

INTRODUCTION BY LARRY WALSH

George Walter Story was the eldest son of Thomas Story of Justice Town, near Carlisle, Cumberland. In 1688, he was chaplain to the Countess-dowager of Carlisle at Castle Howard. He was in London when the army for Ireland was being raised in March and April, 1689, and came to Ireland with Schomberg as chaplain to Sir Thomas Gower's regiment of foot. Gower died early in 1690, and was succeeded in command by Henry, third Earl of Drogheda, the survivors of two regiments being joined into one. Story served with this regiment throughout the war. His younger brother, who was ensign in the same regiment, was killed at Camgort castle, near Birr, on 1 June, 1691, when approaching the gate of the castle, which had just been taken by a party of rapparees, under the command of Captains Grace and Hogan. The rapparees refused to surrender the body, but allowed his own drum to beat the dead march before him, and themselves fired three volleys at his grave, acknowledging at his death some former civilities from him, which is very rare with that sort of people, but this particular I mention to show the uncertainty of the things of this world; for this officer was well and at liberty at nine a clock in the morning, but before twelve he was not only in the power, but buried by his enemies, and that with great formality. And a man that is at the pains to describe other people's actions may be allowed the liberty to leave one page to the memory of his own brother. After the war, in November 1691, Story's regiment went to Ulster, where it remained as part of the standing army.

In December, 1694, Story was appointed dean of Connor. He sometimes visited Carlisle, where he still maintained a living, his curate there being an impoverished Scottish Episcopalian clergyman who was taken into Story's father's house. On 6 or 7 April, 1705¹¹, Story was instituted dean of Limerick, and removed from Connor. In June, 1716, he was visited by his brother, Thomas, a Quaker, then on a preaching tour of Ireland, who attracted large crowds to

the meetings because of his relationship to the dean. A cousin, Charles Story, prebendary of Limerick, also attended the meetings.

Story married Catherine Warter, daughter of Edward Warter of Bilboa, Co. Limerick, who became co-heiress of the Bilboa estate with Margaret Warter, in 1701. In a petition to King William, dated 28, June 1701, Catherine reported that the market town of Cullen had been burned by Sarsfield, and the castle by General Elnberger on William's orders; the Irish burned the manor house, and the Dutch and English armies the market town of Bilboa, so that the whole damage to the estate was estimated at £13.068.

Story died on 19 November, 1721. He had inherited Justice Town, and left it to his widow, who sold it to Thomas in 1723.

His Impartial History is by far the most important account of the war in Ireland on the Williamite side. The first part, to January, 1691, was licensed to be printed on 30 April that year, and in a postscript he apologises for printers errors which he had not time to correct owing to a sudden recall to his post in Ireland. This is the text here used. An abridged edition was published with A Continuation of the Impartial History of the Wars of Ireland, 1693, containing many maps from the three years of the campaign.

campaign.

In the preface to the 1691 edition, Story argues the issues involved in the war in Europe and Ireland from the point of view of a liberal English Protestant. His papers were not intended for publication, until the fall of Mons, now in Belgium, to the French in April, 1691, gave rise to speculation even among Protestants that William's problems in Ireland could prove decisive to the outcome of the wider conflict; publication was designed to set their minds at rest by giving an impartial account of events of the previous two years in Ireland and the state of each army in January, 1691. He defied the opponents of William to contradict him in any matter of fact,

and assured them that he had concealed nothing that could be in any way to their advantage. Firstly, he argued that James, by his poor

Firstly, he argued that James, by his poor management, had surrendered control of the struggle for the English throne to the French, thereby placing his own interest in diametrical opposition that of all English Protestants; that James was being used by zealots of the Church of Rome and Louis, not to restore him to the throne, but for advancement of their own causes; that Louis, in his own interest, did not spare those of his own faith who stood in his way, even to the extent of opposing the Pope, so what could Protestants, 'nay even English Papists', expect but the yoke if in his power; that some leading Irish officers realise this, and are in a dilemma as to what to do, since further successes in their own cause can only result in future ruin of their country.

Secondly, he argued that even if the war was ended with James restored to the English throne and popularly accepted, Louis would surely present a large bill for war expenses, for which possession of Ireland would not be enough, and would be a cause for taking over England; that William was not involved in a war of religion, but was allied with many Catholic princes who feared the power of France and that the war in Ireland was more expensive for France to maintain than for England.

Thirdly, he argued that the war was less about whether James or William should rule in England than whether Louis or the English should control the country, and less a case of the English spending money and men in William's interest than William making a drudge of himself in England's interest.

Fourthly, he argued that James could have been one of the greatest princes in Europe, notwithstanding his religion, and Catholics had the same freedom of religion as other dissenters, if he had not sought to impose his religion on the 99 per cent of the people who were not Catholics; that objections to the deposing of



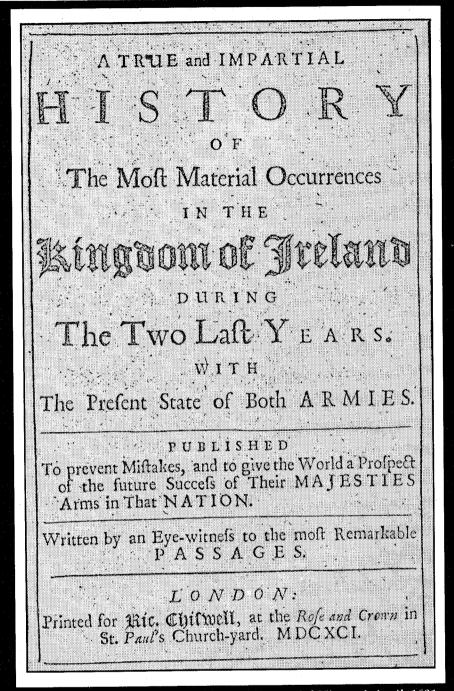
James on legal or religious grounds were spurious: God did not make millions of people to be subject to the whims or interest of one man, and it is agreeable to the principles of reason and religion that the welfare of the people is the supreme law; that James' usurpation of absolute power, against all laws, was tyranny, the seizure of mens freeholds, contrary to justice, was oppression, and the making of his will the law was reducing the people to slavery: neither the laws of nature, reason or religion obliged the people to see the fundamental constitution of their country overturned without making some effort to obstruct it. The greatest privilege of an Englishman was to have the law on his side, and his religion by that law made part of his property. One of the main reasons that this continued for so long, while other nations groaned under the yoke of arbitrary power, was that, with the sea as a defence, there was no need for a standing army — an army in time of peace (which James maintained) was the next thing to being in slavery.

Story's account is very readable, human and, in general, fair, despite his poor opinion of the Irish. He occasionally shows a wry humour, as in mentioning a friary at Mullingar: the Friday before we got thither the Fathers thought to go a pilgrimage into Connaught, and, after describing and deploring the plundering, against orders but without punishment; by the army under Douglas sent to take Athlone: before we got to the king's army we killed and took prisoners a great many thousands, but more of these had four lens than two.

these had four legs than two.

