

SOUTHWELL - NOTTINGHAM CORRESPONDENCE

INTRODUCTION

Sir Robert Southwell (1635-1702), diplomatist, eldest son and heir of Robert Southwell of Kinsale, Co. Cork, was born at Battin Warwick, on the river Bandon, near Kinsale, on 31 December, 1635. His grandfather, Anthony Southwell, was an undertaker in the plantation of Munster under James I, and his father was confirmed in a grant of forfeited lands at Kinsale under the Restoration land settlement in 1666.

Robert went to England in 1650, obtained legal training at Oxford (BA 1655) and Lincoln's Inn, and completed his education by continental travel, 1659-61. In 1664, he was made a clerk to the privy council, and in 1665 was knighted and made deputy vice-admiral of Munster, succeeding as vice-admiral on the death of his father in 1677. Between 1665 and 1669, he was on diplomatic missions to Portugal. In 1671, he spent six months with his father at Kinsale, and then some months as envoy extraordinary to Brussels.

In 1677, Oxford university conferred on him the degree of DCL, and, in 1679, he purchased the manor of King's Weston in Gloucestershire, where he entertained King William on his return from Ireland in September, 1690. In 1680, he was envoy extraordinary to the Elector of Brandenburg in pursuance of a plan to create a defensive alliance against France, and on the way confided his instructions to the Prince of Orange. He was MP for Penrhyn

in 1673 and for Lostwithiel in 1685.

At the end of 1680, he retired to King's Weston until the revolution, when William made him a customs commissioner, and subsequently principal secretary of state for Ireland, a post he held until his death. He accompanied William to Ireland, and was responsible for the drafting of the Finglas declaration of 7 July, 1690, which attempted to divide the Jacobite rank and file from the landed class after the Boyne, but succeeded only in stiffening resistance.

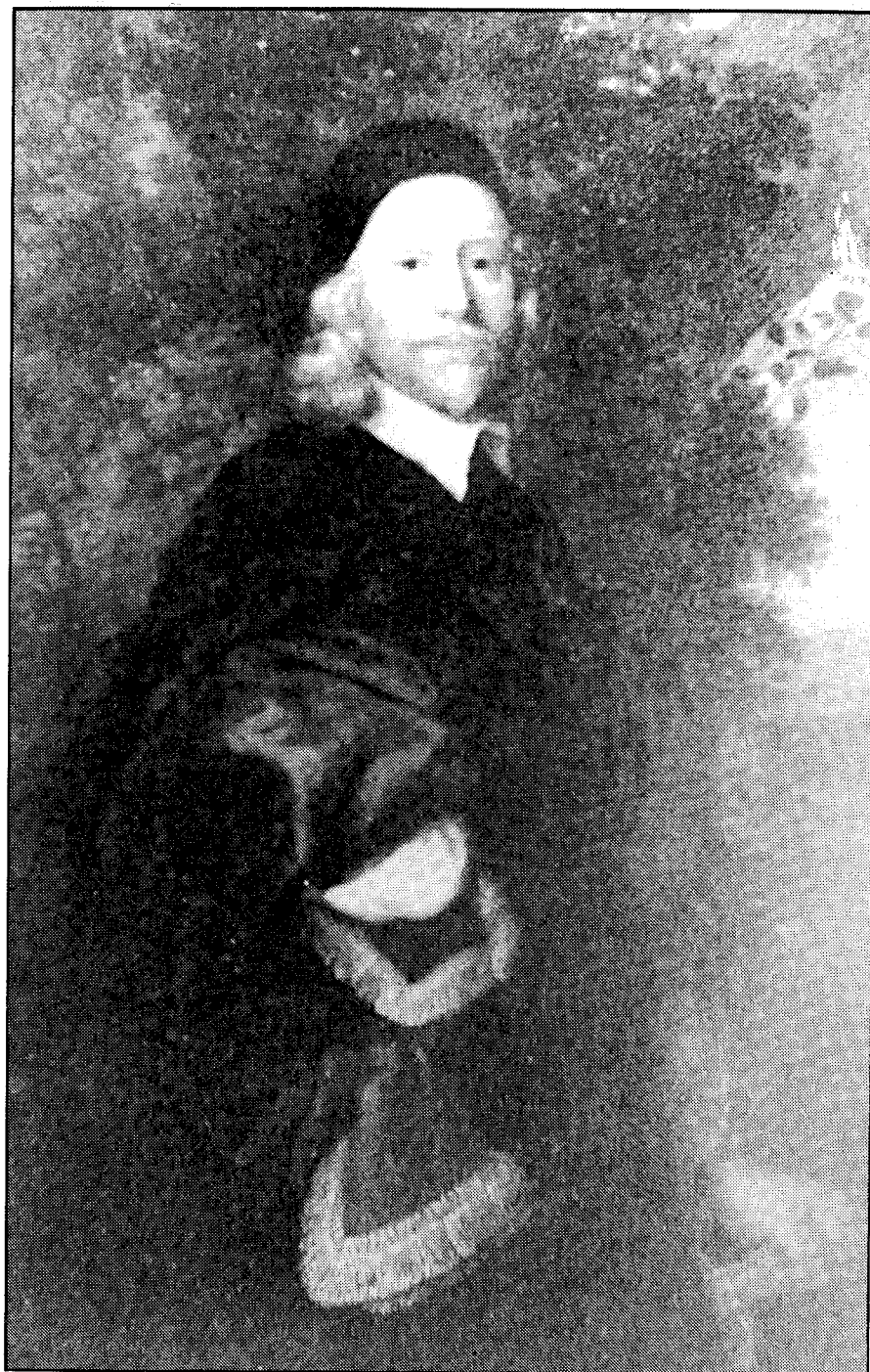
Apart from his diplomatic career, Southwell was elected a fellow of the Royal Society in 1662, and was its president 1690-1695. He wrote a number of political pamphlets and an unfinished biography of James, first Duke of Ormond. He was a close friend of Sir William Petty, who was married to his cousin, Lady Fenton, and after the accession of James II in 1685, much of their correspondence concerned the maintenance of the Restoration land settlement, which gave four-fifths of the land of Ireland to Protestant ownership. In 1682, he founded and endowed an almshouse at Kinsale for eight helpless men and women in remembrance of his own hardships abroad 'for want of such conveniences'. He died at King's Weston on 11 September, 1702.

