printing of 'all narratives of relations not exceeding two sheets of paper and all advertisements'. The printing of news was strictly and efficiently controlled under the Licensing Act of 1662, which continued in force after the revolution until allowed to lapse, to the great displeasure of William, in 1694.

The paper consisted of one sheet, approximately A4 size, printed on both sides in double column. During 1690 and 1691, the contents are almost exclusively war and diplomatic news of the alliance against Louis XIV. As the government paper, its sources of information would be reports coming into various government departments from diplomats and agents, edited to present events in a favourable light, and to minimise the effect on public opinion of reverses. The news from William's camp given in issue 2583, 11-14 August, is almost all contained, down to the phraseology, in the report of 4-5 August from Sir Robert Southwell, secretary of state for Ireland, to the Earl of Nottingham, secretary of state in the war department at Whitehall. The paper at this time bears the imprint of Edward Jones, king's printer, who accompanied William to Ireland. The *Gazette* continues in existence, although for some time it has contained only public appointments and announcements.

#### SOURCES:

*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 9th and 15th editions; Anthony Smith, *The Newspaper, an International History*, (Thames & Hudson, London, 1979).

No. 2579,

Mon. 28 July - Thurs. 31 July, 1690  
The Earl of Tyrconnell and the Count de Lauzun are at Limerick, of which the French have taken possession, so as not to suffer any of the Irish troops to come into the town.

2580, Thurs. 31 July - Mon. 4 August

From Chapelizod, 29 July: On the 27th the king set forward for Dublin and arrived here this day. His majesty having resolved to besiege Limerick, where the enemy have drawn what force they can together, has ordered Lt.-Gen. Douglas to join the Count de Solms, who is on his march thither with the army, and the better to dispose things for the pursuing on that siege with all possible vigour, his majesty has put off his return to England for ten days.

The captain of the James galley which came lately from cruising, and has taken off Kinsale a vessel with six Scotch officers bound for France, informs us that 10 St. Malo ships that were appointed to cruise on this coast are gone about to the river of Limerick, which is the only squadron of French ships that we can understand to be now in any part of these seas.

2581. Mon. 4 August - Thurs. 7 August

Chapelizod, July 31: The king goes back tomorrow to the army, which marched from Carrick the 27th past under the command of the Count de Solms, and came that day within two miles of Clonmel. The 28th they marched 7 miles farther and encamped the 29th at Golden Bridge (about 24 miles from Limerick) where Lt.-Gen. Douglas was to join them the next day, and then they would march directly to Limerick. It is confirmed that the French have possessed themselves of that place, and that they will not suffer any of the Irish troops to come into the town.

2582. Thur. 7 Aug. - Mon. 11 Aug.

Dublin, Aug. 2. His majesty went yesterday from Chapelizod to the army, which will be on Monday or Tuesday next before Limerick. There are people that come every hour from thence, and the country about it, to our camp, who all give an account of the consternation the enemy are in upon the approach of our army; and that they were retired beyond the Shannon, being about 25,000 strong with the French that are in the town of Limerick, but ill armed, and in a deplorable condition; they had several debates about demanding terms, but were at last prevailed with by the Earl of Tyrconnell to stand upon their defence.



**2583. Mon. 11 Aug. - Thur. 14 Aug.**

From his majesty's camp at Golden Bridge, Aug. 5: The king arrived here from Chapelizod yesterday about noon. A deserter came into our camp from Limerick, and told us that on **Saturday** morning the **2nd** instant, he saw the French march out of the town with 8 field pieces, and that the common report was that they were going to Galway to embark there for France, that being a more convenient port for their shipping than Limerick, and that the Irish had taken possession of the town. He could not tell the certain number of the French ships that were at Limerick, but says he saw only three provision ships at the quay, and that they were much disheartened for want of a further supply, which they had long expected. This advice was afterwards confirmed, as well as by our parties that had been sent out, as by other deserters, who added that there were but three Irish regiments now left in Limerick and a small camp without the town, and that they were in great confusion and division among themselves, that the Lord Tyrconnell intended for France with Monsieur Lauzun, and they were sending away their baggage, that many of the Irish had followed the French to Galway, and that a good number of others, who were discontented with Lord Tyrconnell's proceedings, were retired to the mountains of Kerry. Maj-Gen. Kirk joined the army on Saturday last with the regiments that were sent to reduce Waterford and the fort of Duncannon. And Lt-Gen. Douglas is about 7 miles off, so he will soon overtake us. It is believed we shall march tomorrow towards Brian's Bridge, 5 or 6 miles above Limerick, where some of the arches are broken down, but there is a very good ford. We are likewise informed that the Shannon is fordable in some other places near the town, which has not happened before these many years.

