

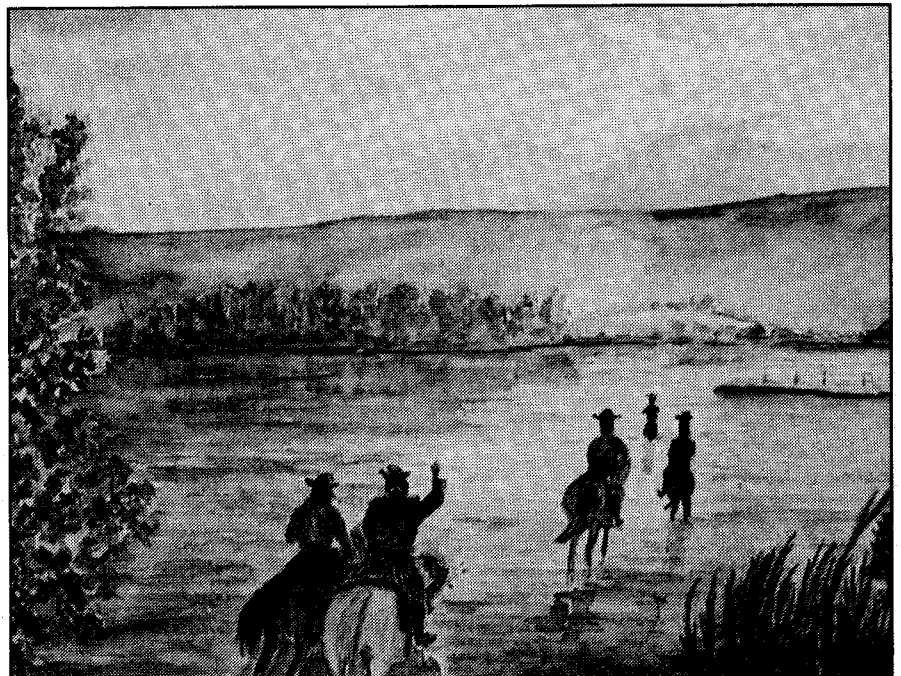
MEMOIRS OF BRIGADIER-GENERAL ROBERT STEARNE:

INTRODUCTION

Robert Stearne's memoirs, Ms. 4166 in the collection of the National Library, is titled 'An account of the most remarkable transactions which Brigadier Stearne has been engaged in with the Royal Regiment of Foot in Ireland'. It begins with his getting a commission in 1678 from Charles II to be ensign to Captain John St. Ledger's Company, then one of the independent companies in Ireland, and ends in 1726. At the time of the siege, he had the rank of captain, and is referred to several times in the Rev. Rowland Davies' journal. The Royal Regiment of Foot in Ireland, also referred to as the 18th Foot and Lord Meath's, was the same regiment in which Robert Parker served. It became the Royal Irish Regiment in 1881, and was disbanded in 1922.

Our army arrived at Finglas (three miles from Dublin) the third [July, 1690] where we waited until the king had settled matters, after which his majesty marched with the greatest part of the army towards Limerick, sending the other part with Lieutenant-General Douglas to try if he could take in Athlone. The king halted near Carrick whilst he sent off Major-General Kirk with some regiments to take in Waterford and Duncannon fort. Both places surrendered upon the first summons, after which we marched forward for Limerick, Lt.-Gen. Douglas joining us the day before we got thither – he not being able to effect what he was sent about. Our army arrived before Limerick about the latter end of July, where the enemy had rallied the greatest part of their scattered troops, and resolved upon defending this place with the river Shannon to the last.

Our regiment, with three others, was detached under Maj.-Gen. Kirk to take in Castleconnell, which surrendered without firing a shot, after which we returned to the camp before Limerick. About the 11 August, Lt.-Gen. Sarsfield, with a party of the enemy's horse, fell upon our



Sarsfield crossing the Shannon at Ballyvalley. Painting by Ann O'Keeffe.

battering train at Cullen, within eleven miles of our camp, for in the night he surprised the guard, which consisted only of about 60 horse, then he burnt and destroyed the whole convoy, burst the cannon, blew up all the ammunition and then retreated without losing one man, woman and child to the sword, when there was no manner of resistance made. But had Sir John Lanier observed the orders his majesty gave him, this unfortunate accident had been prevented, for the king having intelligence of Sarsfield's motion, ordered Sir John the day before this affair happened to march with a strong detachment of horse and dragoons with all the expedition he could and join the train at Cullen. But Sir John (whether out of mistake of his orders, as he pretended, or whatever it was) did not march till next morning, before which time Sarsfield had done his business and gone off, for which Sir John Lanier was seriously reprimanded and

degraded. Notwithstanding the disappointment, the king met with his battering train and pushed on with the siege with what cannon he had in the camp, taking two of their forts, battered down one of their towers and made a considerable breach in the wall, and after having carried our approaches to the foot of the glacis, made on the 27th (August) a grand attack with half the grenadiers of the army, supported by seven battalions (of whom our regiment was one), but through some mistake of the Lord Cutts, who led on the grenadiers, the affair miscarried and we were obliged to retire with the loss of a great many brave officers and soldiers. (We had killed of our regiment our Lieutenant Cott, one captain and four subalterns, with eight officers wounded and about 180 soldiers killed or wounded).

His majesty, meeting with these disappointments before Limerick and the bad weather approaching, drew off the army on the 30th, leaving Limerick for another season.