His account of the siege of Limerick corresponds closely to that of the Jacobite John Stevens, and, taken together, they provide a remarkable narrative of the same incidents viewed from inside and outside the walls. His particular local significance is that he is one of the two eye-witnesses, both Williamite, which mention the presence of women in the action at the breach. Contrary to belief, published in some local sources, Story was not personal chaplain to William. He was chaplain to Lord Drogheda's regiment, the grenadier company of which was involved in the assault on the breach and the entry into the town. Story, even if at a distance himself, would have gotten first-hand information from ministering to the survivors; he might well have had a telescope if viewing the action from the camp at Singland. Telescopes were certainly in use on the Jacobite side: ... we were certainly in use on the Jacobite side: ... we looked on the enemy's losses through multiplying glasses ... (Steven's Journal, 10 August, 1690). In the Continuation Story wrote: I hate to dog the truth with any artifice; nor is there any occasion for such an endeavour, suppose I had an inclination or skill to do it; for whilst things are fresh in everyone's memory, if a man should be guilty of any notable and wilful mistake that way, there are a great many able to find it out. way, there are a great many able to find it out. I have done the subject therefore no injury, but by my own defects, which by this means I have exposed to the public censorious of all people.

I have seen a great part of the most notable adventures, however, from the beginning to the end, and want only skill to give a good account of them. Bystanders commonly see more than those actually engaged in battle; here every man is tied to his post, and minds the business only



Title page of the first edition of Story's 'Impartial History', April, 1691.

that is before him, when those that are lookers on have nothing else to do but to observe.

Story is mistaken in part of his description of the Irishtown, which is understandable, as his description was as good as he could give of a place I had not liberty to go into, though I have been sometimes very near it. His south gate is in fact St. John's Gate, and what he calls St. John's Gate is in fact East Watergate, as is clear from his and Stevens' account of the sally on 20 August. His view of the 1690 siege, printed with the second edition, clarifies the position, locating the Black Battery below the tower at the southeast corner, and the breach immediately north of it, roughly where New Road crosses the line of the wall. The vast ditch with a huge bank of earth and stones inside the wall, which he notes in his description of the town under 10 August, must be the retrenchment built by the Irish as

soon as it was clear where the breach was to be

NOTE

1. I am grateful to Dr. Raymond Refausse, archivist & librarian, Church of Ireland Representative Church Body Library, for confirming the date of Story's institution as dean of Limerick. Conflicting evidence is given in the Dictionary of National Biography entries for George and Thomas Story.

SOURCES:

Dictionary of National Biography; M. Lenihan, History of Limerick, (Mercier Press, Cork, reprint, 1967); R. Murray, Journal of John Stevens, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1912); George Story, Impartial History, (London, 1691) and Continuation of the Impartial History, (London, 1693).



ARUE ANDER OF THE STORY

BY GEORGE STORY

n the 7th [August] his majesty marched Caherconlish, within five miles of Limerick. Upon our approach thither the enemy burnt and levelled all the suburbs; as also set fire to all the houses in the country between us and the town. On the 8th of August early in the morning my Lord Portland and Brigadier Stuart were sent towards Limerick, with about eleven hundred horse and foot, who advanced within cannon shot of the town, but met with little opposition from the enemy; and before they returned his majesty went out with about three hundred horse, being accompanied with Prince George, the Heer Overkirk, Major-General Ginkel, and several other great officers. When these went nigh the town, a party of the enemy's horse advanced toward them. But Captain Selby, of my Lord Oxford's regiment, having the advance guard, drew towards them, with a design to charge them; which they perceiving, thought fit to draw homewards, their cannon firing from the town several times. Then in the evening Lieutenant-General Douglas with his party joined the king's army.

The 9th of August in the morning early, the king sends three squadrons of horse and dragoons, with a detachment of one thousand foot, commanded by Sir Henry Bellasis (as brigadier), my Lord Drogheda, and Colonel Erle, as an advance guard to make the first approach, and all the army both horse and foot followed in order. About six o'clock our advance party discovered some of the enemy upon the top of a hill, three miles on this side the town: our men drew up, and then marched slowly forwards; and as we proceeded the enemy disappeared by degrees, till they were all gone off the hill: We drew forwards, and about half a mile further we could see a great part of the town from a rising ground, but could not discover the ways to it, nor who were between us and it, because of a great many enclosures and lanes, in one of which the enemy appeared again. Our men halted a little till the pioneers had cut down the hedges to the right and left; which done, they advanced, and the enemy drew back. This took some time a-doing, and therefore the front of our



William III Portrait after W. Wissing.

army, both of horse and foot, came up. The king was here at first, riding from one place to another to order matters, as his custom always was. We cut the hedges in a great many places, and went forwards, and the enemy they drew homewards, till they came to a narrow pass between two bogs, within half a mile of the town. The neck of land between these bogs is not above 150 yards over, and this full of hedges, with a large orchard, a stone wall, and also the ruins of a great house upon the laneside, which the Irish had burnt the day before. But there were three lanes that led this way towards the town, the middlemost being the broadest, the Irish horse stood in it, on the pass beyond this old house; and whilst our pioneers were at work, the front of our horse went up so close, that there were several little firings, but not much damage done on either side. To the right and left of the Irish horse, the hedges were all lined with musketeers, of whom our foot were got now within less than two hundred yards. The pioneers laboured at the hedges all this while, and the army made their approaches in excellent order. The detached party of foot was upon the advance towards the regiment, and Lieutenant-General Douglas at the head of them (my Lord Drogheda himself being upon the advance guard). The Danes were towards the left, led on by the Prince of Würtemberg, and Major-General Kirk. The Blue Dutch, and several English regiments, were upon the right. All those were lined with horse, and these supported again with more foot, so that all men that understood it said it was a most curious sight; for though the hedges were very thick and troublesome, yet it was so ordered that the front kept all on a line, except the advance party, who went always some distance before. Whilst things were going on thus, the king ordered two field pieces to be planted towards the left, where they could bear upon the enemy's horse. These fired several times, and the enemy soon quitted that post. Our English foot were so little concerned that though they knew the enemy to be in the next hedges, yet whilst the pioneers were at work, they would sit them down and ask one another whether they thought they should have any bread today? (for they began to want their breakfasts, though some few of them went to the next world for it). The Danes to the left stood with all the care and circumspection in the world, but observing the posture of some of our men, and hearing what they said, they believed we had no mind to fight; yet no sooner were the hedges down, and our front advancing in a narrow field, but the Irish fired a whole volley upon them from the neighbouring hedges; which our men seeing, some of them cried aloud, Ah ye toads, are ye there? we'll be with you presently: And being led on by my Lord Drogheda and Colonel Erle, they ran along the field directly towards the hedges where the Irish were planted, which the others seeing, immediately quitted, and then our men fired upon them as they retreated to the next hedges, and so beat them from one hedge to another, even to the very end of the suburbs, which were then all burnt and levelled. During this action the Danes advanced in the left, and the Blue Dutch with the English on the right, the horse coming on in the centre, so that in less than half an hour from the first volley, the Irish were

