



LE FLEMING MANUSCRIPTS

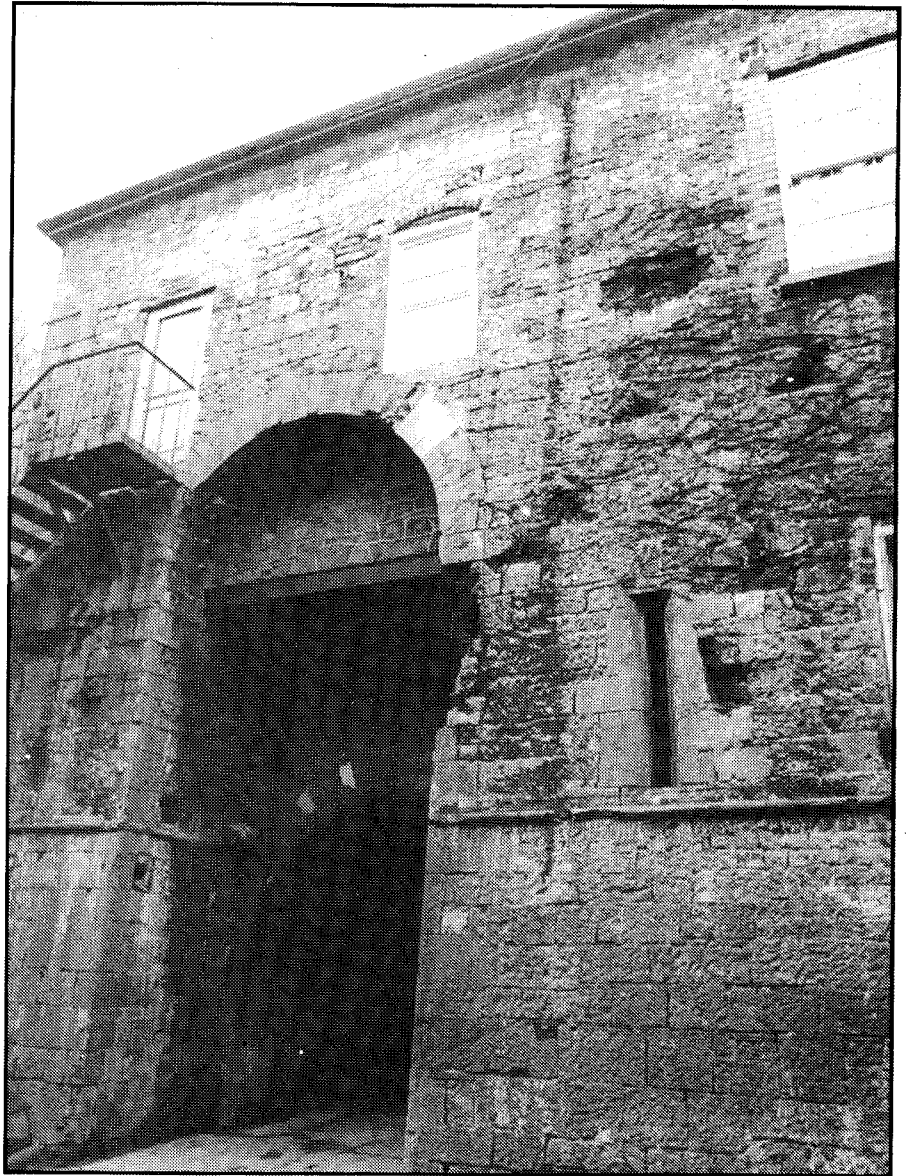
The Le Fleming manuscripts consist mainly of the letters and papers of Sir Daniel Fleming (1633-1701), eldest son of William Fleming of Coniston, North Lancashire, and Rydal, Westmoreland. He inherited considerable estates on the death of his father in 1653, and on the restoration of Charles II was made sheriff of Cumberland. He was a strong supporter of the Church of England, and enemy to both dissident Protestants and Roman Catholics. The newsletters, containing information not in the printed gazettes of the time, had been intended for destruction — they were found in a chest, tattered, mudstained and many crumpled into balls. Col. William Fleming, eldest son and heir of Sir Daniel, was created baronet in 1705. The newsletters are published in Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Mss of S.H. Le Fleming*, 12th Report, Appendix, part 7, 1890.

