



Galloping Hogan comes riding down the highway of Irish history with a cluster of heroic and romantic references pinned on his rapparee's hat. Those references are plucked from poems, ballads, stories, schoolbooks and songs.

What has he done to deserve such accolades? After all, very few individuals are accorded such honour by posterity. Hogan was only a minor figure, and a shadowy one at that, in Sarsfield's ambush of the Williamite siege train at Ballyneety in August 1690. Many of the academic accounts of those events make no reference whatever to Hogan. It is difficult to distinguish historical truth from traditional assertion, and what follows doesn't attempt to perform that task. So what does follow? It's quite simply a montage of words taken from various sources; a montage which tells of the Ballyneety ambush, with the use of poetic licence here and there, and also some curious fictional portraits of Hogan.

GALLOPING

HOGAN

Saddle, Sabre & Song

Tim Lehane

Silent the skies over Limerick Town,
Broken the walls once scarred by war,
Jacobite sword and Williamite crown
One with yesterday's causes are; (1)

By Limerick's walls I thunder down with
a cannon's stormy rattle,
Chanting the rune of a fighting tune where
Sarsfield stood to battle.
To the thudding of Galloping Hogan's steed,
I tell of a Treaty broken,
Of Wild Geese flown, and a cause undone till
a new day's word be spoken. (2)

From the Boyne it was an easy march for William into
Dublin and Ulster and Leinster fell into his hands ...
The Irish army fell back across the Shannon ... and
the main army took up its stand at Limerick ... (3)

It was the 10th August, 1690, when William had advanced upon Limerick, forced the Irish outposts back to the city, erected his cannon on Ireton's fort, and opened fire on the walls. That evening he had summoned Limerick to surrender. (4)

A French deserter from William's camp having made his way into the city, gave information of the state of the Williamite artillery, which had not as yet come up in full force, but which was on its way from Waterford. The deserter said that the artillery, &c., were on their way under an escort of a few troops of Villier's horse. And no

doubt they were on the road from Cashel. And now having called together his faithful staff, Sarsfield made every preparation to prevent the advance of the approaching train. (5)

Oh! Limerick is in danger and old
Ireland is not free,
So Sarsfield sends a message to a
fearless rapparee
"Come ride across the Shannon at
the sounding of the drum;
And we'll blow the enemy siege-train
to the land of kingdom come". (6)

Hear you those ghostly hoof-beats ring
Down the valley and up the height!
Is it for Sarsfield or the king
Galloping Hogan rides to-night? (7)

He was thoroughly aware of the advantages to be obtained by the presence, in the expedition, of "Galloping" Hogan, a well educated, popular man, and a brave rapparee Hogan knew every pass and defile - was familiar with every track and roadway - with every ford and bog - and in a critical juncture like the present, was the best man that could be obtained to give effectual assistance to the grand exploit of the dashing, dauntless Irish general. (8)

Owing to the state of the roads, which in many places

were little more than ill-defined tracks, progress was always quicker on horseback than by a carriage of any kind. (9).

Ho! Galloping Hogan, Galloping Hogan,
Galloping all along,
On his saddle is a sabre,
On his lips there is a song. (10).

It requires something of an effort to-day, especially to the younger generation, to realise the importance of the horse in the everyday life of the seventeenth century, and indeed of the eighteenth and early nineteenth also. Then to be able to ride a horse was as much a matter of course as it is to be able to ride a bicycle to-day. Not only men, but women also, except those in the lowest station of life who seldom if ever had occasion to leave their own cabins, were more or less at home in the saddle. (11).

The Raparee is bearded, there's a
twinkle in his eye,
As he rides into the city how the
Limerick ladies cry?
"Mister Outlaw, Mister Outlaw,
won't you tarry here with me..." (12)

SENTRY OFFICER:

"Mr. Hogan has just turned up, sir. May I usher him here?"

SARFIELD:

"Oh! yes"

(Officer salutes again and leaves. Enter Hogan in mud-bespattered garments, face flushed with excitement).

SARFIELD:

(RISING UP AND SHAKING HIS HAND HEARTILY)

"Welcome again to old Limerick, Prince of Rapparees. I was about to ask you news of the outer world, but the fire-flashes which I see shooting from the corners of your keen grey eyes, plainly tell me that your news is satisfactory, and that you are the herald of pleasant sword-slashing exercise for my cooped-up troops - an exercise they badly need. Your breeches, too, exhibit more than usual signs of a late hard ride, proving that you have been well maintaining your right to be known as the 'Galloper'."