Daniel Finch, second Earl of Nottingham, was one of the secretaries of state in charge of the

war department, and a member of the council of nine advising Queen Mary during William's absence. The correspondence was published in Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Finch MSS*, ii, 1922. Appended are extracts from two other letters in the same collection, one showing Nottingham's reaction to the news of the attack on the breach, and the second from Robert Henley at Bristol, which could be the source of information in the London newsletter of 6 September preserved in the *Le Fleming MSS*.

Southwell's dispatches are a most important source of information about the details of the siege, William's activities, the movements of Sarsfield (confirming Jacobite accounts), the plundering of the countryside by Williamite soldiers, and the actual text of the summons to the town and Boisseleau's reply. His anger at Boisseleau's reference to William as Prince of Orange, rather than as king, is evident in his dispatch of August 10, that when the great guns arrive, Boisseleau 'will be content to treat with the King of England, though he now refuses to do so with the Prince of Orange'. His letters are the principal source for the *London Gazette* reports, and, in turn, for several pamphlets, such as Samuel Mullenau's *Diary*, in England and on the continent.

SOURCES: *Dictionary of National Biography*; *Kings in Conflict*, (Ulster Museum, 1990).



*Sir Robert Southwell (1635-1702) by Thomas Pooley, 1674.
Kings Weston House.*

**Southwell to Nottingham, August 4,
1690. Camp at Golden Bridge.**

... On the 3rd we encamped at Lismolin and today have joined the army under Count Solms. Here we understand by a very sensible man, a deserter from Limerick, that the French marched out of that town on the 2nd and are reported to have gone to Galway. The man says he saw only three provision ships at Limerick quay, and that they were much disheartened for the want of twenty other ships which they had long expected.

Tomorrow [15th] we bend our course towards Brian's Bridge, 5 or 6 miles

above Limerick, where though some of the arches are broken, yet the ford is reckoned very good. We may want forage, because all has designedly been eaten up by the enemy, but we have an opinion that the Irish who now possess the town are not such defendants as those who have left it. We hear also a report as if the Irish were in division among themselves, and that there is a strong party who are opposite to the proceedings of the Lord Tyrconnell.

[News from Duncannon and Youghal, where the besieging Williamite captain was invited to

dine with the governor, and 'in their

cupps perswaded him also to give up, for fear of a worsor fate'.]

But notwithstanding these successes ... the whole country is filled with rovers and rapparees, who burn and destroy the poor English without any mercy, yet being in pursuit of the main issue, his majesty cannot crumble his army into parties. If only arms were to be had, the English could defend themselves.

You will see herewith a new proclamation for disarming papists. His majesty has sent a second declaration to the press, enlarging the time to the 25th, and stating that all of superior rank who will retire to towns appointed shall have liberty there, and a subsistence until the war is ended; and lastly, that all strangers shall have free leave to depart.

Postscript - Aug. 5 ... Lieut.-Gen. Douglas is but seven miles off, so that he'll soon overtake us ...

**Southwell to Nottingham, August 10,
1690. Eleven at night. Camp before
Limerick.**

My last was the 4th inst. from Golden Bridge, where, having joined the army under Count Solms and rested on the 5th, we marched on the 6th to Sallywood; on the 7th to Caherconlish; and here again resting on the 8th, we were again joined by the party of Lieut.-Gen. Douglas. His men were extremely harassed by a long march, though to little effect; many of them are left sick behind. But there are five regiments by his majesty's command left to remain about Mullingar to secure that country from inroads.

On the 9th we all marched early towards Limerick; about eleven of the clock we found the enemy drawn forth, horse and foot, above a mile from the town, and that on the east side, which is not only hilly but the fullest of hedges and enclosures of any part of the kingdom. The Danes with four small field-pieces marched on the left, the Dutch on the right and the English in the middle.

The king and those about him were a long while gazing at the enemy, at about a quarter of a mile distance, till our parties came to bear. The enemy then retired to those thick hedges, which were to advantage, and defended themselves for some hours, beyond our expectation. But our men pressed on, driving them from one hedge to another, till at length Col. Erle, at the head of the English, ran up in the open field; so as his majesty apprehended their hurrying promiscuously into the town, and the danger might follow. The orders to stop them had not effect till they had in the heat gained the very top of the hill, and to all the broken walls on the other side, which reach within 500 yards of the town. Our guns from the Danish quarter played smartly upon them, and in about three hours time they ran for it, and recovered those works which were cast up just

under their walls. Among other places which they deserted the hill called Singland is remarkable, not only that Ireton had there formerly planted his batteries, but it was made lately famous by the prophesy of one come not long since from Spain, and the right heir of Tyrconnell, who is now in Limerick; his name is 'Baul-Darg McDonnell'. He held forth that the English should conquer till they came to the well near that hill, but from thence forward they should be defeated and driven out of the land. 'Tis hard to believe how this dream had obtained among the common sort.

His majesty, though he rose at four in the morning, stayed out fasting till eight at night, and spent three or four hours near to that place. It was about six of the clock that by his command I sent down from thence the short message to the governor, which is here enclosed, and your lordship will see the answer which was returned.

It was about the same time that his majesty ordered a small party of dragoons to the ford, which is 2 small mile above the town. There were three regiments of the enemy's horse on the other side, who all fired upon them, but wounded none. From the city they fired some pieces all the afternoon, killing and wounding about 30 of our men.

