

'At the fight of Aughrim O'Kallagh'

The Irish chieftains; or, A struggle for the crown
(1872)

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Lieutenant-General Godert Baron de Ginckell, Commander-in-chief of the English army in Ireland, on beholding, for the first time, the Irish camp at Aughrim, but not so near as to satisfy a general of his ability, referred to an elaborate map of the field which he had in his possession, and at once saw the necessity of engaging the enemy here, as their position would prevent him from marching to Galway, which town he was most anxious to take, as he feared that as the bay was one of the best and safest in Ireland, it might be chosen by the French to land arms and ammunition for the relief of the Irish. At the same time, he felt it was necessary for him to be very cautious, and to act with great prudence, in consequence of the excellent position chosen by the Sieur de St. Ruth. It was then ordered by Baron de Ginckell that the password that night should be 'Dublin,' and that the whole army, with the exception of the two regiments in charge of the baggage, was to form in order early next morning, with as much silence as possible, and without waiting for the drums to beat; that those who required ammunition should be immediately supplied from the military stores, and all to have their arms in perfect order; that the grenadiers, with two shells each, were to be drawn up to the right and left of every regiment; and that five pioneers were to march at the head of each battalion. As he also ordered the tents not to be removed or the baggage stirred, it is evident he was not determined to engage with the Irish army. However, seeing he was now so far advanced that he should either give battle to the Irish or retreat with dishonour and perhaps irreparable loss, he resolved to advance cautiously on the ensuing morning, and trust to fortune for the result. Accordingly, after a protracted, bloody, and devastating war, which now, for a period of about three years, had checked the progress of agriculture, paralysed the commercial intercourse with foreign nations, shrouded the country in misery, and bloodshed, and wrapt the land in famine and disease, the eventful day arrived which was predestined by an allwise Providence to determine the fate of the Royal House of Stuart, and commence a melancholy era in the history of our country, ever to be recollected with feelings of the deepest regret.

On Sunday, the 12th of July, 1691, the field of Aughrim, which embraced all those qualities the most fastidious military devotee could possibly desire, was the theatre of the most memorable, and perhaps the most sanguinary and unnatural struggle for ascendancy that unfortunate Ireland ever knew. Stretching far away on one side was a swampy marsh, its russet costume contrasting strangely with the greenery of the surrounding fields, while to the south rose the picturesque Hill of Kilcomedan, lifting its gorse-clad forehead high in air, and looking calmly down on the yet tranquil scene beneath. The vernal season might now be said to be in its zenith; and, although the first streaks of day, breaking in the orient sky, were ushered in with a thick fog, still the air was aromatic with the fragrance of the sweet haw-thorn that crowned this hill's lofty summit and enveloped its sides, while the wild flowers spread over the grassy lea lifted their drooping petals to inhale the morning zephyr. All looked the picture of peace, plenty, and security, until, at six o'clock, the Williamite army moved forward and never before was such an incongruous invading host witnessed in Ireland.

Having crossed the river, Baron de Ginckell drew up his whole army on the hilly ground, in two lines, each of which was subdivided into four divisions, and placed respectively under the command of different distinguished officers. The extreme left was composed of Dutch, Danes, and some of the Huguenot cavalry. The front division was commanded by Major-General the Marquis la Forrest and Brigadier Abraham d'Eppenger. The rear division was in charge of Major-General de Holtzapfel and Brigadier Sachack. To the right of these were stationed several Dutch and Danish, with two Huguenot infantry regiments, commanded by Major-General Count Tetteau and Brigadier Louis la Mellionere; and behind this force was posted a strong division, principally made up of Dutch and Danes, commanded by Major-General the Count de Nassau and Brigadier-General Prince George de Hesse-d'Armstadt. The centre consisted of the whole of the English and Anglo-Irish infantry, the front division of which was under the command of Major-General Hugh Mackay and Brigadier Sir Henry Bellasyse; and the rear under that of Major-General Thomas Tollemache. The right wing of De

Ginckell's army comprised the entire of the English and Anglo-Irish cavalry, together with Major-General the Marquis de Ruvigny's regiment of horse. The front division of this wing was commanded by Lieutenant-General Scravenmore and Brigadier Edward Villiers ; while the rear was under the command of Major-General the Marquis de Ruvigny and Brigadier Richard Levison. But, owing to the heavy fog which continued during the morning, the Williamite army made no further progress, but remained under arms.