centre, the horse a little to the right of

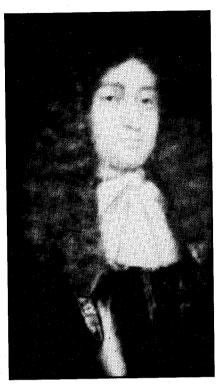
them, followed by the Earl of Drogheda's



driven under their very walls; nor did we lose a dozen men in all this action, when if the Irish had managed this advantage of ground, and fortified the pass, as well as Ireton's fort on the right of it, (which was built by Ireton on his first coming before Limerick: it stands on a rising ground, and overlooks the pass on one side, and the town on the other: this we commonly called Cromwell's fort) they might have kept us some days from approaching the town; at least, they might have killed us a great many men. But the truth is, they had not time for all this. They had drawn up, however, several companies of men in the fort, but when they saw us coming on, they retreated towards the town without ever firing a shot.

We were not as yet saluted with one great gun from the town, because their own men had been between them and us, but as soon as they retreated under the walls, they let fly amain amongst us, and killed several as they marched in. Amongst others, a French captain had both his legs shot off, and died presently. We drew four field pieces immediately to Cromwell's fort, playing them upon the town and the outworks; and before five o'clock in the afternoon, all our army was marched in, and most of them encamped within cannon-shot. In a siege the first two things that are to be regarded is the safe encamping our men, and the drawing the line of countervallation to prevent the enemy from sallying; but the latter of these we did not much mind, because I suppose we did not much fear any desperate sallies, and the former was in some measure prevented by the situation of our camp. The Danes encamped to the left, where they found an old fort built by their ancestors, which they were very proud of, and from thence they fired three or four field pieces upon the Irish that lay entrenched between them and the town. The detached party kept an advance post till they were relieved about nine o'clock, and the Lord Drogheda's regiment was placed next to the town, nigh Cromwell's fort, where they were to stop the enemy's career, if they attempted a sally.

As soon as our army was posted, the king ordered a trumpet to be sent with a summons to the town, and, as we understood since, a great part of the garrison were for capitulating, but Monsieur Boisseleau, the governor, the Duke of Berwick, and Colonel Sarsfield opposed it with a great deal of heat, telling them that there were great divisions and insurrections in England, that the Dauphin was landed there with fifty thousand men, and that the Prince of Orange would be obliged soon to draw home his army into England. The trumpeter was sent back from Monsieur Boisseleau with a letter directed to Sir Robert Southwell, Secretary of State (not sending directly to the king, because he would avoid, I suppose, giving him the



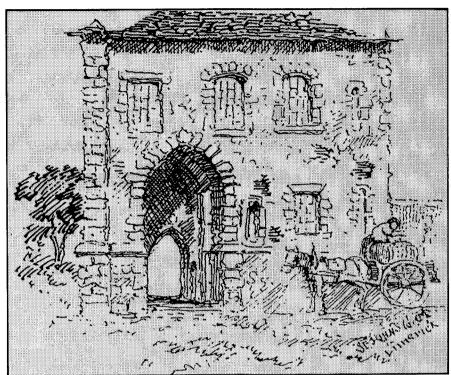
Lieutenant-General James Douglas (d. 1692), the Scottish commander of the unsuccessful William assault on the Breach, 27 August, 1690. King James was to write bitterly in his 'Memoirs': 'He was the first Scotsman that deserted over to the Prince of Orange ... and has ever since been so faithful to the revolutionary party, and adverse to the King and all his advisers ...'

title of majesty), that he was surprised at the summons, and that he thought the best way to gain the Prince of Orange's good opinion was by a vigorous defence of that town which his master had entrusted him withal. That evening a party of dragoons was sent to view the pass at Annaghbeg, three miles above Limerick, where six of the enemy's regiments of foot, three of horse, and two of dragoons were posted on the other side of the river, where there stood a large new house, with a great many brick walls about it, and several convenient hedges were adjoining to the river. They fired from thence upon our men, but did little or no execution, and that night they marched off to the town. The cannon played on both sides till it grew dark, and next morning early, being Sunday, the 10th, the king sent eight squadrons of horse and dragoons, commanded by Lieutenant-General Ginkel, and three regiments of foot, under Major-General Kirk, who passed the river without any opposition, and immediately his majesty went thither himself. The stream was very rapid and dangerous, though the river had not been known to be so low these many years. The king at his return left Major-General Kirk, with his own, Brigadier Stuart's and my Lord Meath's regiments, who encamped one beyond the ford, and two on this side, having a party of horse (relieved every twenty four hours) to support them.

A cornet this morning deserted the enemy, who told the king that a great many in town were for surrendering, but prevented by Sarsfield and Boisseleau; that Count Lauzun, with the French, were encamped nigh Galway, the Irish refusing to accept them into town (because themselves had done so with the Irish some time before at Limerick); that my Lord Tyrconnell, with most of the Irish horse and some foot, were encamped on the other side, about six or eight miles from Limerick; that there were fourteen regiments of foot, with three of horse and two of dragoons then in town. The king sent that afternoon a small party of horse to discover my Lord Tyrconnell, but he was then removed about ten miles further off towards Galway.

But it will be convenient that I here give as good a description of the city and its situation as I can of a place that I had not the liberty to go into, though I have been sometimes very near it. Its therefore for circumferance one of the largest in the kingdom, except Dublin, and the houses are generally built very strong within the walls, being made most of them castleways, with battlements. It stands upon the river Shannon, and though it be nigh sixty miles from the sea, yet ships of burden can come up to the bridge, for the river below the town looks like an arm of the sea. One part stands on Munster side, and is called the Irish town, being compassed about with a very strong stone wall, and without this a counterscarp with pallisados, and also several forts and bastions; and on the inside the wall they had cast up a vast ditch, with a huge bank of earth and stones, having only a place left to go in and out. The river, about a quarter of a mile above the town, splits itself in two, and between the branches lies a most pleasant spot of ground, called the King's Island, being about two miles circumference, on the lower end of which stands the greater part of Limerick, where is a castle and a cathedral church. This is also invested with a stone wall, and is called the English town, between which and the Irish town there is a very large stone bridge; and beyond the English town, upon the further branch of the river, there is another bridge that leads into the County of Clare, near which stands a considerable fort of stone, and the Irish cast up several more of earth, and made great fortifications in the King's Island, at which they were busy all the while we continued there. Here the Irish kept continually a strong guard, having also during our stay two or three regiments entrenched, opposite to the Danes on Munster side, towards the west of the Irish town.