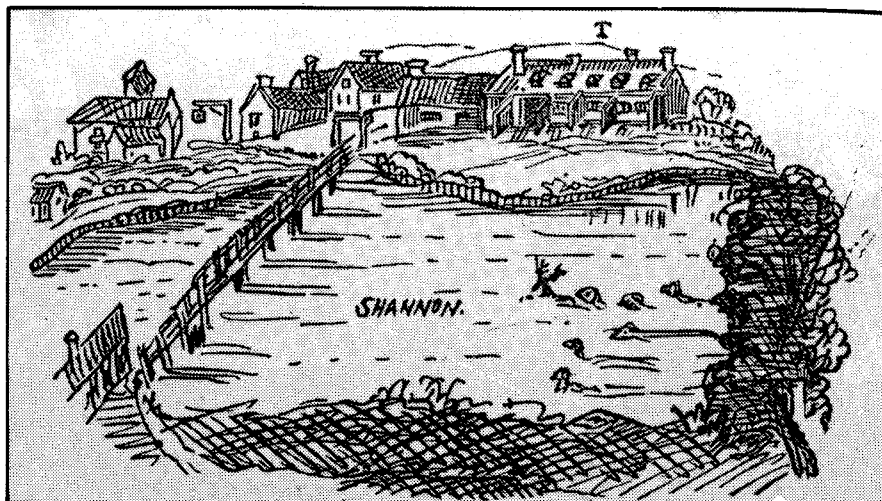
This morning early [10th] Monsr. Ginkel, with his horse, passed the ford, for the enemy, both horse and foot, had about midnight quitted their station, though they had a small breast-work for their foot on the other side. The water is rapid, and the bottom very stony, but never was it known to be so shallow as now. However, it reached the foot up [to] their pockets. We have now about 5000 of all sorts on the other side.

His majesty went over among them by eight of the clock, and rode near a mile downwards towards towards the town. We understand by those that were met, that the Irish being too many for the town, have made an encampment at Sixmilebridge, which is eight mile from our ford, and lies north-west, on a small river which empties itself at Bunratty, three miles lower upon the Shannon, and this is also about eight miles below Limerick.

We are endeavouring to begird the place, but must, I believe, attend our greater artillery, part whereof we expect on the 13th from Kilkenny, and some of the greatest sort that came by sea to Carrick [Carrickfergus], which are also sent for.

'Tis possible when they come that Monsieur Boisseleau will be content to treat with the King of England, though he now refuse to do so with the Prince of Orange.

The Lord Tyrconnell was not yesterday [9th] in Limerick, so that a letter wrote him by his majesty's order from the Earl of Scarborough was brought back. But the Duke of Berwick,



O'Brien's Bridge by Thomas Dineley, 1680.

Sarsfield, Sheldon &c. were there. Monr. Lauzun is supposed to be with his party at Galway, though most of the deserters report that the people of Galway would not suffer the French to come in.

His majesty may tomorrow leave off the plaster from his shoulder where the bullet touched him, for the skin is just now growing over. While he rode in his coach it often incommoded him, but since he is returned to the army, he is always on horseback, and as vigorous as ever I saw him.

In my former, I told your lordship of our intentions towards Brian's Bridge, which is six miles above, but upon second thoughts, we came directly to Limerick. Your lordship will herewith see a second declaration his majesty has thought fit to publish in reference to his enemies.

It was not till the 7th inst., while we were at Sallywood, that I had your lordship's of the 26th past, the post from Dublin having a mischance on the way ... I had yesterday by your lordship's messenger ... another of the 2nd inst. which his majesty read, as he did most of those other letters which your lordship intended him to Chester. This was part of his entertainment for many hours, while we were on the top of the hill, and the great bullets flying over our heads.

Postscript - The king just now bids me repeat to your lordship what he wrote in his of the 31st past from Chapelizod, that there was not then above one month's provision of bread for the army. He says that either from Bristol or Milford there must some supply be sent immediately to Waterford.

ENCLOSED

'Copy of a message to the Governor of Lymerick, and the Governor's answer thereto'.

(Sir Robert Southwell, kt. his Majesty's principal Secretary of State for Ireland).

'This trumpeter is required to go to the commander in cheif of the city of Lymerick to lett him know that his

Majesty expects some officers to be forthwith sent into his camp, to hear what his Majesty is inclin'd to propose unto them. From the Camp Royall this 7th [sic.] of August, 1690'.

(A monsieur le chevalier Robert Southwell, secretaire de Monsieur le Prince d'Orange).

'De Limerick, le 8-18 [sic.] Aoust, 1690. Je suis surpris, Monsieur, de la lettre que vous m'avez ecrit. Je suis bien aise de meriter l'estime de Monsieur le Prince d'Orange par la vigoureuse deffence des troupes du roy que j'ay l'honneur de commander. Je suis, monsieur, vostre tres humble et tres obeissant serviteur Boisseleau'.

(To monsieur Robert Southwell, knight, secretary to monsieur the Prince of Orange.

At Limerick, the 8-18 August, 1690. I am surprised, monsieur, at the letter you wrote to me. I am very well pleased to earn the good opinion of monsieur the Prince of Orange by the vigorous defence of the troops which the king gave me the honour to command. I am, monsieur, your very humble and very obedient servant Boisseleau).

Southwell to Nottinghsam, August 13. Camp before Limerick.

By the express on the 10th I acquainted your lordship how things then stood, since when we have had a considerable misfortune. We had eight pieces of great artillery coming from Dublin, with powder, tools, small bridge-boats &c., making a train of about a hundred wagons and carts. They were gotten safe on this side of Cullen, and within ten miles of our camp, when Col. Sarsfield coming at the head of 500 chosen horse and 60 dragoons, on Tuesday the 12th at two in the morning fell suddenly on our small convoy, and being presently masters of all, he burnt and destroyed whatever time would let him. The guard under Capt. Poultney were but 80 troopers and 12 fusiliers. They also had turned out their horses into the fields and went to rest, thinking all secure. The enemy fell first to the carnage of those



Richard Talbot, Duke of Tyrconnell. National Gallery of Ireland.

they could light on, as they did on about twenty troopers, many of the carters, even wives and children not escaping. Capt. Poultney got through the corn fields, and the Dutch comptroller Meesters into a bed of nettles, and so they escaped. The enemy enquired strictly after Meesters, whose loss for an engineer had in the king's opinion been irreparable. About forty of the troopers are already come in, and 'tis hoped that about twenty more may have escaped. Two of our guns they split by overcharging, the other 6 (all 18-pounders) will be of use. The bridge-boats, composed of cork and tin, are not much damnified; some carts and wagons

which lay out of the way were untouched, but otherwise all that the fire could master is, as they say, made useless, if not destroyed.