**2854. Thurs. Aug. 14 - Mon. Aug. 18.**

No Irish reports.

**2585. Mon. Aug. 18 - Thurs. Aug. 21.**

From his majesty's camp before Limerick, Aug. 10. On the **7th** we came to Caherconlish, 5 miles from Limerick, where the horse and foot joined again and some small parties were sent out. But the enemy retired from place to place all this day, and in the night burnt the houses and cabins within 3 miles of the town.

On the **8th** at 1 in the morning, his majesty sent out 900 horse and 200 foot under the command of the Earl of Portland, who advanced within cannon-shot of the town. Three regiments of the enemy's foot, one of horse and another of dragoons had lined the hedges close by their works. At 5 this detachment returned with an account of the posture the enemy were in, and about 7 the king

went himself with a fresh party of 200 horse within two miles and a half of the town. The enemy were come so near with some of their outguards that we could hear them talk, but there being a bog between, we could not get to them. This night it was resolved the army should march toward the town in order to battle, for we heard that, the country being very close and full of hedges and ditches, the enemy had lined them to defend the approaches to the city.

Accordingly, on the **9th** we decamped by 5 in the morning, 200 horse and dragoons with 1000 chosen foot out of all the regiments, commanded by Col. Erle, leading the van. We found the enemy drawn up within 2 miles of the town, whereupon the foremost of our troops halted till the rest came up; then our horse pushed them for near a mile, when they threw themselves behind the hedges and fired from thence, so that our horse could not come to them. Upon which we brought some small field pieces to fire upon them; and the 1000 detached foot were ordered to attack them. Accordingly about 1 o'clock Col. Erle led on his foot, who ran on with that bravery, tho' the enemy made a great fire through the hedges, that they forced them to retire, and continued this hedge fight for two hours, advancing within 400 yards of the town, and possessing themselves of two advantageous posts called Cromwell's fort and the Old Chapel and being hardly stopped there by the orders his majesty sent them. Then the town began to fire their great guns, which killed us some men; but in all this days action we had not above 30 killed and wounded.

About 6 in the evening, his majesty ordered a trumpeter to be sent with a summons to the town, who brought back an answer from Monsieur Boisseleau, the governor, that he would endeavour to make a vigorous defence. About 8 the king went to his camp, a little mile from the town, having been on horseback from 4 in the morning, giving the necessary orders and exposing himself amidst the greatest dangers, wherein his royal highness the Prince of Denmark did everywhere accompany his majesty. The cannon ceased not all the while to play from the town, several of the shot coming over his majesty's tent and some falling near it.

The same evening a party of dragoons was sent to the ford at Annaghbeg, about 2 miles above the town, where 6 of the enemy's regiments of foot, 3 of horse and 2 of dragoons were posted on the other side of the river, with a breast-work to cover them, who all fired upon our men, but neither killed nor wounded one of them. The advantage the enemy had here was such that we expected to have met with great difficulty in passing the river, which is very rapid, and the bottom stony; but in the night they abandoned their station, so that Monsieur Ginkel,

who was commanded with a detachment to force his way over, passed the river the next morning early with about 5000 men without any opposition, the horse passing first, and then the foot, who went almost to the middle in water, which is shallower now than has been known for many years. About 8 o'clock the king went over, and 3 regiments of foot with some pieces of cannon were posted there. Towards evening his majesty, upon the information he had that the Lord Tyrconnell was with a small camp about 6 miles from Limerick, in the way to Galway, sent over a party to get a farther account of them, and according to their report, a detachment will be sent tomorrow to attack the enemy, if they do not retire before.