Exterior view of the citadel.

This place was first won from the Irish to Raymond le Gros, an Englishman and son of William Fitzgerald, but afterwards burnt by Donald, an Irish petty King of Thomond; and then in process of time Philip de Braose was infieffed of it, and it became an Englishlike town, being fortified with a castle and walled, by King John. In late times Cromwell was called over into England before his army reached that place, and Ireton managed the siege, who died here afterwards. He laid a great many months before it, and did not take it at last. Colonel Fennell, and others of the Irish, in some respect, betrayed the town to him; for against the governor's consent they drew up articles, and sending them to Ireton's camp, on the 27th of October, 1651, they received two-hundred men at St. John's Gate, and more into another fort, called Price's Mill; next day getting possession of the town, Ireton hanged several of those that were still for defending of it.

But to come again to our business: the Irish began also to make two small forts between us and the Irish town, one nigh the south gate, about the middle of the suburbs, where stood two chimneys, and it had that name; the other towards the east, nigh that part of the wall where we afterwards made a breach. They had a citadel towards the west, whereon they had several guns which plagued us till we killed that gunner, and then we were more at ease from that quarter. There was a spur at the south gate, whereon the greatest of their guns were planted, and at another small gate, with a sallyport (called St. John's Gate) towards the east, they had also a battery of three guns, which from its colour we called the Black Battery. This was just under the place where we made our breach. Our camp was ordered thus: the king's camp was to the right, in the second line; next him the Horse Guards and Blue Dutch; then some English and Dutch regiments, then the French and Danes, and behind all were the horse, though after some time we rather encamped conveniently than regularly.

Whether it was that his majesty was made believe the town would surrender upon summons, or what else was in it I know not, but when we sat down before Limerick, we had only a field train, though we had been a month in our march from Dublin thither; and whether it be usual to go before a town without sufficient materials to force it, I am no competent judge. However, there were six twenty-four pounders, two eighteenpounders, a great quantity of ammunition, much provisions, our tin boats, and an abundance of other things all this time upon the road from Dublin, under the care of two troops of Colonel Villiers'

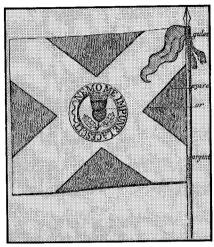
The day after we got to Limerick, a Frenchman, (as was reported) a gunner of ours, ran away from us into town, and gave the enemy an account where our train lay, as also of those guns and other things that were coming up, the manner of our encamping and where the king's tents stood, with all the particulars that were material for them to know. They had always a plaguy spite at our guns, and therefore on Monday morning early they played theirs most furiously towards the place where our train lay. I happened to be not far from the place at

that time, and in less than a quarter of an hour I reckoned nineteen or twenty great shot that fell in a manner all in a line. This place grew presently so hot that we were obliged to remove our train beyond an hill further off. They fired also all this day, and the next, at the places where the king's tents stood, killing some men, as also two of the Prince of Denmark's fine, horses. His majesty was advised to remove to some more convenient and secure ground, which he did.

Monday the 11th. in the morning, we planted six twelve-pounders Cromwell's fort, which dismounted one of the enemy's best guns upon the spur, and did further damage to the houses in the town. The same morning came one Manus O'Brien, a substantial country gentleman, to the camp, and gave notice that Sarsfield in the night had passed the river with a body of horse, and designed something extraordinary. For when Sarsfield heard what the Frenchman had told, he was pretty sure that if those guns, boats and other materials came up to us, the town would not be able to hold out, and therefore he resolves to run a hazard, and destroy them in their march if it were possible. If he succeeded, then he broke our measures, but if not, he then designed for France, if he did but survive the attempt: in order to which, he takes all the best horse and dragoons that were in the town, and that very night marches over the Shannon at a place called Killaloe, a bishops' see on the Shannon, twelve miles above our camp. The messenger that brought the news was not much taken notice of at first, most people looking upon it as a dream. A great officer, however, called him aside, and after some indifferent questions, asked him about a prey of cattle in such a place, which the gentleman complained of afterwards, saying he was sorry to see general officers mind cattle more than the king's honour. But after he met with some acquaintance, he was brought to the king, who to prevent the worst, gave orders that a party of five hundred horse should be made ready and march to meet the guns. But whether his majesty's orders were not delivered to the officerin-chief that was to command the party, or where the fault lay, I am no competent judge, but it was certainly one or two of the clock in the morning before the party marched, which they did very softly, till about an hour after they saw a great light in the air, and heard a strange rumbling noise, which some conjectured to be the train blown up, as it really was. For on Sunday night our guns lay at Cashel, and on Monday they marched beyond Cullen, to a little old ruinous castle, called Ballyneety, not seven miles from our camp, and directly in the rear of it, where they encamped on a small piece of plain green ground, there being several earthen fences on one side, and the old castle on the other. If they had feared the least danger, it had been easy to draw the



guns and everything else within the ruins of the old castle, and then it had been difficult for an army, much more a party, to have touched them. Nay, it was easy to place them and the carriages in such a figure upon the very spot where they stood, that it had been certain death to have come nigh them; but thinking themselves at home, so nigh the camp, and not fearing an enemy in such a place, especially since they had no notice sent them of it, they turned most of their horses out to grass, as being wearied with marching before, and the guard they left was but a very slender one, the rest most of them going to sleep. But some of them awoke in the next world, for Sarsfield all that day lurked amongst the mountains, and having notice where and how our men lay, he had those that guided him through byways to the very spot where he fell in amongst them before they were aware, and cut several of them to pieces, with a great many of the wagoners and some country people that were coming to the camp with provisions. The officer commanding-inchief, when he saw how it was, commanded to sound to horse, but those that endeavoured to fetch them up were killed as they went out, or else saw it was too late to return. The officers and others made what resistance they could, but were at last obliged every man to shift for himself, which many of them did, though they lost all their horses, and some of them goods of a considerable value. There was one Lieutenant Bell, and some few more of the troopers killed, with wagoners and country people, to the number in all of about sixty. Then the Irish got up what horses they could meet withal, belonging either to the troops or train; some broke the boats, and others drew all the carriages and wagons, with the bread, ammunition, and as many of the guns as they could get in so short a time into one heap. The guns they filled with powder and put their mouths in the ground that they might certainly split. What they could pick up in a hurry they took away, and laying a train to the rest, which being fired at their going off, blew all up with an astonishing noise; the guns that were filled with powder flying up from the carriages into the air, and yet two of them received no damage, though two more were split and made unserviceable: everything likewise that would burn was reduced to ashes, before any could prevent it. The Irish took no prisoners, only a lieutenant of Colonel Erle's being sick in a house hard by, was stripped and brought to Sarsfield, who used him very civilly, telling him if he had not succeeded in that enterprise, he had then gone to France. Our party of horse that was sent from the camp came after the business was over, in sight of the enemy's rear. But wheeling towards the left, to endeavour to intercept their passage over the Shannon, they



Flag of Lt.-Gen. Douglas' regiment by Thomas Dineley, 1680.

unhappily went another way; since if our party had been fortunate, they had a fair opportunity first to save the guns, and then to revenge their loss, and if either had been done, the town had surrendered without much more battering. Sir Albert Cunningham's dragoons were abroad also, who met with some of the Irish, killed a major, one Captain James Fitzgerald, and about fifteen more, but the main body marched off secure. Colonel Villiers went also with another party of horse towards O'Brien's Bridge, but the enemy did not return that way.