To repair this mischief we have sent afresh to Carrick [*Carrickfergus*] for six pieces of 24-pound ball, which come thither by water; we may hope for them about the 18th, but till they come we can do but little against those walls and bulwarks with what we have.

Sir Albert Cunningham lay with six thin troops of dragoons about three miles beyond this artillery, and in his way to Carrick, being ordered to look after the rest, he was by a deserter from Sarsfield advertised of the mischief

intended, but had only time to meet Sarsfield when the exploit was over. He killed a major, a captain and fifteen others in the dispute they had. In this affair we have much to lament; we lose admirable weather, which will not always last, but what smarts most is this, that it was in our power to have prevented all. We had notice on the 10th at night that the desertion of the ford the night before was for some design to be conducted by Sarsfield on this side, and that he was gone to the ford at Killaloe, nine miles up, to effect it. This on the 11th in the morning was by all interpreted to be a design on our artillery, and upon a second advertisement to the same effect, it was so fully credited that his majesty gave order as he rode out for a strong party to be sent forth; and when he returned at noon he enquired if it were gone. But such was the fate of things, this party left not our camp till after twelve of the clock that night, or rather two in the morning, being 400 horse and 200 dragoons, under the command of Sir John Lanier, who met the ill tidings by Capt. Poultney five or six miles on this side of the place of action. And now this morning we are told upon the whole that Sir John is returning back without effect.

Yesterday [12th] Castleconnell, a castle of good strength being three miles above us on the Shannon, was taken by a party of ours; there were in it above a hundred able soldiers, besides officers, who on the firing some great guns yielded at discretion; this do much enlarge our foraging.

[*News from Youghall*]. I am sorry to tell your lordship that all the poor Protestants anything near our camp, who have endured prisons and plundering by the Irish, are now so ransacked by our army, but especially the Danes, that Tartars could hardly do worse; there is indeed a great defect of pay, but this excuse is improved to all extravagance.

Our camp is here so placed that the bullets fall into it, and do much mischief, even close to the king's tent. This morning at least ten bullets have gone close over us, and shot down a tent not twenty yards from the king's, yet will his majesty not regard it, till perhaps the stench of this close place may force us to take fresh ground.

Since I wrote at noon what is above, the king has been prevailed on to take a new place of encampment, though, as I am told, not out of reach of the bullets.

We hear now at night that Sarsfield is still haunting our roads, so that our bread-carts being in danger, we are sending out a fresh party to find him out. His majesty has this evening your lordship's of the 6th inst., with the other foreign letters that came by the express.

We are glad to hear that our fleet begins to look out. If it so pleased God that we were but masters at sea and could spare a few ships to block up this



river, it would highly contribute to dispatch our work.

Postscript – The number of all killed by the Irish at the artillery were about eighty. [News from Mullingar].

Southwell to Nottingham, August 14, 1690. 11 at night. Camp before Limerick. His majesty is dispatching messengers with orders to Sir Cloudesley Shovell to hasten to the Shannon, but if he is not within reach of the said orders, your lordship is to send them (as by copy enclosed) with all speed wherever it may be. His majesty is acquainting the queen that he approves fully what is proposed by the Earl of Marlborough, and would have you press it on with all possible expedition. I am writing to Sir John Lanier to send the £25,000 intended hither.

As his majesty rode out this afternoon to observe the city on the side which is thought most weak, though he went separated from the rest of the company, and only Count Schomberg and another with him, yet by a musket bullet Count Schomberg's horse was shot in the thigh.

His majesty orders Sir Cloudesley Shovell, if he meets a squadron of French much superior to him, he is to forbear making any rash attempt.

[Enclosing copy of the king's orders to Shovell,] that he shall immediately set sail with the squadron under his command and sail up the Shannon as near to the city of Limerick as the burden of his ships will permit, taking care to leave such a defence below as may resist the assault of any French squadron. On his arrival at the Shannon, he is to send advice thereof to the king and also to the Lord Kerrys at Lixnaw, about seven miles up the river Cashen.

Southwell to Nottingham, August 17. Siege of Limerick.

Since my last, we have done little except getting and mounting the six pieces left at the surprise of our artillery near Cullen.

The last night we began to open our trenches, and his majesty would needs be near the place, so as it was two this morning before he went to rest.

I can only tell your lordship in short that we have done extremely well for one night, being got within 150 paces of the counterscarp and this without the loss of one man. 'Tis true there are fifteen wounded, and some of them may die, and but one officer hurt, who has lost his thumb. The enemy spared not to fire, but they are not skilful in taking aim. The trenches were attended last night by the Duke of Würtemberg, Maj.-Gen. Kirk and Brig. Sir Harry Bellasis, who (as I forgot to tell your lordship before) commanded in chief, where Col. Erle was, and did very bravely in our approach to this town.

Our six great pieces of 24lb. ball, which are coming from Carrick [Carrickfergus], will not be here till

Thursday night [12th]. But then all the appurtenances will come together. The men of skill do assure me that at the rate of our advance last night, the king must soon be master of this place, in which there may be at this time about 12,000 men in garrison. The Lord Tyrconnell and Monsieur Lauzun are gone to Galway with two regiments of foot, where they have also the remainder of the French; but these languish to be at home. They abhor the country and the nation, and the wants they undergo, and there is no love lost. And the people of Galway now force them to encamp without the town in miserable huts, for their tents were lost at the Boyne. Nor are any of them, except the colonels, suffered to come within the walls.

The enemy have a body of horse, which may be 3000 in all. 'Tis said they are marched with the Duke of Berwick and Col. Sheldon towards Loughrea, where they were to meet with Col. Sarsfield, and with purpose (as the deserters tell us) to go by Athlone into Leinster, and there to ravage all towards Dublin. 'Tis plain they have in several countries, by severest orders stirred up the whole Irish nation to assemble as they have done, burning towns and destroying houses, and all the scattered Protestants that opposed them, nay, all who will not actually join with them, which they require.