From the time that Lieutenant-General de St. Ruth first beheld the English, he kept his army drawn up in two lines before the camp, to let Baron de Ginckell see he was resolved to fight. The principal officers under his command were Major-General Patrick Sarsfield, Earl of Lucan ; the Chevalier Philibert Emanuel deTessé, Maréchal-de-camp ; Brigadier-General William Mansfield Barker, Lieutenant-General William Dorrington, Major-General Dominick Sheldon, and others ; but, unfortunately, while the greatest harmony existed between De Ginckell and his officers, it was quite the contrary in the Irish camp ; for, although De St. Ruth now treated the Irish with civility, he was still very reserved in his manner, and looked upon the Earl of Lucan with an eye of suspicion, for he plainly saw that he was more popular with both the officers and soldiers, who treated him with as much respect as if he were the Commander-in-chief of the Irish army. Another fatal error on the part of the Sieur de St. Ruth was, that he kept his plan of battle strictly secret from all his officers, which annoyed them very much, and justly so, as they were aware that if he fell, or themselves failed in carrying out his orders in any particular point, a great deal of valuable time would be lost in waiting for further instructions.

At early dawn the drums and trumpets warned the different regiments to assemble, and, it being Sunday morning, High Mass was solemnized in the open air ; and it was a sight calculated to inspire feelings of the deepest awe, to behold all those brave men bowed down in silent adoration of the Most High, while, through the dismal gloom of the hazy morning, numerous candles flickered on the temporary altars raised to do honour to the Almighty King of Kings. The priests afterwards, in powerful and energetic language, exhorted all to stand by their colours on that day, and not to shrink back, but conquer or die in defence of their holy faith, country, families, and King. After the Irish troops had breakfasted, they were drawn out at six o'clock in battle array. Fathers O'Daly, O'Reilly, O'Hogan, and O'Madden were indefatigable in their exertions to encourage the men ; but the life of the King's cause was Doctor Alexius Stafford, a member of the ancient family of Stafford of Elphin, and Chaplain to the King's Royal Regiment of Foot Guards, who was appointed by his Majesty, on the 23rd of April, 1689, one of the Masters in Chancery for Ireland. He was also Dean of Christ's Church, Dublin.

At twelve o'clock, the dense vapour arising from the marsh cleared away, and the sun, in all the roseate splendour so characteristic of the summer solstice, shone brilliantly athwart the blue-vaulted dome of the heavens. Baron de Ginckell now ordered his troops to take up the respective posts assigned to them, while himself advanced, with a strong guard, to view more closely the position of the Irish camp. He also sent forward detachments to clear the rising ground in front of where the Irish videttes were stationed of every obstacle to the speedy advance of his army. On his approach, the Irish outposts retired to within half-a-mile of their own camp, and thereby enabled the Baron to observe, from a high hill to his left, the strong position of the Irish army. On surveying the preparations of the Sieur de St. Ruth, he perceived the danger of risking a battle at present, particularly as his fine field of artillery had not yet reached him. However, to try the courage of the Irish soldiers, he commanded a Danish Captain, on whose courage and military skill he had great reliance, to take sixteen horsemen and endeavour to force the Pass of Urachree, where a small Irish outpost was then stationed. As soon as this party engaged the Irish they were repulsed, not being able to withstand the shock they received. Although their Captain endeavoured to lead them on, and they were aware that De Ginckell eagerly watched their movements, still they turned and fled, abandoning their commander, notwithstanding that the enemy were inferior in number. The Baron de Ginckell, though rather displeased, was not discouraged by the cowardly conduct of the Danes, but, considering it safer to carry on the attack in the *commencement* with the *English* troops, ordered up 200 of Sir Albert Conyngham's Dragoons to the ditches, near a small ford over one of the branches of the river which protected the right wing of the Irish, to prevent them from crossing there and engaging his forces. By the time this order was obeyed it was two o'clock in the afternoon ; but, notwithstanding that it was so far advan-