(3922) August 21, 1690. Newsletter, Dublin, 13th.

We have just now received advice that the siege of Limerick has been formed and that the trenches were opened on the 12th [17th] at night; the enemy played furiously upon us, and killed some men, but we advanced about 100 paces towards the bridge on the Clare side, and are raising batteries of 24 cannon each, and two for mortars. The enemy made a sally to disturb us, but with our cannon from the hills, and a detached party of 1000 Danes, we beat them into the town again. Several deserters, especially three in a late sally, came over to us, and informed us there are above 6000 in the town, also there are about 800 French, who are returned from Galway. They further add that they have a considerable quantity of provision, but shall want salt, but have powder sufficient to hold out a three week siege, also they are unpaving the streets to prevent the execution of the bombs.

(3490) September 2, 1690. Newsletter.

From his majesty's camp before Limerick we have this account. At the action in taking the lower town a soldier who was an apprentice to a butcher here in



Exterior view of the gatehouse of the Citadel, showing damage caused by cannon-fire.

Leadenhall Market had the courage before the king to go up to the very mouths of two cannon of the enemy's with a sword in one hand and a musket in the other and killed both the gunners. The other soldiers followed close after, beat off the rest and kept possession. For this, his majesty sent for him the next day and gave him 200 guineas and a captain's place.

(3948) September 6, 1690. London. Newsletter.

Dublin letters dated 30th August add Nenagh is surrendered to his majesty on discretion ... From Dublin they also agree that Col. Luttrell, Col. Moore, Col. Dorrington and Sir Maurice Eustace are killed in the garrison of Limerick, with about 900 men more, and that we have lost about the same number with Capt.



Needham, Capt. Lucy, Maj. Margetson, Capt. Browne, with other officers. That Col. Kirk stormed and took the said fort, and put all therein to the sword except Capt. Barrett, who begged his life on condition to make some disclosures, and being brought before the king said there were several mines ready to spring, with heaps of stones over them to preserve them from the bombs, and that they had great stores in the garrison and about 10,000 men. Upon this his majesty ordered some batteries to be removed which had made breaches in the walls 10 yards wide. The king had offered mercy by sending a trumpeter into the town, but they rejected the offer, whereupon the mortars played afresh and threw in bombs, carcasses and red-hot balls, which occasioned great shrieks and cries in the town, and fired some houses, which were soon quenched. The garrison made four sallies, in the last of which they lost 200 men. The great mortar had arrived in the camp, which carries a ball of 500lbs. weight, and was to play the next day. All the enemy's magazine of hay was burnt by our bombs. It is said that 4 or 5 were discovered who intended to kill the king, and were executed. Two spies were discovered in the camp which were immediately hanged, and that the adjutant-general of the rapparees was brought in pinioned.

(3956) September 13, London. Newsletter.

[Plymouth letters] write also that a letter is come from Ireland to a merchant in Bideford giving an account that our army are encamped at Golden Bridge, and that upon their decamping from before Limerick, the garrison, to the number of 1500, sallied out thinking to have fallen upon the rearguard; but Count de Solms, having notice thereof, laid an ambuscade of two regiments of horse and one of dragoons, who let them pass quietly by, and then fell furiously upon the rear, while the other fronted them, and cut off 700 upon the place and 200 prisoners. Orders came thither for 5000 to go to winter quarters.

(3957) September 14, 1690. J. Copley to Col. William Fleming at Coniston Hall, in Furness Fells, Lancashire:

... I know you will expect some news and I do here send you a true account of the king's proceedings against Limerick. From the camp before Limerick, August 18: On **Thursday [14th]** his majesty went to view the most convenient places for a battery, and Count Schomberg had his horse killed under him near the king by a musket ball. Afterwards the enemy made a show of attacking us with a considerable body, but were soon repulsed leaving 20 of their men dead on the place. On **Friday [15th]** several prisoners were taken and some spies. Two were executed, being the first example of his majesty's displeasure. The six guns