[News from Co. Cork – Irish actions to divert William's army from Limerick, and their expectation of a French fleet to burn Dublin etc.]

When the French left Limerick they sent down to one of their ships a boat so overladen with their wealth that all was cast away, and 22 men drowned, whereof many were officers. All the French paymasters' cash was there, all the money and plate of Count Lauzun and every other private man, and some say a great cash belonging to King James, so that the loss is variously computed from 50 to 90,000 pound sterling.

At that time near 40 ships went about to Galway, whereof 12 or 14 were men-of-war, from 30 to 40 guns, commanded by Forant, a Dutchman and a Protestant. And many of the merchantmen had from 10 to 24 guns. I had it yesterday from a French major who deserted, that when he left them two days before, it was reported young Du Quesne was come to Galway with a squadron of about 8 or 10 ships, and that Monsieur d'Amfreville was expected with 15 great ones every day.

I name to your lordship what is reported to us. But from Cork we have it that Monsieur d'Amfreville was the 5th inst. at Kinsale with only 4 ships and 4 tenders. That he stopped but a tide and then set sail for Limerick. In this river no ships have been seen for many days till on the 12th there appeared at Scattery, some leagues within the Shannon, 7 men-of-war and a wheat ship of 250 tons, where hearing how things stood at

Limerick, they steered the next day towards Galway. The boatman who gives this account says the 7 ships were the biggest he ever saw in his life.

Our army, for want of pay, make strange destruction round us, there being no distinction between Protestant and Papist as to plunder and ill usage. The next calamity to the poor scattered Protestants is the want of arms and ammunition, for if they had anything but their hands, they could deal well enough with this sort of foe, and perhaps in many things do better than those of the standing army. Certainly if our merchants came here with arms and ammunition at this time, it would prove an East India voyage unto them.

Our victory at the Boyne was not dear to the enemy as to the loss of men, and I fear that without some terrible carriage fall somewhere on them, they will not be humbled.

The rivers in this country have not been so low in the memory of man, by which your lordship will know the unaccustomed good weather we have had. We heartily pray it may not leave us till we have done this work.

Nottingham to Southwell, August 21, 1690.

Last night I received yours of the 14th and dispatched his majesty's orders to Sir Clo. Shovell at Plymouth, acquainting him also with the need of an immediate dispatch of the provision ships ... Sir John Lowther had dispatched the £25,000. We are in great pain to know what your misfortune is that befell the artillery, of which the messenger tells us something, but we know not what to make of his report.

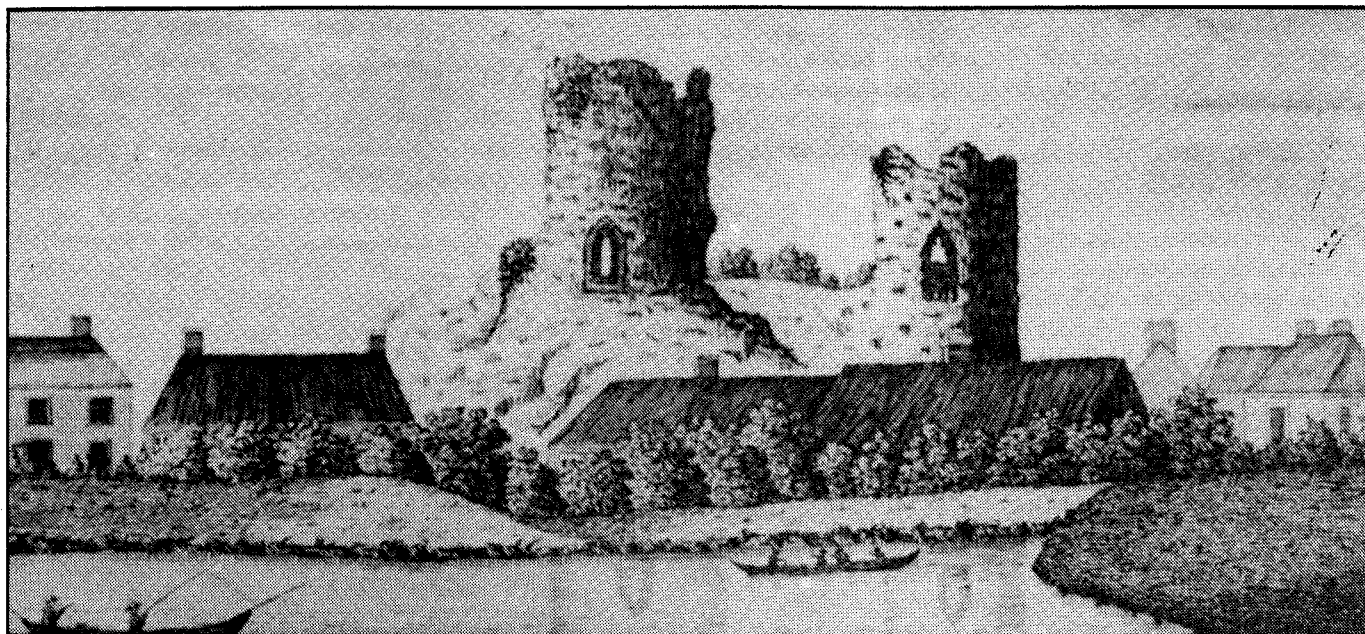
Nottingham to Southwell, August 22, 1690. Whitehall.

This evening the committee met and the resolutions (for which orders will be dispatched this night) are:-

1. That Sir Cloudesley Shovell should stay at Plymouth till 5 men-of-war and 5 fireships shall join him, and then proceed to the Shannon. The reason of this is that his squadron is too weak for the service designed.
2. Six men-of-war more are ordered to him at Plymouth and if he be sailed, they are to follow him to the Shannon ... the whole squadron will consist of 22 men-of-war and 6 fireships. I told you that Sir C. Shovell was directed to order some men-of-war to see the provision ships safe to Waterford ... Sir H. Goodrick has written to Plymouth that the ammunition taken out of the ship there is to be put back with all speed and if she can be ready, the men-of-war are to convey her to Waterford, but they are not to stay for her ...