This news was very unwelcome to everybody in the camp, the very private men showing a greater concern at the loss than one would expect from such kind of people. The loss of the guns was not so great as that of the horses and ammunition, but to make the best of a bad market, the Duke of Würtemberg and several great officers sent their own horses, and every foot regiment furnished so many garrons, to bring up the guns and broken carriages, as also to bring up two great guns and a mortar that were coming from Waterford. We went on with the siege, however, and planted several more guns, and firings continued briskly on both sides, all the army, both horse and foot, being ordered to make such a number of fascines a day and bring them to the heads of their respective regiments, to which end we cut down most of the hedges and orchards about.

On Tuesday the 12th. Brigadier Stuart, with a detachment of his own and my Lord Meath's men, went towards Castleconnell with four field-pieces: the besieged submitted and were brought prisoners to the camp, being 126 in number, commanded by one Captain Barnwell. This is a strong place upon the River Shannon, four miles above Limerick, built by Richard, the Red Earl of Ulster. (Queen Elizabeth gave the title of Baron of Castleconnell to William Bourke for killing James Fitzmaurice,

who was a rebel in those days). Here we kept a garrison till the siege was raised, and then it was blown up. During these transactions several parties of horse were sent abroad, and **Wednesday** the 13th. Lieutenant-Colonel Caulfield was sent to Cullen with a detached party of 300 foot mounted upon garrons, there to remain as a guard to those who passed to and from the camp; as also to scour the country, the rapparees (upon the miscarriage of the guns, and being partly plundered contrary to the king's orders) beginning to disturb us.

[Here Story notes events at Youghal and a proclamation by William on payment of tithes following complaints from the North].

Sunday the 17th. Monsieur Cambon, our quartermaster-general, was very diligent, in order to have the trenches opened that night, and all things being prepared, seven battalions, consisting of English, Danes, Dutch, and French foot, commanded by the Prince of Würtemberg, Lieutenant-General, Major-General Kirk, Major-General Tettau and Sir Henry Bellasis, Brigadier. The king, I suppose, by this mixture thinking to raise an emulation in his soldiers, or further, that they might instruct one another, several regiments having never been in trenches before. They were commonly seven battalions on at a time, and relieved at twelve o'clock at night: but this method was altered, for a reason to be given afterwards. This night we advanced our trenches, and attacked the Irish at the two old chimneys. The grenadiers threw in their grenades and then endeavoured to get over. This occasioned a general firing from our trenches, and so also from the town. The king himself was at Cromwell's fort to see what happened (as he was constantly every night). The Irish in the fort made no great resistance, but after once firing they cried out 'murder' and 'quarter', but made the best of their way toward the town: those that stayed in the fort were knocked on the head. The firing from the walls and trenches continued for at least two hours longer, by which time we had secured this fort from the enemy's retaking it.

Next day, being Monday the 18. we planted a battery below the fort, to the right of our trenches, and dismounted some of the enemy's cannon. All that day the guns played briskly on both sides, and at night the trenches were relieved by Lieutenant-General Douglas, my Lord Sydney and Count Nassau as Major-Generals, and Brigadier Stuart. We made our approaches toward the fort without the wall, and Lieutenant-General Douglas' and Brigadier Stuart's regiments were posted towards the right. It was dark when they went on, and they did not perceive the enemy to be so near them as they really were, for there was at that time scarce twenty yards distance between them. They were ordered to lie down upon their arms, which they did,



Drawing of tower on the walls of Limerick.

and a great part both of the officers and soldiers fell asleep. The enemy perceived this and attacked them, which put them presently into a confusion, and several of them gave ground, but presently recovered themselves and fired, but they did not know at what. The Danes to the left took our own men for the enemy sallying, and so fired upon them: they believed the Danes to be the Irish, and so returned the complement. The Irish fired upon both, and they at one another. This confusion lasted nigh two hours, in which time several were killed; nor did the king, or anybody else know what to make of it. At last our men found their mistake, and the Irish were beat in, crying quarter and murder, as they used to do. After this his majesty ordered the trenches to be relieved in the day, and our men marched always in and out in the very face of the cannon.

About this time we had an account of one 'Balderock Rho O'Donnel', of the ancient family of Tyrconnell. This man was born in Spain, but there being a prophesy amongst the Irish that he should free his country from the English, doing great matters in his own person, and more by his conduct, he was sent for on purpose, and came to Limerick. Its

incredible how fast the vulgar Irish flocked to him at his first coming, so that he had got in a small time seven or eight thousand rapparees and suchlike people together, and begun to make a figure; but after a while the business cooled, and they were weary of one another, and he is only now a colonel in Limerick. They had another prophesy also, that we should come to the field above Cromwell's fort, where stands an old church, where, on a stone hard by, we should pitch our utmost colours and be afterwards undone, with a thousand such fopperies not worth the naming.

Tuesday the 19th, our battery played upon the walls, and also the guns from Cromwell's fort upon the houses in town. And the enemy were not idle, for their shot flew very thick, insomuch that the king riding softly up towards Cromwell's fort, directly as his horse was entering a gap, a gentleman stayed his majesty to speak to him, and in the very moment there struck a twenty-four pounder in the very place which would have struck his majesty, and horse too, all to pieces, if his usual good angel had not defended him. It struck the dust all about him, however, though he took little notice of it, but alighting, came and laid

him down on the fort, amongst all the dust. That night we planted four twenty-four pounders at the angle of our trenches, near the south-east corner of the wall, where we made the breach afterwards.