We expect our great cannon on the **13th** instant, and after that hope in few days to give a good account of the place. The Count de Lauzun lies, we hear, with his men near Galway, the people there, as the deserters report, refusing to receive them into the town. The Duke of Berwick, Sarsfield and Luttrell are said to be in Limerick.

**2586. Thur. Aug. 21 - Mon. Aug. 25.**

From his majesty's camp before Limerick, Aug. 14: My last was of the **10th** inst. The **11th** was spent in investing the several posts. The **12th** in the morning Brig. Stuart was sent with a detachment and 4 pieces of cannon to attack Castleconnell, of considerable strength, situated on the Shannon, about 4 miles from Limerick. There were in it about 140 men, commanded by Capt. Barnwell, who had refused to surrender upon the summons sent to him the night before, but no sooner saw the cannon but submitted at discretion.

The same day we understood that Sarsfield having with 5 or 600 horse and dragoons passed the Shannon, 9 miles above Limerick, had about 2 that morning surprised, near a place called Cullen, 8 pieces of cannon of 18-pound ball which were coming with some wagons laden with powder and ball from Kilkenny under the guard of a squadron of horse and a small party of foot. The enemy killed all they met, men, women and children, in all about 50 (the rest escaping), blew up the powder, which burst 2 of the guns, the other 6, with the pontoons, being left entire and fit for service, and burnt some of the carriages; their haste and disorder was so great that they could carry nothing away with them, but left several things untouched behind them, as also the carriage horses, which were loose at grass. Sir Albert Cunningham, with part of his regiment of Inniskilling dragoons that lay not far from thence, being timely alarmed by a deserter, marched immediately towards the enemy, charged them, killed about 20, with a major and a captain, and pursued them as far as 'twas safe. Sir John Lanier,





*City wall at Charlotte Quay.*

who upon the news of Sarsfield's march, was sent from the camp with a detachment of horse, came within 3 miles of them, and being informed of what had happened, struck off to Kilcullen Bridge to cut off their retreat, but the enemy retired, as its believed, by Athlone.

This accident will only lose us 3 or 4 days, for in that time our cannon (being 24-pounders) will arrive from Waterford, whither they were brought by sea, with great quantities of stores, and the 6 pieces from Cullen will be remounted. In the meantime our batteries are preparing, and all things are put in a posture for a vigorous attack of the town.

**2587. Mon. Aug. 25 - Thur. Aug. 28.**

Chester, Aug. 25: By a letter of the 16th from the camp before Limerick we are told that our troops had attacked the enemy in their outworks, which in half an hours time they made themselves masters of, killing about 80 of them. They add that Lt.-Gen. Ginkel was, with 1800 horse and 600 dragoons, in pursuit of a strong party of the enemy's, of whom they hourly expected to have a good account.

**2588. Thur. Aug. 28 - Mon. Sept. 1**

Plymouth, Aug. 27: A Dutch caper has brought in a prize which came from the river of Limerick the 17th inst, the master says that the French left Limerick the beginning of the month, with intention to quit that kingdom, giving their affairs there for lost, and retired to Galway as a more convenient port to embark at, and

that at the same time their sick men, of which they had a great number, were put on board the French men-of-war and privateers, which were then at Limerick, to the number of about 25, all small ships; but knows not whether they were sent from thence to France or Galway, where the French expected more ships to carry them off. As to the siege of Limerick, he says that when he came away the batteries were raised against the town.

**2589. Mon. Sept. 1 - Thur. Sept. 4**

From his majesty's camp before Limerick, Aug. 28: The 17th at night we opened the trenches with 7 battalions, commanded by the Prince of Würtemberg, Lieutenant-General, Maj.-Gens. Kirk and Tettau, and Sir Henry Bellasis, Brigadier, we advanced about 300 paces and took two redoubts from the enemy, from whence they might have disturbed our workmen. The 18th the trenches were relieved by Lt.-Gen. Douglas, the Lord Sidney and Count Nassau, Major-Generals, and Brigadier Stuart, and we approached towards another strong redoubt of the enemy's. The 19th the trenches were relieved by the Prince of Würtemberg &c., and we continued to advance towards the said redoubt, which the king ordered to be attacked the 20th, Lt.-Gen. Douglas &c. being again on the guard; the signal was given by 3 guns about 2 in the afternoon, when our men that were detached for this service, to the number of above 150 besides officers, immediately fell on, and with extra-