Southwell to Nottingham, August 22, 1690. Siege of Limerick.

Yours of the 9th and 12th came together



North view of Castleconnell. Engraved for Ferrar's 'History of Limerick,' 1786.

on the 19th. But now as to our business here. Though his majesty came near Limerick on the 9th instant, yet as I have already told your lordship, we began not, from the accidents that fell out, to be in earnest with the siege till Sunday the 17th. Nor was it very safe rashly to enterprise where a garrison consists of 12,000 men, the governor, Monsieur Boisseleau, a skilful commander, the generality of the Irish officers resolute and brave enough, the city by its walls and situation very strong, and many outworks very skilfully made.

On the 17th at night we took two redoubts that were opposite to our attack, and opened a trench of above 300 paces long; we had about 14 men killed and wounded. [*Order of command*]. On **Monday night the 18th** Lieut.-Gen. Douglas, Lord Sidney and Count Nassau as Major-Generals, and Brig. Stuart came on. Their intention was to take the great redoubt from the enemy, which lay at the right hand of our trenches, but they found it so high, so strong and so impossible to be carried, till shaken by our cannon, that they desisted from this enterprise. They applied themselves to drive up one of our trenches towards it, also to mend those which before were made, and to raise a battery of four guns, in order to shake or shatter the said redoubt.

On **Tuesday night the 19th**, the Prince of Würtemberg, Kirk etc. came on again, and their business only was to make preparation to attack the said redoubt by daylight, for the killed and wounded being the night before about 25, were perhaps more from our own shot than the enemy's.

Upon **Wednesday the 20th** about 3 in the afternoon, his majesty and all of us going up to the top of the hill, we saw this great redoubt attacked. There were

50 detached grenadiers with a captain for the right side, the like number for the left, the like number to support each of these, also 200 fusiliers, together with a battalion of 600 foot, led on by Col. Belcastel (who succeeds in the regiment of Caillemotte). They had some ladders with them, but found much more use by the many turnpikes which they carried, and wherewith they surrounded the ramparts. They did most bravely endure the fire of the enemy in their approach, and by these engines presently climbed over, and with a shout fell to executing of those within. They were 150 chosen men, and of very large stature, besides 3 captains, 3 lieutenants, 3 ensigns and 12 sergeants, 42 of them, and 2 captains, were killed in the place, and a captain taken prisoner, besides many more slain in their flight. They had within five large bombs, whereof they had only fired two, and by a splinter of one, Col. Belcastel, who, they say, first entered and performed brave things, had his leg so shattered that 'tis much feared he will die. Our men lost no time to carry faggots and make the place tenable towards the town, as expecting, according to the methods of war, a speedy sally to regain it. Accordingly in about two hours after, the enemy came forth with 3 battalions of 1800 men, and 3 squadrons of horse, which might be near 200. Two of the battalions came up very briskly towards the redoubt, and their horse also made a very brave onset. But our fire from all quarters was so hot upon the foot, and our detachment of 250 horse, led on by old Col. Boncour, did so furiously repel them that they were driven back to the town. Our horse remained even at the very counterscarp for above an hour expecting a new sally, in which time being under all their fire from the walls, 50 of our brave horsemen dropped, and

about 14 or 15 of the officers either killed or wounded, so as few will escape. Old Boncour, of 68 years, had five wounds, though but one of them considerable. Of our foot we lost this day about 100, besides the wounded, as also 25 officers wounded or killed, but many of these officers are Reformadoes. And every of the different nations strove to outvie each other in gallantry. Doubtless the enemy must be convinced there is no withstanding our men when we can come at them, and yet, to give them their due, they have much outdone our expectation. It was in an hour after this repulse that two battalions on foot came forth to a second sally, but were so disheartened by our great and small shot, that notwithstanding their officers forced and beat them to go on, yet they would not advance into danger.

On Wednesday night, Lieut.-Gen. Douglas, Col. Kirk etc. came on. They made a communication from our trenches to the said redoubt, which may be distant from the enemy's counterscarp about 150 paces. They also made near thereto a place of arms, and raised a battery for four of our 24-pounders to beat down the defences of the great wall. They farther carried down a trench of 200 paces to the bog on the right hand below, crossing herein the two highways by which the horse could only sally, so as now our condition is secure against any sallies from horse or foot. There were killed and wounded this night about 14 men. On the evening of **Thursday the 21st**, our said battery began at 5 of the clock, and has already so torn one of the high towers on the walls, which much incommoded us, that we may expect to have it levelled this night.

The same Thursday night, the Prince of Würtemberg, Lord Sidney etc. came on. They mended all the works which

were before imperfect. They raised two redoubts on the right and left of that great one which we had gained, and which are made to secure our trenches. They also raised a battery for twelve guns of 18- and 24-pounders, which are to play directly on the great wall, which is distant about 150 paces. These guns will be at work early tomorrow morning, and these will facilitate our attack of the counterscarp, which by computation of the military men, we may in two days attempt. We had this last night but 10 men killed and wounded, and in the working of our trenches and the preparation of our batteries even by daylight, our men are strangely preserved by an invention of woolbags, which are planted like palisades before those who work, and are musket-proof. These are made by one Meesters, a Dutchman, who is comptroller of our artillery, an excellent artist, and were never made use of before, unless at the siege of Bon.

Having written thus far, at 5 of the clock we heard a great shout from the hill, and the meaning is, that the tower is already fallen down. And I hear there is good progress already made towards the disabling of another. Hitherto our men have had fatigue enough, yet little sickness, excellent weather, undaunted courage and very few deserters.

Southwell to Nottingham, August 25, 1690. Camp before Limerick.