Wednesday the 20th. Colonel Cutt's grenadiers, commanded by Captain Foxon, and my Lord Meath's, by Captain, Needham, were placed conveniently in the trenches for an attack, and at two o'clock in the afternoon (the signal being given by firing three pieces of cannon) they leaped over the trenches and ran straight to the fort which the enemy had to the right of us, at St. John's Gate. The enemy fired from the fort and from the walls. Our men did the like from the trenches, and the great guns went to work on both sides. The grenadiers threw in their grenades, and Captain Foxon made an attempt to climb up, but was thrown down again, but entered at the second trial, and his men with him. So did my Lord Meath's men, with Captain Needham, and in a small time we were masters of the fort. There were about fifty killed in it, and twelve with the captain taken prisoners, and some made their escapes to the town. The firing continued, however, on both sides for above an hour, and all possible diligence was used to bring down faggots wherewith to make up that side of the fort that was open to the town. Before the attack, a party of our horse were drawn up, in a lane to the right of the trenches, to prevent the enemy from sallying, upon which the enemy's cannon played, so that after the fort was ours, they drew back beyond an hill for their security. About an hour after, some friend in town gave notice that the enemy were going to sally, which they did immediately, both horse and foot, from St. John's Gate. Their horse came up very nigh the fort, though our men fired from thence, and the trenches, as fast as they could. Then small and great shot on both sides began afresh again. Major Wood of Colonel Byerley's regiment commanded an advance party of twentyfour French and twenty-seven English horse. At the noise he advanced with this party and, leaping a ditch, he engaged immediately a squadron of the Irish horse and broke them. Then came in Lieutenant-Colonel Windham and Captain Lucy, as also some Dutch and Danish horse. These charged the Irish that sallied and beat them back, following them almost to the very gate. But we being exposed to the enemy's shot from the walls, lost several coming off, amongst the rest, Captain Lucy, a gentleman much lamented by all that knew him. The king saw all this action, (as indeed he did most things that happened, going often into the trenches, and never without danger) expressing himself to be in pain for Major Wood when he saw him and his party in such danger, losing the greatest part of them.



Fanciful view of the action at the Breach, 27 August, 1690, from 'United Ireland', Supplement, Sat., 2 October, 1886.

Captain Needham, after all was over, and he leading his men off, was shot by a chance bullet, and died immediately. We lost at the taking of the fort, and at the sally afterwards, 58 foot killed and 140 wounded; horsemen, 21 killed, 52 wounded; 64 horses killed, 57 wounded; besides the Danes. These men sold their lives dear, and you may easily believe the enemy gained nothing by this afternoons work, for the next morning [21st] two drummers made their escape out of town, who told us the enemy had lost above 300 men, and in two hours after came a cornet and four trumpeters from the enemy's camp. That afternoon Captain Bourn was killed as he was marching down to relieve the trenches, and Major Margetson was wounded with a cannon-bullet as he lay in bed, of which he died in two days.

The 22nd. we raised a battery of eight guns, most twenty-four pounders, nigh the fort that we took the day before, from whence we beat down two towers that stood upon the wall, out of which the enemy fired upon our trenches. That night we threw good store of bombs and carcasses into town, which disturbed the enemy very much, most of them having never seen such things before.

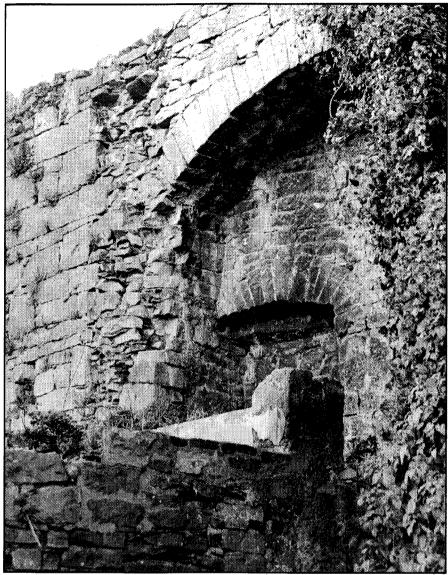
The 23rd. There was a drum sent, and a truce towards the evening for the burying of the dead killed on both sides at the taking the fort. When our people came to look amongst the dead, they

found a French officer wounded, and his horse lying upon him, and yet the gentleman was alive, and, as I heard, he recovered, though he lay from Wednesday till Saturday in the evening. I cannot omit a pleasant adventure that fell out at the taking the fort, between a chaplain in the army and a trooper. This chaplain happened to go down after the fort was taken, and seeing a trooper mortally wounded, in all appearance, he fancied himself obliged to give him his best advice. The other man was very thankful for it, and whilst they were about the matter, comes the sally. Our horse came thundering down, at which the clergyman making haste to get out of their way, he stumbled and fell down. The wounded trooper, seeing him fall, judged he had been killed and stepped to him immediately to strip him, and in a trice had got his coat off on one side. The other called to him to hold, and asked him what he meant. Sir, (says the other) I beg your pardon; for I believed you were killed, and therefore I thought myself obliged to take care of your clothes as well as you did of my soul.

This afternoon were eighty-four prisoners brought to the camp from a castle some twelve or fourteen miles off, called Nenagh Round. These kept out the castle for twenty-four hours against Major-General Ginkel and his party of about 1500 horse and dragoons. They killed us fourteen men, but, seeing two

cannon come and the soldiers very busy in bringing faggots for a battery, they submitted to mercy. Their commander was one Captain O'Brien. This afternoon also one of Colonel Leveson's dragoons was hanged for deserting. In the evening our bombs and red-hot balls began to fly, which set part of the town on fire, which burned all that night, destroying a great quantity of hay, with several houses. I remember we were all as well pleased to see the town flaming as could be, which made me reflect upon our profession of soldiery, not to be overcharged with good nature.

The 24th. we fired pretty smartly, but our guns only struck the top of the wall off, and therefore we raised a new battery within sixty yards of the wall, and that night drew the angle of our trenches within twenty yards of the counterscarp, thirty volunteers out of a regiment working very diligently, and had two shillings apiece for their pains, several woolsacks being carried down to secure our men from shot as they were at work. Monday morning [25th] we began to fire from our new battery, and the breach in the wall began to be considerable, which the enemy seeing, brought an abundance of woolsacks to damp the force of our cannon. This was like Josephus's defending his towns in Gallilee, who filled large sacks full of chaff and hung them over the walls to defend them from the battering rams of



Site of the middle tower of the east wall, Irishtown, at Lelia Street.

the Romans, for cannons were not then invented.

The king sent his gunners some drink down to the batteries, which made them ply their work very heartily, and, for all the woolsacks, the wall began to fly again; and early that morning were two cannon planted about 300 yards to the right of our trenches, in order to beat down the bridge. But we were too late abeginning this work: the Irish, seeing what we intended, were very much afraid of the bridge, and therefore they planted two guns without the town in the King's Island, which played upon our battery, and also flanked their own counterscarp. You must know that two or three days before this, it had rained so violently for nigh twenty-four hours together that the soldiers were almost up to the knees in the trenches. This looked very ill, and therefore we were obliged to hasten our work, lest the rains should force us to desist. That night, therefore, a council of war was held, whether we should make an attack upon the counterscarp next day; and it was deferred till

Wednesday, because as yet the breach was not wide enough. Monsieur Cambon was for deferring it for two or three days longer, which had been a great happiness if it had; and yet this could not well be, for our ammunition began to sink.