HOGAN:

"As usual, General, you guess rightly. But, tare an ages, I can hardly come out with all I have got to tell ye; for it is mighty big with fate for yerself, yer army, and the city here. By your leave, sir, I will try and steady myself a bit by saddling my legs across this chair here." (13)

Highwaymen were nearly always made, not born, and it was dire necessity - a crushing burden of debt or the shadow of the gallows - rather than mere love of adventure which made them adopt their dangerous calling. In Ireland there had been reasons for men to take to the woods and hills and live "upon their keeping", and at no time were there more recruits to the profession of raparee than at the period we are considering. It was indeed almost an aristocratic profession. (14)

SARFIELD:

"What further news have you now of the travelling battery?"

HOGAN:

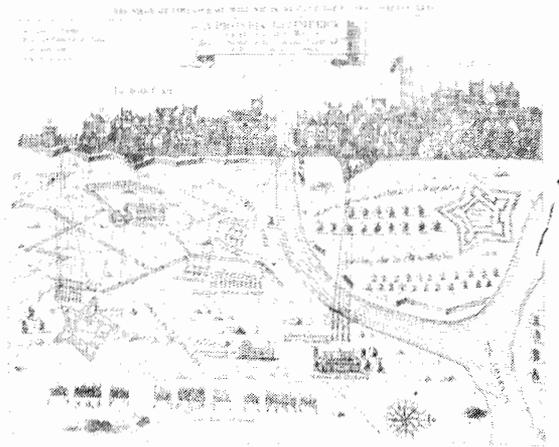
"Further news, you ask. Great heavens above! it is within twelve miles of ye, and I myself saw it last evening encamped near Ballyneety Castle".

SARFIELD:

"This is rather exciting tidings, Galloper".

HOGAN:

"Faith! ye may well say so. Perhaps, it will astonish you a trifle more, when I tell ye that this battery is only guarded



The Siege of Limerick, August 1690, from Lenihan's "History".

by two companies of dragoons ... By the cross of Mungret! (RISING FROM HIS CHAIR HIS BODY SWAYING WITH EXCITEMENT, AND A FLOOD OF FIRE SHOOTING FROM HIS EYES) with 500 of your troopers ye should be able to cut them up into ribbons, and blow their guns and ammunition into as many pieces as there were stars last night when I rode here. But ye would have to start this very night.

This is all, sir, and I leave the rest in your hands, and, by all the goats in Kerry, I know no better ones to entrust them to." (15)

Sarsfield was in charge of the Irish cavalry at Limerick. A brilliant cavalry general, he had trained under a great master, Turenne, in France. He decided to intercept and destroy the siege train. At dusk, on the night of Sunday, 10th August, with six hundred men, he rode out from Limerick ... (16)

A fine harvest moon lent light to the landscape. He could not venture over O'Brien's Bridge; for that old pass between Clare and Tipperary, was jealously guarded by the soldiers of William, prepared to meet any attack that might be made upon them. The cavalcade passed through Bridgetown and Ballycorney, the Shannon being all the time on their right. (17)

The night we rode with Sarsfield
out from Limerick to meet
The waggon-train that William hoped
would help in our defeat
How clearly I remember it, though
now my hair is white
That clustered black and curly
'neath my trooper's cap that night.
For I was one of Sarsfield's men,
in years tho' still a lad;
And to be one of Sarsfield's men
what boy would not be glad?
For Sarsfield chose of all his troops
the best and bravest ones
To ride, and raid the convoy's camp
that brought the English guns. (18)

Sarsfield rode out the Dutch to rout,
And to take and break their cannon;
To Mass went he at half-past three,
And at four he crossed the Shannon. (19)

'Twas silently we left the town,
and silently we rode,

While o'er our heads the silent stars
 in silver beauty glowed.
 And silently and stealthily,
 well led by one who knew,
 We crossed the shining Shannon
 at the ford of Killaloe.
 The galloping O'Hogan, Ireland's
 fiery-hearted son,
 'Twas he by many a byway led us
 confidently on. (20)

Having gone up beyond the bridge, they crossed the ford between the Pier Head and Ballyvalley. This was one of the only two fords which were on the Shannon, about Killaloe at this period. The party then proceeded across the country between Ballina and Boher, coming out on the Boher road, near Labadhy Bridge. When at this bridge, the party, who were conducted by Galloping Hogan, was startled by a curious incident. Sarsfield discovered, near Labadhy Bridge, a number of men on his left, whose presence excited alarm. He ordered the horse to halt, apprehensive that he had been betrayed by Hogan. But the delusion was dispelled in a instant; the



De Brun's portrait of Patrick Sarsfield.

men whose presence caused so much alarm were a body of Rapparees who had a den or hiding place here, in which they were accustomed to conceal whatever provisions they had taken in their predatory excursions throughout the district. (21)

SARSFIELD:

(MUSING). What a deuced clever fellow Hogan is, only needing a little more education blended judiciously with ambition to rise to almost anything in defence of his King. If this expedition succeeds, and I do not see why it should not, he will far out-run me in its honours. He is welcome to them, and best deserves them. (22)

They encamped for the remaining three hours of the August night on the side of the Keeper Mountain. A man named O'Ryan offered Sarsfield shelter in his cottage, but

the soldier preferred to sleep, wrapped in his cloak, on the sweet grass.