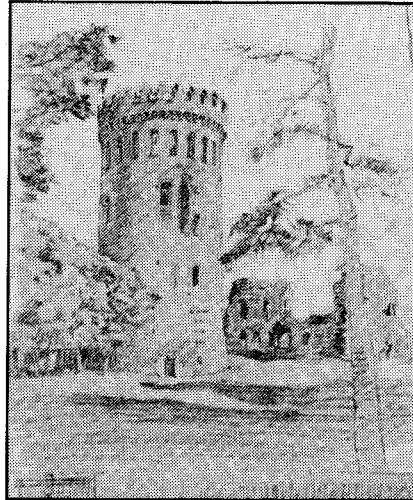
We have about 30 pieces, great and small, here, and have thrown many bombs, carcasses and hot bullets into the town, which have several times set fire to the houses, but soon put out. On Saturday evening [23rd] a magazine of hay and some houses were set on fire and not quenched for as many hours. His majesty did very unwillingly consent to this expedient, but most of the officers were urgent for it, as the only way to expedite the work.

Yesterday the moon changed, and the day held up fair, but this morning it began to pour down at such a furious rate that some of the trenches have been two foot deep. Should such weather hold, it would make all things impossible. But the wind is now turned about north-east and the evening is quiet and clear, and the sky in some places red, and we are got near enough to make our attack upon the counterscarp tomorrow, if it please God the weather hold up. 'Tis this success must crown all we have hitherto done, and we should have a very long after game to play without it.

[Shipping news from Galway and Plymouth. Money and a good stock of meal arrived at Waterford].

Southwell to Nottingham. August 25, 1690.

These are only a few words to your lordship. I find by this one day's fierce rain a strange damp as to our success among many of the chief officers, and



Nenagh Castle, Co. Tipperary.

that our army must draw off or be ruined if the rain should hold; nay that it would be a great task in these deep ways to get off our cannon. Being this evening alone with his majesty he asked me in his dark and reserved way what men-of-war were now at Waterford. I told him none was there now but the *Jersey*, that had newly brought the money. He then asked me the difference of the postage from Dublin to Chester, and from Waterford to Bristol. And after a while, he said he therefore asked, as thinking to return for England by this way. My answer was that I ever proposed in my thoughts that after the reduction of Limerick he would go towards Cork and Kinsale and from thence embark; but to this he would say nothing. He was indeed angry at the ill day, and the apprehensions of its continuance. If it please God to favour us with a little more sunshine it will dispel many a cloud.

Southwell to Nottingham, August 28, 1690. Camp before Limerick.

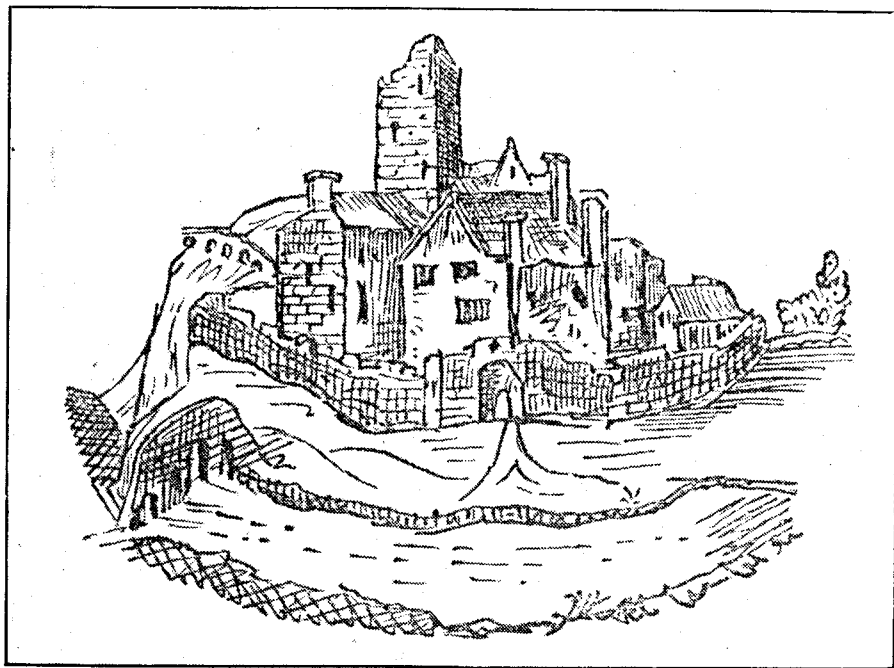
I have no good news to tell your lordship, but rather that we were yesterday unfortunate in the loss of many brave men. It was at half an hour after three in the afternoon that our men began their attack on the counterscarp. There were no orders given to enter the breach but the contrary. Our men did the first part with so much bravery as the enemy, for more haste to get into the town, ran in at our breach. This example drew on some of our men to follow the same way, who, by the many preparations made within to receive them, were soon cut off. His majesty was at a mount to observe what passed, and while the officers below sent to know if the main body should attempt the breach, the enemy, by stones as well as bullets, did so afflict our men who were got into the counterscarp, as also by a spur-work, that played upon the breach, that by six of the clock we were beaten out of all we had got. Our men of most experience do confess that, as the enemy had great

advantage by their walls and situation, so they turned everything beyond all expectation to their best account. Such sharp firing so continued and so levelled has not been known. 'Tis thought our killed and wounded are not less than 1000 or 1200, and among these a very great loss of officers. But in this particular it will require more time to be exact. All affirm we might have kept the counterscarp if that only had been minded, and some believe we might have carried the town if the first orders had been for all to enter the breach.

His majesty has this day consulted much with his officers, but I know not what is resolved, whether it be to try one push more, or to desist. I find most are for the latter. They say the breach ought to have been much wider, that the entrenchments within are very strong, that should this part of the town be taken, there is on the other side beyond the bridge another as strong as this. We have not had men enough to block up that other side, so as the enemy have turned out from time to time all their sick and wounded, and taken in fresh men and cattle in abundance, and those we had at first on the other side of the Shannon have for many days been called to this. Our trenching work was very large and laborious, and employed them all, and we have detachments abroad. That the season of the year is so advanced that we must every hour expect the rains, of which we had an excessive trial on Monday last [25th], so that three such days would make it near impossible to get our cannon off. Whereof to venture the ruin of this army, that is our foot, upon this single attempt, when there would still remain to the enemy Galway and Athlone, which are places of strength, is not thought so advisable as to remit them all to the next spring, and then to prosecute the whole.