retaken brought into the camp, the other two were burst and our boats and carriages spoiled. On **Saturday [16th]** a French major came over to us and assured us most of their men would do so if they could; as also that the French are encamped without Galway, the town refusing them entrance, which is confirmed by four troopers and a quartermaster of Sarsfield's that came in this day. Yesterday [**Sunday 17th**] was spent quietly by us, but the enemy played warmly on us, but did little hurt. After prayers, all preparations were made for opening the trenches, which had been done sooner but for the unlucky accident of our guns. Our men have since prepared mighty numbers of faggots to carry on our approaches, and last night our trenches were opened, the Prince of Würtemberg, Maj.-Gen. Kirk commanding the attack which was begun near a small fort the enemy had raised near out trenches, and it was carried on with such success that in less than an hour the rebels cried out murder and quarter. Gen. Kirk told them they should have such quarter as they had given our men when the guns were taken, and so knocked 80 on the head. His majesty was four hours near the trenches, the bullets flying about him like hail. It pleased God to protect him without any hurt and he is very well.

From the camp before Limerick, August 22nd. The **20th [Wed.]** this morning early we played on the enemy's fort from two batteries and by three in the afternoon had tumbled down a good part of it. His majesty after dinner went to a place near the battery and, on a signal of three guns, our grenadiers being ready each with three grenades, stormed the fort and in less than half an hour were masters thereof, putting all they found therein, being 150, to the sword, except one Capt. Barrett, who was brought to the guard by the king's orders. The enemy behaved themselves very well in this action, continually firing showers of great and small shot on us, yet our men held their own. About five in the afternoon the enemy made a brisk sally, expecting to beat us out of our new gained ground, but we were ready to receive them, for just as they sallied, Maj.-Gen. Kirk relieved the trenches, and those before on joined him, also a detachment of 600 horse gave them so warm a welcome, being seconded by a round or two from our ordnance, as sent them quickly back again. We had some officers killed, Lt.-Col. Belcastel wounded, and about 100 common soldiers killed and wounded, but the enemy's loss was far greater, at least 500 of the slain, but what wounded we cannot hear. Capt. Needham of the Lord of Meath's regiment of grenadiers, who, behaving himself admirably well, was killed coming off the trenches after he was relieved. This day [**Thursday**] the **21st**, between 3 and 4, the enemy made a brisk

sally, and Maj.-Gen. Kirk, whose post they attacked, let them come up to the trenches, and then gave them such a welcome of small shot, seconded by cannon, that in less than a quarter of an hour they ran in again with considerable loss. All this day the enemy fired upon us in the fort we had gained from a roundel⁽¹⁾ and a square tower⁽²⁾ which overlooked it, and fired with two small rabnetts which galled our men much, for this day we could do little but shelter ourselves with blinds until our works could be made to secure us better in making a battery near our fort, which was completed that night, and planted four big guns, 24 pounders, wherein the enemy did not disturb us. **Friday the 22nd.** About 5 this morning we battered the roundel with our four guns with that success that about 4 this afternoon we brought it down, which covered another small fort,⁽³⁾ and since we have been battering the square tower which covers their square before the pale, in which we have made a considerable breach. This day came up our guns from Carrickfergus, and some mortars, which are carried down to the battery, so that tomorrow I doubt not we shall storm their counterscarp, which is well palisaded; they have left nothing unattempted to strengthen the town, but nothing can stand before us. This evening his majesty sent a drum into the town with offers of mercy, or else to expect nothing but fire and sword.

September the 2nd. On **Wednesday** last [**27th**] the king ordered the counterscarp of Limerick to be stormed, but the enemy making a vigorous defence and springing several mines, our men were forced to quit it. In it we lost a great many good officers and soldiers. On **Friday [29th]** it was designed to storm the town again, but the rain falling, it made the ground so bad it could not be done, and his majesty, it might hazard his army to lie on such boggy ground, thought fit to draw them off, and they marched hither on **Saturday [30th]** morning early, and last night we judged his majesty was at Waterford, where men-of-war and yachts were ready to transport him to England. How the army is disposed is not yet known, or whose hands the government will be in.

NOTES

1. The south-east corner tower, in the grounds of St. John's Hospital.
2. The citadel at St. John's Gate.
3. The Black Battery.

(3988) October 11, 1690. Newsletter.

A gentleman that left Limerick and is come to Dublin reports that that place is in great want of provision, corn being worth 10s. per bushel, and 1lb. of tobacco 20s. in brass money, by means whereof many of the officers begin to wish themselves out and the English in possession.