ced in the day, and that he had already received considerable reinforcements, De Ginckell did not think it prudent to enter into a general engagement with the Irish. His officers also advised him not to do so, and gave their opinion that, as he had commenced the attack, he had better wait to see what measures would be adopted by Lieutenant-General de St. Ruth. Still, seeing the utility of possessing the ford and other passes to the right of the Irish camp, in case he had to fight, he ordered Sir Albert's Dragoons to cross the ford, with strict orders to 'drive back the Irish from that post, but not to advance farther.'

It was De St. Ruth's intention, on the other hand, to entrap the enemy into this position, which Baron de Ginckell felt quite sure he had ably provided against. The Irish outposts returned the fire of Sir Albert Conyngham's Dragoons, and then retreated, for the purpose of drawing the English on to the ambush. The latter, imagining the enemy was seized with fear, and neglecting their orders, impetuously charged the retreating foe, but were soon brought to a stand by a deadly discharge from a party of Irish who were placed under cover for the purpose of opening fire on them. Several of the English dragoons fell dead, and others who were only wounded were trampled to death by the steeds that a few minutes previously had borne them triumphantly in pursuit of the enemy. As soon as the survivors recovered from their surprise, they galloped to the rere of a neighbouring hedge. Here, being protected from the enemy's fire, they quickly dismounted, and, letting their horses run loose, advanced, sword in hand, to meet the Irish, most of whom they quickly despatched, being more than twice the number of those in ambush. However, the Irish cavalry posted as a reserve on the hill, and at the rere of the ancient Manor House of Urachree, soon came to the rescue, and, charging on Sir Albert's Dragoons, amply revenged the death of their companions. The English fled in great confusion towards their camp, being as much afraid of their General, on account of their disobedience, as they were of the enemy who hotly pursued them. Baron de Ginckell, observing this defeat, and seeing the likelihood of his men being cut off, ordered Brigadier-General d'Eppinger's Dragoons, who were about 1,100 strong, to their assistance, with instructions to steadily approach, and endeavour to get between the pursuing cavalry and the Irish camp. De St. Ruth, observing the advance of the latter, despatched reinforcements to assist his cavalry. The Irish, thus assisted, charged the united forces of Brigadier d'Eppinger and Sir Albert Conyngham's Dragoons, and drove them back with considerable loss. Baron de Ginckell immediately sent the greater part of the Earl of Portland's Horse to the rescue of his retreating troops; but they were quickly thinned by the Irish, who slew them in great numbers. Among the slain was Major-General Holtzapfel, who led them to the charge, and was one of the first to fall.

At three o'clock in the afternoon, the victorious Irish cavalry again fell into the same regular order they occupied at two o'clock, when the assault was made by Sir Albert Conyngham's Dragoons, and the English forces, numbering over 1,000 men that were engaged, retreated from the ground which they had vainly endeavoured to maintain. This great success, gained by such an inferior force on the part of the Irish, indicated so much military skill and boldness, that the English at once ceased hostilities, and Baron de Ginckell remained undecided as to whether he would again renew the contest or not, for, on viewing the enemy's camp, he now beheld before it, cold in death, several of the bodies of his bravest soldiers. The consequence was that he immediately convened a council of war, to determine the best course to pursue. The Duke de Wirtemberg, and most, if not all, of the veterans in the Williamite army, were for postponing the battle until the following morning, assigning as a reason that, owing to the determined and unexpected resistance they had already received from the Irish, it was most probable the fight would continue during the night, which would be greatly to their disadvantage, on account of the strong position occupied by the Irish, and the dangerous character of the surrounding ground. So many were of this opinion that Baron de Ginckell gave orders to have his tents and baggage, which he had that morning sent to Athlone, brought back, and pitched for the night between his army and the Irish position. However, Major-General Mackay, who differed with the Dutch, Danish, and other foreign commanders, gave as his opinion that it would be much more advantageous to renew the battle, and suggested that the plan ought to be at once to endeavour to outflank, and attack with a strong force, the right wing of the Irish army stationed at Urachree, as the ground there was more open and better adapted for such an undertaking, and because such a manœuvre on the part of the English would necessarily compel the Irish to strengthen the Pass of Urachree with numerous reinforcements from their main reserve, and strong parties of cavalry from their left wing. This movement of the left wing of the Williamite army against the Pass of Urachree