During the next day, Sarsfield and his troop lurked by the mountain. The weather was fair, but cloudy, the solitude undisturbed. (23)

The night fell dark on Limerick
 and everthing was still
 As for the foe in ambush we lay
 beside the hill
 Like lions we waited boldy to
 dash upon our prey
 With gallant Sarsfield at our head
 by the dawning of the day. (24)

On the following morning divettes were sent to watch the advance of the expected artillery train of William, and to report progress. In a short time it was intimated to Sarsfield that the guns and ammunition were on their way to Limerick, and that the English forces were to encamp for the night near the hill of Ballyneety, a remarkable conical eminence which may be seen from a great distance, somewhat near Derk. Sarsfield went next night and arriving near the hill, he halted. And here lay a principal difficulty, namely, how to discover the watchword of the Williamites. (25)

One of the men's horses cast a shoe, and the soldier was obliged to fall behind and walk the animal. He met with a woman on her way to Ballyneety, and they got into conversation. She told him she was the wife of a Williamite soldier, and was rejoining her husband, who was among the escort. She further told him the password. (26)

"I have got their password. You'll smile to hear it. It is 'Sarsfield'."

The two Irishmen looked at each other and laughed. There were moments when a kinship of blood made Sarsfield feel more intimate, more at one with the rapparee chief than with any of his own friends and equals. They understood each other without the need of exchanging confidences, and Sarsfield relied absolutely on the loyalty of this man. (27)

The sleepy sentry on his rounds
 perhaps was musing o'er
 His happy days of childhood
 on the pleasant English shore:
 Perhaps was thinking of his home
 and wishing he was there
 When springtime makes the English
 land so wonderfully fair. (28)

The convoy lay asleep under their guns, their horses were at rest; the encampment was still as death; no danger appeared; all were in imaginary security, free from the slightest suspicion of the blows that were about coming thick and heavy upon them.

It was moonlight, with occasionally flitting clouds. No time was lost in making everything ready. When the clouds gathered heavily for a few moments, Sarsfield, at the head of his men, accompanied by Galloping Hogan, cautiously proceeded down the hill. As the first sentinel was approached, the challenge was given, and was replied to by the watchword "Sarsfield". (29)

At last our horses' hoof-beats
 and our jingling arms he heard.
 "Halt! Who goes there?" the sentry
 cried, "Advance and give the word!"
 "The word is Sarsfield", cried our Chief,
 "and stop us he who can,
 For Sarsfield is the word to-night
 and Sarsfield is the man!" (30)

I have not discovered the origin of the story that the Williamite password for the night was 'Sarsfield', which gave him the opportunity of saying 'Sarsfield is the word and Sarsfield is the man'. (31)

And with that word upon our lips
we'll pass the sentries through
Then when you hear my voice upraised
charge boldly one and all -
No cannon from this convoy e'er must
bark at Limerick's wall! (32)

They asked us for the password
"Brave Sarsfield is the man"
"And here I am" our general cried,
as down on them he ran
For God had cleared the firmament -
the moon and stars gave light
And for the Battle of the Boyne
we were revenged that night. (33)

"Charge!" Sarsfield cried: and the green hillside
As they charged replied in thunder:
They rode o'er the plain, and they rode o'er the slain,
And the rebel rout lay under. (34)

Scarcely any resistance was offered. The men were sabred and shot to death where they lay. Then Sarsfield had their cannon loaded to the muzzle, sunk in the earth and discharged, with an explosion which was heard even in the city itself. (35)

One bursting cheer, one headlong charge,
and sabres bright and keen
Are hacking at the foeman's heads
where'er a head is seen
The Colonel leaves his wig behind,
bestrides a horse and flies
To tell of Sarsfield's daring and
the convoy camp's surprise.
We make a pile of captured guns
and powder bags and stores,
Then skyward in one flaming blast
the great explosion roars. (36)

"'Tis a bonfire they'll see in Singland camp", cried O'Hogan with joy.