I tell your lordship only what I gather among the officers and what I may infer from his majesty's now commanding me to order 3 men-of-war and 3 yachts, which are now at Dublin, to hasten to Waterford. And I do believe he will sail from thence to Bristol.

I did on this occasion remind his majesty what your lordship wrote in yours of the 16th of the squadron which were ordered to find out the French, either in the Shannon or in the bay of Galway. I moved his majesty that the *Jersey*, now at Waterford and one of those from Dublin, might be presently ordered to find out our squadron and advertise them not to lose time by putting into the Shannon, but keep directly to the bay of Galway, where, as I have told your lordship, Monsieur d'Amfreville lies, as we hear, with about 18 men-of-war and about 50 vessels in all. But his majesty's answer was that perhaps these orders might clash with that other affair of my Lord Marlborough's, and it would be time enough to think of this point hereafter.



*View of Clare Castle from the road between it and Sixmilebridge, 1680,
by Thomas Dineley.*

Nottingham to Southwell, 2 September, 1690. Whitehall.

I have received yours of August 28 and do extremely lament the ill success of the assault on the 27th upon Limerick. I pray God his majesty be not forced to quit it ... The French in that case will certainly remain in Ireland, and the French king will think it worth his pains and expense to reinforce them, whereas if the king takes Limerick, they will certainly embark on board their fleet and their master will think no more of Ireland, as very plainly appears by those letters of Amfreville which I then sent you, and consequently Galway and Athlone will fall necessarily into our hands ...

Southwell to Nottingham, 4 Sept. 1690. On board the *Ruby* at Passage, [Co. Waterford].

I was just writing to you on the 29th at night, telling you the difficulty of getting a letter down to meet Sir Cl. Shovell at the mouth of the Shannon, when word was brought me to be ready to attend his majesty next morning, which made my attempts impossible. We broke up on Saturday the 30th, lying that night near Cullen, where our cannon had been surprised. On the 31st, on our way to Clonmel, we met the money for the army, brought by the *Jersey*. On the 1st inst., we reached Waterford, and there I got his majesty's orders for Sir C. Shovell, informing him of the breaking up of the siege, and that no [French] ships were in the Shannon, but all in the bay of Galway. His majesty came from Carrick to Waterford on the opposite side, and had thereby a fair view of that city, that was there filled with trading ships, who

all fired their guns and gave great acclamations as he passed. That night his majesty gave me orders to prepare all that we could to constitute justices in his absence, which are to be the Lord Sidney, [blank] and Mr. Coningsby. He told me the blank should be filled up with somebody he would name and send from England. The instructions given them are but short, as namely, to follow such as formerly had been given so far as the present conjuncture will admit, and they have power to act upon emergencies as they should judge fit, until they represent the cases unto him and receive his orders. They are to fill up the militia, and see them rearmed, as soon as possible. They are also to represent who are fit to be made of the privy council, etc. His majesty has disposed of no manner of dignities in the church, and very little in the state.

... On the 2nd at night, Lord Sidney and Mr. Coningsby took their leave for Dublin, and departed next morning. And my Lord Portland went thence also to the army, the business being, as I suppose, to reconcile some feuds among the great officers, and then his lordship will hasten to Dublin, and so to Holyhead. Yesterday about ten in the morning, his majesty rode to Passage, being five mile down the river, where the yachts now lie. He presently went on board the *Mary*, and there dined, but such was the weather, all day very rainy and high blustering winds, that in the evening he lay on the shore at Passage, a very dismal place. This morning he sent for his horses from Waterford, and went and dined in the yacht, and after came on shore in order to ride back, but the weather held on

tempestuous until five, but afterwards growing more quiet, his majesty thought it best to go down to Duncannon fort, and there attend a milder season. The wind is at SW, and overblows. His majesty intends for Bristol, if he can. As yet the transport ships for his horses are not come from Dublin, nor the other ships ordered, so we have only the *Ruby* and the *Jersey* for convoy ...

Southwell to Nottingham, 6 Sept. 1690. Kings Weston.

His majesty set sail from Duncannon fort yesterday at four in the afternoon, and, at seven in the evening, cast anchor in Kings Rode. He is now, about ten, happily gotten to my house. He may lay tomorrow at Badminton. I do not find that he will go to Bristol. We are here in a little hurry with the joy of seeing the king so very well after so rough, though a very quick and happy passage. The prince [of Denmark] will hardly get on shore this night.

APPENDIX

Nottingham to the Earl of Marlborough, September 2, 1690. Whitehall.

... Just now is come an express from Ireland. The news is not very good. On the 27th Limerick was assaulted, but the breach was not wide enough, and our men too brave in entering it without order ... 'Tis thought we might have carried the town if the first orders had been for all to enter the breach, but in conclusion we were beaten back, and have lost about 1000 men, as the letter says, though the messenger declares not above 500.

Robert Henley to Lord [Nottingham?]. September 2, 1690. Bristol.

A person arrived from Dublin brings an account that the latest news from the camp was of August 25, and states that several houses in Limerick were burning, and that bombs, carcasses and red-hot balls were thrown in abundance from the camp into the town. Several sallies had been made, but were always beaten back with great loss, and it was said that in these sallies Cols. Dorrington, Luttrell and Moore and Sir Maurice Eustace were slain. In one great sally, of which his majesty is said to have had notice, scarce ten men of three regiments returned.

The besiegers were got within pistol-shot of the counterscarp and the letter from the camp concluded: 'Nothing has or can stand before us'.

A sloop from Jamaica brings news of the arrival of the governor [Lord Inchiquin] there. Off the Skilleets and near the Dursleys (not far from Limerick) they saw in the night the lights of three great ships, which, 'tis hoped, were Sir Cloudesley Shovell's.

A party sent from the camp has taken *Nenacroon* [*Nenagh*], a place about 16 miles from Limerick, where was a priest and about 70 men.