would enable the right wing of that army to march against the Pass of Aughrim with a good chance of success, as the strength of that place would be considerably weakened by the removal of so many troops from it. Another circumstance in favour of Mackay's plan was that during the time that would be employed by those detachments in marching a distance of about two miles, and the excitement likely to ensue from such an unexpected event, it was more than probable that time would be obtained to sound the marsh in front of Kilcomedan Hill. If this movement could be successfully accomplished, and that it was discovered the marsh was solid enough to admit of foot soldiers crossing, the Scottish veteran proposed sending infantry regiments to engage the Irish centre, as he considered this was the only available way of having the whole of the English army engaged at the same time. The council sat until half-past four in the afternoon, when, having adopted Major-General Mackay's scheme, they separated. Baron de Ginckell now rescinded the command which he had previously given to have the tents and baggage returned, and had his army drawn up in the following order, to renew the attack on the Irish.

Fifteen regiments of foot, in two lines, were placed in front of the infantry and the entire of the English and foreign horse, consisting of forty-nine squadrons, were divided into two divisions, for the purpose of attacking the right and left wings of the Irish army. Twenty-four of these squadrons were to march against the Pass of Aughrim, and the remaining twenty-five against the Pass of Urachree.

Baron de Ginckell completed all his arrangements in a very short time, and at five o'clock the fighting recommenced, with great energy on both sides. The Danish horse, accompanied by some infantry, marched to the left along the side of the river, where the English forces were beaten back in the morning. De Ginckell's motive in ordering this movement was to compel the Irish to extend themselves so much to the right that a great number of their cavalry would thereby be prevented from rendering assistance in any other quarter. The Danes, who were experienced soldiers, and who had been well trained on the Continent, unlike Sir Albert Conyngham's Dragoons, adhered strictly to their orders, by remaining stationary on the English side of the river, without attacking the Irish.

To the right of the Danes, the regiments of Brigadier General la Mellionere, Du Cambon, and Belcassel, numbering between 2,100 and 2,300 well-disciplined men, advanced against the ditches on the extremity of Kilcomedan Hill. Those three Huguenot regiments charged gallantly, but were met with a stem determination by the Irish which they did not anticipate; and, without exaggeration, it may be safely asserted, that more bravery was displayed in this engagement, on both sides, than in any other that took place during the battle. This bloody and fierce contest was carried on, with unabated vigour, until six o'clock in the evening. The Sieur de St. Ruth, now observing from his post on Kilcomedan Hill how severely his troops at the Pass of Uraohree were assailed by the Dutch, Huguenot, and Danish cavalry and infantry regiments, ordered a reserve of cavalry and foot, from the second line of his left centre, to march to their assistance. Perceiving this wise movement, Mackay, who was always desirous of assisting his Commander-in-chief, strongly advised him to withdraw some of the forces that were sent against the Pass of Aughrim, and order them up to Urachree. Baron de Ginckell at once saw the utility of adopting this measure, for he knew that, after withdrawing from the Pass of Aughrim the necessary number of men requisite to reinforce Urachree, still his remaining force there would be vastly superior to the Irish opposed to them.