ordinary bravery entered the redoubt, and drove out the enemy, killing about 40 of them; after we had been about half an hour in possession of the fort, the enemy made a great sally with horse and foot, in all about 2000, but after small dispute they were beaten back, our horse pursuing them to the walls of the town. The 21st we carried on our trenches and finished them so as to hinder any more sallies. The 22nd we raised a battery against the enemy's high towers, from whence they fired upon our men, and we quite levelled them. The night following we threw several bombs and carcasses into the town, and burnt some houses. The 23rd at night we continued to throw in red-hot balls and bombs, which fired the town in several places, and one fell on their great magazine of hay, which was consumed, and several houses burnt, the fire lasting above 6 hours. The 24th we finished all our batteries, on which were mounted 30 pieces of cannon. The 25th we advanced our trenches within 30 yards of the ditch. A deserter that came out of the town informed us that the day we took the redoubt the enemy lost above 300 men. The 26th, we widened the breach we had made the day before in the wall of the town and beat down part of the enemy's palisades on the counterscarp. The 27th, the king ordered an attack to be made on the counterscarp, which was begun about 3 in the afternoon; a detached party of grenadiers made the onset, and were seconded by other detachments, who went in with that heat and courage

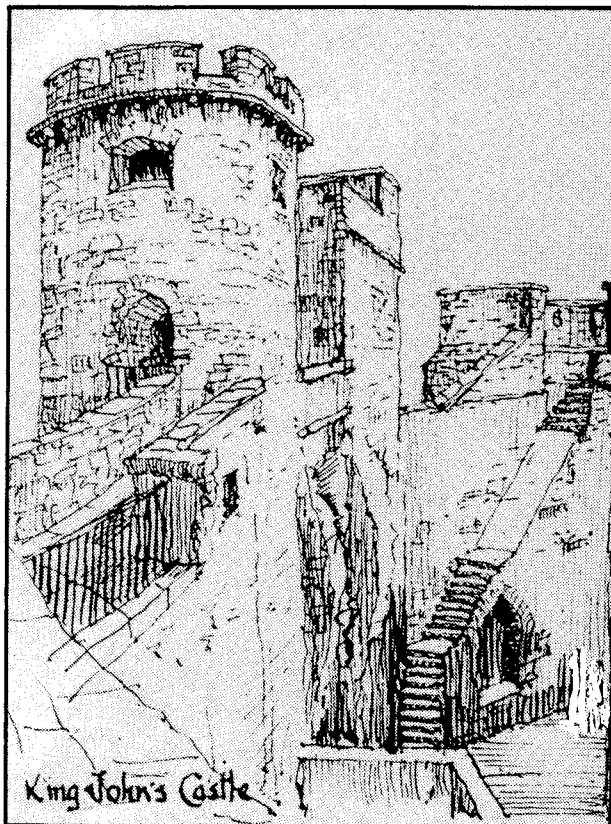
that, having gained the counter-scarp and a fort the enemy had under the walls, instead of lodging themselves there, as they were ordered to, and not to advance any farther, they mounted the breach, following the Irish that fled that way, and some were entering into the town, but the enemy being entrenched behind the breach, and having planted cannon against it, they were cut off. The fight lasted three hours, during which the enemy were still supplied with fresh men, and they sprang a mine in the ditch, but with little effect; but in conclusion, our men having, by pressing too far, lost the opportunity of lodging themselves, it was thought fit to retire to our trenches. What men we lost in these actions we cannot precisely say, but its thought we may have had about 4 or 500 killed and wounded since the beginning of the siege. Last night we advanced our trenches about 20 yards, and this day have enlarged the breach, and are making preparations for another assault. Divers deserters are come out of the town, who tell us they have lost a great many men, and that our cannon and bombs have made a terrible havoc. We hear that the French, of whom a great many are sick, are at last got into Galway, and there is a report that a squadron of French ships is arrived there to take them off. Lt.-Gen. Ginkel took three days ago a considerable castle 2 miles from hence, in which were 80 men who surrendered at discretion. The Irish have burnt the Earl of Thomond's house at Bunratty, and do a great deal of mischief in the country. Sarsfield is gone with his party towards Galway.