Tuesday the 26th. we plied the breach hard all day with nigh twenty cannon from several batteries, and in the night saluted the town after the usual manner, with fireballs, bombs and carcasses. And on Wednesday the 27th. a breach being made nigh St. John's Gate, over the Black Battery, that was about twelve yards in length and pretty flat, as it appeared to us, the king gave orders that the counterscarp should be attacked that afternoon; to which purpose a great many woolsacks were carried down and a good store of ammunition, with other things suitable for such work. All the grenadiers in the army were ordered to march down into the trenches, which they did. Those, being above five hundred, were commanded each company by their respective captains, and were to make the first attack, being

supported by one battalion of the Blue Dutch on the right, then Lieutenant-General Douglas's regiment, Brigadier Stuart's, my Lord Meath's and my Lord Lisburn's, as also a Brandenburg regiment. These were all posted towards the breach, upon the left of whom were' Colonel Cutts and the Danes. Lieutenant-General Douglas commanded, and their orders were to possess themselves of the counterscarp and maintain it. We also had a body of horse drawn up to succour the foot upon occasion. About half an hour after three, the signal being given by firing three pieces of cannon, the grenadiers being in the furthest angle of our trenches, leaped over and ran towards the counterscarp, firing their pieces and throwing their grenades. This gave the alarm to the Irish, who had their guns all ready, and discharged great and small shot upon us as fast as 'twas possible. Our men were not behind them in either, so that in less than two minutes the noise was so terrible that one would have thought the very skies ready to rent in sunder. This was seconded with dust, smoke and all the terrors that the art of man could invent to ruin and undo one another, and to make it the more uneasy, the day itself was excessive hot to the bystanders, and much more sure in all respects to those upon action. Captain Carlisle of my Lord Drogheda's regiment ran on with his grenadiers to the counterscarp, and though he received two wounds between that and the trenches, yet he went forward and commanded his men to throw in their grenades, but in leaping into the dry ditch below the counterscarp, an Irishman below shot him dead. Lieutenant Barton, however, encouraged the men and they got upon the counterscarp, and all the rest of the grenadiers were as ready as they. By this time the Irish were throwing down their arms and running as fast as they could into the town, which our men perceiving, entered the breach pell-mell with them, and above half the Earl of Drogheda's grenadiers and some others were actually in the town. The regiments that were to second the grenadiers went into the counterscarp, and having no orders to go any further, there stopped. The Irish were all running from the walls and quite over the bridge into the English town, but seeing but a few of our men enter, they were with much ado persuaded to rally; and those that were in, seeing themselves not followed and their ammunition being spent, they designed to retreat, but some were shot, some taken, and the rest came out again, but very few without being wounded. The Irish then ventured upon the breach again, and from the walls and every place so pestered us upon the counterscarp that after nigh three hours resisting bullets, stones, (broken bottles, from the very women, who boldly stood in the breach, and were nearer our men than their own) and whatever ways

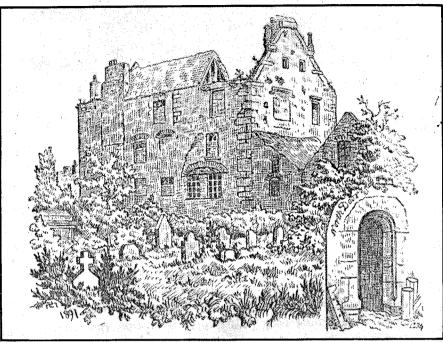


could be thought on to destroy us, our ammunition being spent, it was judged safest to return to our trenches. When the work was at the hottest, the Brandenburg regiment (who behaved themselves very well) were got upon the Black Battery, where the enemy's powder happened to take fire and blew up a great many of them, the men, faggots, stones and whatnot flying into the air with a most terrible noise. Colonel Cutts was commanded by the Duke of Würtemberg to march towards the spur at the south gate and beat in the Irish that appeared there, which he did, though he lost several of his men, and was himself wounded, for he went within half musket-shot of the gate, and all his men open to the enemy's shot, who lav secure within the spur and the walls. The Danes were not idle all this while, but fired upon the enemy with all imaginable fury, and had several killed; but the mischief was, we had but one breach, and all towards the left it was impossible to get into the town when the gates were shut, if there had been no enemy to oppose us, without a great many scaling ladders, which we had not. From half an hour after three till after seven, there was one continued fire of both great and small shot, without any intermission, insomuch that the smoke that went up from the town reached in one continued cloud to the top of a mountain at least six miles off.

When our men drew off, some were brought up dead, and some without a leg; others wanted arms, and some were blind with powder, especially a great many of the poor Brandenburgers looked like Furies, with the misfortune of gunpowder. One Mr. Upton,(1) getting in amongst the Irish in town and seeing no way to escape, went in the crowd undiscovered till he came at the governor, and then surrendered himself. There was a captain, one Bedloe, who deserted the enemy the day before, and now went upon the breach and fought bravely on our side, for which his majesty gave him a company.

The king stood nigh Cromwell's Fort all the time and, the business being over, he went to his camp very much concerned, as indeed was the whole army, for you might have seen a mixture of anger and sorrow in everybody's countenance. The Irish had two small field pieces planted in the King's Island which flanked their own counterscarp, and in our attack did no small damage, as did also two guns more that they had planted within the town, opposite the breach, and charged with cartridge-shot.

We lost at least five hundred upon the spot, and had a thousand more wounded, as I understood by the surgeons of our hospitals, who are the properest judges. The Irish lost a great many by our cannon, and other ways, but it cannot be supposed that their loss should be equal to ours, since its a much easier thing to defend walls than 'tis by plain



Galway's Castle, known as Ireton's House, Bridge Street, Englishtown, Limerick, from the south.

strength to force people from them, and one man within has the advantage of four without. Nor possibly may it be amiss to insert the list of the officers killed and wounded at the attack in the five English regiments that were upon duty, as it was taken exactly next day:

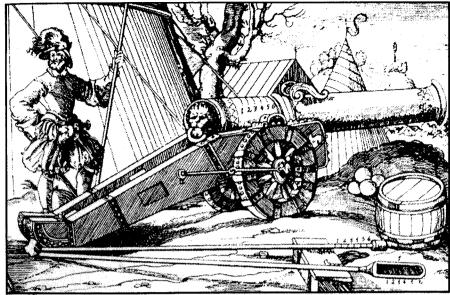
[Here Story lists the names of 15 officers killed and 44 wounded, three of them mortally].

These make in all fifty-nine, whereof fifteen were killed upon the spot, and several died afterwards of their wounds. The grenadiers are not here included, and they had the hottest service; nor are there any of the foreigners, who lost full as many as the English, so that I'm afraid this did more than countervail the loss that the Irish had during the whole siege, at least in the number of men.