The next move on the part of the Williamites was to sound the marsh, which though rather deep and very muddy, was still firm enough to admit of the troops crossing. On satisfying themselves on this point, they determined, without further delay, boldly to attack the Irish centre. Of the success of this project Mackay was most sanguine, and he also considered that on its accomplishment chiefly depended the fate of the English. The four regiments of Colonels Abraham Creighton, Thomas Earle, Charles Herbert, and Richard Brewer were ordered by De Ginckell to proceed by the narrow part of the bog near Urachree to the ditches occupied by the Irish, and near Aughrim Pass, where the marsh was considerably wider and more dangerous, a large body of foot were directed to cross. This latter force, which was by far the most numerous, received strict orders, when they would have crossed, to divide into two divisions, and respectively march to the right and left. The left division was to proceed to a corn-field quite close to where the first four regiments were to halt, and the right was to form in order on the uneven ground near to where they had crossed the marsh. When these parties would have taken up the respective positions assigned to them, they were to remain inactive, and on

no account endeavour to advance up the Hill of Kilcomedan until the three were ready to assist each other. While they would be crossing the marsh, it was arranged by Baron de Ginckell that Major-General Tollemache, with the right wing of the English cavalry and a strong force of infantry, was to march round the old Castle of Aughrim, and, by attacking the Irish army at the Pass of Aughrim, thereby prevent them from opposing the troops while crossing by the marsh. Since the fight was renewed at five o'clock, the artillery of both armies kept up an incessant and deadly fire, and the loss sustained, in killed and wounded, appeared to be about equal, although the Williamites had more than four times as many guns as the Irish.

Lieutenant-General de St. Ruth, with the eye of an experienced officer, viewed the manœuvres that were being made by De Ginckell, and expressed his opinion to the officers who were near him that he was very much surprised he would order or sanction such absurd movements, as it must be evident to him that his three divisions could not patiently stand under arms in the face of an enemy until they would have joined each other. The only thing which appeared in their favour was that there was a probability that Major-General Tollemache might succeed in passing at Aughrim, and come up to relieve them. However, as the Pass of Aughrim was so very narrow, and as excellent arrangements had been made by De St. Ruth to fortify the old castle, once the residence of a branch of the sept of O'Kelly, its ruined outworks, and the adjacent ditches, he felt certain that if all his instructions were fully carried out, it would merely be a waste of time and men on the part of the Williamites to attempt effecting a passage in that quarter. As soon as the reinforcements began to march in the direction of the Pass of Urachree, Baron de Ginckell took advantage of the movement, and ordered the infantry regiments intended for that purpose to cross the bog with as much haste as possible, and by the shortest route in front of the centre of the Irish army. Colonel Earle's regiment led, and was closely followed by the other regiments, the four comprising about 3,000 men. Their progress, however, was slow and difficult, owing to the softness of the marsh, and the weight of their arms and accoutrements. When they reached the first of the ditches at the foot of Kilcomedan Hill, which there extended farther into the bog than at any other point, and consequently was the shortest way across the marsh, they were about to halt, according to orders, until the larger body of infantry would have crossed the marsh lower down, or nearer to the Pass of Aughrim ; but the Irish infantry who lined the hedges opened fire on them, and then retreated, without difficulty, through the various openings to the next hedge. The English having suffered severely by this galling fire, and seeing the Irish retreat, became enraged and pursued them in haste. While they were rapidly advancing to the next hedge, the Irish, having reloaded, fired on them with as much success as before, and again retreated to the third hedge. With great anxiety Baron de Ginckell beheld his troops ensnared by this stratagem ; while, on the other hand, De St. Ruth was well pleased with the signal success he had met with. The Irish continued to retreat from hedge to hedge, and while doing so gave the English who still pursued them a heavy volley from each. The English continued in pursuit for about half-a-mile, when, finding themselves quite close to the main reserve of the Irish army, who were ready to attack them, and observing the infantry, who had purposely retreated before them, now forming into order to rush down upon them, and the Irish cavalry preparing to charge, they saw the fatal mistake they had made in disobeying their orders, by not waiting for their foot to come up, and, being seized with fear, eagerly sought the shortest way by which they could retreat. Colonel Earle did all he could to encourage them to stand their ground, but in vain. He advanced several yards in front, and flourishing his sword, called out — "Come on, my men, there is no way to come off but by being brave." However, all his efforts to do so proved futile, and, seeing they were determined not to fight, he resolved to retreat in order, if possible, by making them proceed from one hedge to another, firing back on the Irish from each as they retreated. But in this the Colonel was also disappointed, as the soldiers, who paid no attention whatever to his orders, fled in wild confusion down the hill towards the bog, closely pursued by the Irish infantry and dragoons, who succeeded in making prisoners of Captain Bingham, Captain Gooking, Colonel Herbert, and Colonel Earle. This latter officer, who was captured three successive times by the Irish in this engagement, and as often rescued by his men, being severely wounded, again fell into their hands, with other officers of distinction, independently of those already named. In the meantime, the larger division of the Williamite infantry, comprising the regiments of Lord George Hamilton, Brigadier William Stewart, Colonels Zachariah Tiffin, John Ffoulke, and Thomas St. John, with many other regiments, all under the command of Major-General Mackay, were endeavouring to cross the bog. The Major-General, having succeeded in crossing the marsh with the advanced guard, ordered the Prince de Hesse-d'Armstadt, to take up his position in the corn-field to the left of the