**2590. Thurs. Sept. 4 - Mon. Sept. 8.**

King's Weston near Bristol, **Sept. 6:** His majesty set sail yesterday at 4 in the afternoon from Duncannon fort, and at 7 this evening cast anchor in King's-Rode, and is now (about 10) come to Sir Robert Southwell's house at this place. The Prince of Denmark landed likewise this evening.

**2591. Mon. Sept. 8 - Thur. Sept. 11.**

Whitehall, **Sept. 10:** His majesty having thought fit by reason of the ill weather to withdraw his forces from before Limerick, the cannon and heavy baggage were sent away on the 30th past, and the next day the army decamped and marched off in very good order, and without any disturbance from the enemy, towards Clonmel, from whence a strong detachment was ordered towards Cork and Kinsale. His majesty having named the Lord Viscount Sidney, and Thomas



*King John's Castle. Sketch by S.O.P. O Ceallachain.*

Coningsby, Esq., to be Lords Justices of Ireland, went, accompanied with the Prince of Denmark, to Duncannon fort, where they embarked the 5th of this month in the afternoon, and arrived on the 6th towards evening in King's-Road, with three yachts, two men-of-war, and small tenders. His majesty being come ashore, lay that night at King's-Weston, not far from Bristol. On Sunday his majesty went to Bath, and lay the night following at the Duke of Beaufort's at Badminton. On Monday his majesty lay at the Duke of Somerset's at Marlborough, and last night at Windsor. His royal highness the Prince of Denmark arrived here yesterday in the evening. And this day about four in the afternoon, his majesty came to Kensington, attended by the great officers of the court, and other persons of the chiefest quality, who went to meet him. His majesty was received in all the places he passed through with most zealous demonstrations of duty and affection, and joy for his safe and happy return. And the same were this evening universally expressed in London and Westminster, the great guns being fired from the tower, the streets filled with bonfires, and the houses illuminated, together with ringing of bells and other public rejoicings.

**2592. Thur. Sept. 11 - Mon. Sept. 15.**

No Irish news. Issues 2589 to 2592 carry the advertisement: The commissioners

appointed by their majesties for the distribution of the monies collected upon their briefs for the relief of the poor Protestants of Ireland, do again most earnestly desire that all persons concerned in collecting or returning of the same, would do it with all possible speed, forasmuch as there are yet great numbers who, for want of a small supply to carry them into their own country, are forced to continue here under pressing necessities, and the winter drawing on, will make their journeying more difficult and their transportation more hazardous.

**2593. Mon. Sept. 15 - Thur.**

**Sept. 18.**

From the camp at Tipperary, **Sept. 7:** The army, which is now commanded by the Count de Solms, is come by short marches to this place, about 20 miles from Limerick. Lt.-Gen. Douglas marched this day with several regiments of horse and foot towards the north. Most of the English about Limerick have brought away their families, cattle and goods, and the city is so wasted that the Irish will find it a very difficult thing to subsist this winter. The deserters that come

daily over to us report that the French at Galway are in a miserable condition, having neither bread nor money, and say they are shipped, in order to their return to France.

From the camp at Tipperary, **Sept. 10:** On Monday last, Monseigneur de la Forest was sent, with 600 horse, 300 foot and 4 pieces of cannon, to Kilmallock, 13 miles from hence, in which the enemy had a garrison of 200 men, who submitted upon condition to march away without their arms and baggage. This is a very useful place, for that it intercepts the direct passage between Cork and Limerick.

**2596. Thur. Sept. 25 - Mon.**

**Sept. 29.**

From the camp at Tipperary, **Sept. 13:** ... The deserters that are come over to us, as well as other advices, do assure us that the Irish are falling into miserable necessities, and that they are divided among themselves; that the French, with the Earl of Tyrconnell, Duke of Berwick, Count Lauzun and Msr. Boisseleau have left them; that Sarsfield has now the chief command among them and that Brigadier John Hamilton is governor of Limerick.

From the camp near Cashel, **Sept. 16:** ... it is confirmed by several persons come from Limerick that the French are all gone from Galway, and that the Irish are in a vile condition, not knowing how to subsist this winter.