Next day [28th] the king sent a drummer in order to a truce that the dead might be buried, but the Irish had no mind to it; and now the soldiers were in hopes that the king would make a second attack, and seemed resolved to have the town or die every man. But this was too great a hazard to run at one place, and they did not know how scarce our ammunition was, it being very much wasted the day before. This day, however, we continued battering the wall, and it began to rain, and next day [29th] it was very cloudy all about and rained very fast, so that everybody began to dread the consequences of it. The king therefore calls a council of war, wherein it was resolved to quit the town and raise the siege, which, as the case stood then with us, was no doubt the most prudent thing that could be done. We drew off, therefore, our heavy cannon from the batteries by degrees, and, on Saturday, August the 30th, we marched the greatest part of them as far as Caherconlish, the guard being the Earl of Drogheda's and Brigadier Stuart's regiments. The rain which had already fallen had softened the ways, and we found some difficulty in getting off our guns, especially since, for the most part, we were obliged to draw them with oxen, a part of our train horses being disposed of to the enemy's use before. And this was one main reason for raising the siege, for if we had not (granting the weather to continue bad) we must either have taken the town, or of necessity lost our cannon, because that part of the country lies very low and the ways are deep. Therefore on Sunday, the last of the month [31th], all the army drew off (having a good body of horse in the rear). As soon as the Irish perceived we had quitted our trenches, they took possession of them with great joy, and were in a small time after all over the ground whereon we had encamped. Two days before we raised the siege, a great many wagons and carriages were sent towards Cashel and Clonmel with sick and wounded men, which was the reason that we were forced to leave a great many bombs, hand grenades and other things behind, which we buried in the artillery ground, but with a train to blow them up, so that, when it took fire, the Irish were mightily afraid and thought we were beginning a new siege from under ground. But yet they dug up most of our dead officers and soldiers, only to get their shirts and shrouds.

The army encamped that day at Caherconlish, and then the artillery marched forwards to Cullen, whither the





A German cannon. These guns had a devastating effect on the high towers and walls of medieval fortification, and provided the impulsion behind the development of the geometrical artillery fortresses of the 17th and 18th centuries.

army followed the day after [1 Septemberl. But as soon as the Protestants that dwelt in that country understood that the army was drawing off, they prepared to march along with bag and baggage, which most of them did, and looked something like the children of Israel, with their cattle and all their stuff, footing it from Egypt, though most of these poor people had no promised land to retire to, but were driven into a wilderness of confusion, for I saw a great many both men and women of very good fashion, who had lived plentifully before, yet now knew not which way to steer their course, but went along with the crowd, whither providence should direct them.

In a day or two after we were removed from before Limerick, Monsieur Boisseleau, the governor, made a speech and told the Irish 'that with much ado he had persuaded them to defend the town, which with God's help they had done, but assured them it was not fear, but prudence and policy that made the enemy quit the siege, as might appear by their slow marches, and withal he told them his opinion that the next time the enemy came, they would have it'. Which said, he took leave and went to the French forces then at Galway, and designing for France.

[He reports William's return to England via Waterford. Two of the Lords Justices visited the camp at Cullen, and the army got money, which had been very scarce all the campaign. On 6 September, they marched to Tipperary, first blowing up a strong castle at Cullen].

Some that are men already prejudiced will pretend to be judges in this affair (though they never saw the place or the country) and affirm that the Irish never made a false step, but one, during the

whole siege, and that was in not fortifying the pass, and Cromwell's fort without, as also in not drawing a large trench from the river towards the east and then running it round that part of town, on which they might have raised several forts and breastworks, from whence they might have retarded our approaches. But indeed they had not time for all this, though they had done something of that kind towards the west, where they kept men encamped all the while we lay before the town, and they had made also some forts towards the east, but they could not put courage in their men to defend them, especially when walls were so near to fly to.

What objections they make against us were these, that we ought to have divided our army and sent a party beyond the river, as also to have broke down the two bridges, one between the two towns, and the other on the County of Clare side, by which means we had prevented the Irish communication between the two towns and also from without, the greatest hazard that we could run being to attack a town that had one side open, to bring in what men and things they pleased. All these and a great many more inconveniences were seen into at that instant. But the dividing the army was impractical, because that when one part had been over the river, they must have marched several miles to the right, and then down again, before they could come nigh the other side of the town, by reason of a vast bog that runs from the town a great way cross the country, and then it was no easy thing to bring provision to those; and besides, if the rains had fallen (as it often threatened us) that part of the army which had gone over must have run the hazard either of starving or fighting their whole army, or both, for the Shannon rises all on a sudden, and the least swelling in the world would have made it impassable for the army, since it was with great difficulty that single regiments could get over as it was, and it never has been seen so low in many years. Nor had we men enough to make what works were convenient to secure both parts of the army from sallies or assaults from, without, if we had been divided. We know Caesar at the siege of Alexia shut in eighty thousand Gauls, made a line of countervallation of eleven miles circumference, and one of circumvallation that was fourteen, fortifying both these with sharp stakes and vast holes in the ground, slightly covered over, by which he both reduced that great army within to his mercy and kept off a much greater that designed to raise the siege. But his army were men of fatigue and labour as well as courage, and his numbers were six times as great as ours. And though we were commanded by a prince of as great courage and resolution as ever Caesar was, and he had men that were as willing, yet several of them were beginning to be sick and were not able to endure the fatigue, except both our time had been longer and the season better, and though kings are gods in wisdom as well as power, yet there is one in heaven that limits them.

7th September: [Douglas' and seven other regiments went to winter quarters in the north].

September the 8th. my Lord Lisburn with a party of foot, being about four hundred strong, and Monsieur La Forest, with a party of five hundred horse, were sent to Kilmallock, a place between Cork and Limerick, where the enemy had a garrison of about two hundred men, who when they saw our party and four field-pieces which they brought along, they yielded upon the first summons, and had conditions to march out with their arms and baggage.

13th September: [a section of the army went to Birr to secure it against Sarsfield, then at Banagher Bridge with about 5000 horse, foot and dragoons. Another section headed for Cork. An Irish deserter informed that Tyrconnell, Lauzun, Boisseleau and all the French forces had left Galway for France, in such haste that they left several sick behind, but took an excellent field-train which had come from France the previous spring].

14th September: [the rest of the army began to disperse to winter quarters at Waterford, Clonmel, Cashel and Carlow. The commander, Count Solms, returned to England, leaving Ginkel commander-in-chief, with headquarters at Kilkenny].

NOTE

1. 30 September, 1690. Whitehall. Earl of Nottingham to the Lords Justices: The king wants Captain Upton, taken at Limerick, amongst the first exchanged. Calender of State Papers, Domestic, 1690-91.