The Irish, implicitly obeying Sarsfield as he rode here and there giving directions, worked with speed and skill; the rapparees were as cool and adroit as the trained soldiers; though their haste was extreme they bungled nothing. The train of powder was lit; the Irish drew back; the whole night seemed to break into noise and flame as the burst guns, like monsters in quick death agony, sprang into the reddened air. The deep roar of the explosion, the shuddering of the earth, the long jets of flame that licked all whiteness from the moonlight, shrieks and lamentations that seemed inhuman yet surely a vision of unreality; Sarsfield, the tall man on the heavy horse, hatless, his hair blown back, his eyes wide open, his features strained with exultation and stained crimson from the glare, looked monstrous on his dark hillock. (37)

It was an enterprise of skilful timing and swift execution, which was highly damaging to the enemy. (38)

He burned the gear the knaves held dear -
For his king he fought, not plunder;
With powder he crammed the guns and rammed
Their mouths the red soil under.

The spark flashed out - like a nation's shout
The sound into heaven ascended;

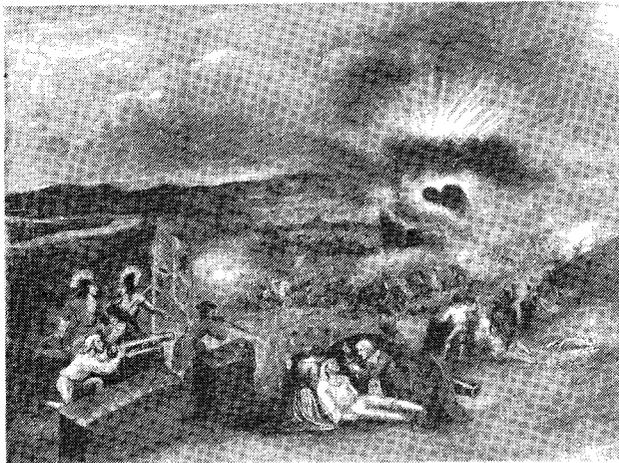
The hosts of the sky to earth made reply.
And the thunders twain were blended. (39)

Most of the 100 wagons of the convoy were burned and with them 12,000 pounds of powder and a great quantity of match and grenades. Carters and horses were ruthlessly cut down. The carters' wives and children were said to have been among the victims. (40)

The Irish brought away with them four thousand draught horses and a hundred chargers of Colonel Villier's regiment, which were saddled, bridled and had pistols at their holsters. (41)

The Dutch company ordered out to lead in the convoy started late. They were only about a mile from Ballyneety, where the siege train had encamped, when the night was brilliantly lighted up by an explosion that seemed to rend the earth.

Furiously spurring their rearing horses, they reached the burning remains of the convoy to find that the Jacobites had gone. They pursued for some distance, but believing capture impossible that way, wheeled westward to cut Sarsfield off before he could again cross the Shannon. (42)



A painting of the Siege.

Knowing that William would adopt every strategem to prevent his return to the besieged city, he went back to Limerick by Banagher, where he crossed the bridge, one of the arches of which he blew up, in order to stop pursuit of the English horse, which were close upon him. (43)

Major James Fitzgerald and fifteen others were killed by Sir Albert Cunningham's Dragoons, in their pursuit of the returning Irish. (44)

The darkness, however, was all against the pursuers, who did not know the country as Galloping Hogan knew it. They failed to catch up with the Jacobites, and disconsolately returned to camp next morning. (45)

Galloping Hogan rode beside Sarsfield as they galloped along by the shore of Lough Derg. The moon showed the rapparee's bare arms and his face which was set in a smile of intense satisfaction. (46)

Sarsfield's ride is his most celebrated exploit. It caused an international sensation at the time and its memory is still preserved in a number of local traditions. (47)

Nothing could equal the intense joy and satisfaction with which the garrison within the walls heard of this signal advantage. According to King James's memoirs "the garrison was hugely encouraged" - and when Sarsfield safely returned with his brave band of faithful rapparees and Dragoons, the rejoicings that ensued chased away every apprehension, and everyone felt con-

fidest of success in the issue of the siege. (48)

To the heroes of Limerick, the City
of the Fights
Be my best blessing borne on
the wings of the air!
We had' card-playing there o'er our
camp-fires at night,
And the Word of Life, too, and
prayers. (49)

An amnesty was proclaimed in a short time, of which Galloping Hogan is stated by Storey to have taken advantage, adding that he was murdered near Roscrea soon afterwards by certain rapparees who had not submitted. (50)

So to-night along the Shannon
by the pale light of the moon
There comes an eerie brightness
as of an Indian noon,
Then clipperty clop resounding
through the lattice of the shade
The ghost of Galloping Hogan
goes a-riding down the glade. (51)

Craven James in ashes and dust,
Throne forgotten and dreams laid by,
Sarsfield, keeper of Erin's trust,
Lies in his grave under Belgium's sky. (52)

But with thundering hoof-beats
fierce and fleet
Night by night till the edge of dawn,
By the lonely valley and hill retreat
Galloping Hogan still rides on. (53)

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The women of Limerick in action in 1690.