marsh, and to remain there, without engaging any of the Irish, until he (Major-General Mackay) would have reached the ditches to the right ; and, further, to make no move whatever, until he observed him, with his division and the rest of the foot, advanced far enough in that position to flank the Irish on that side. The Sieur de St. Ruth, observing Prince George separating from Mackay, resolved to engage the two divisions separately, being aware that if he dispersed one, or both, while thus separated, they would be compelled to retreat over the bog, which was certain to be attended with difficulty and loss of life. Before De St. Ruth, however, had time to give the necessary orders for the carrying out of this resolution, the Irish got an ample opportunity of encountering the English. The Prince de Hesse-d'Armstadt, with all the vigour and rashness of youth, and anxious to distinguish himself, disobeyed orders, and advanced to the ditches to engage the enemy. The Williamite fire was fully reciprocated by the Irish, who, from their sheltered position behind the hedge, were enabled to take steady aim. After this effective volley they quickly retreated to the next hedge. Here, having taken up their position and reloaded, they poured a second volley into the ranks of the advancing foe, with as much, if not more success than the first, being reinforced by fresh parties of infantry. The English now found themselves hemmed in on all sides, as the Irish, when they retreated from the first hedge, passed by the openings to the others on the right and left, and by this means returned to the first hedge again. While engaged in executing this manœuvre, fresh parties of Irish infantry, moving forward, took possession of the hedges in advance of the enemy ; and now a galling fire was opened from front and rear on the surprised and terrified English soldiers. Prince George, seeing the mistake he had made, and knowing he would be held accountable by Baron de Ginckell for disobeying orders, endeavoured to rally his troops ; but his utmost endeavours to do so proved unavailing. The Williamites turned and fled, cutting their way through the Irish stationed at the first line of hedges, and hastened to the corn-field where they had been previously drawn up. Great numbers of them, afraid to remain even there, continued their flight across the bog, where many of them perished. This defeat of the Williamites was so complete that their Commander-in-chief regretted having adopted Mackay's plan ; but the latter, knowing it was occasioned by the rashness of the impetuous Prince George, steadfastly adhered to his determination of carrying out his first design. Mackay now returned in haste to assist the Prince de Hesse-d'Armstadt, and sent a messenger to Tollemache, with orders to stop his march against the Pass of Aughrim, and to hasten with some Huguenot infantry to his own and Prince George's assistance. On the advance of the Williamite troops through the bog, the Irish occupying the ditches concealed themselves so well that the enemy doubted their presence there. However, they were soon convinced, for, when they advanced to within twenty yards of the ditches, the Irish received them with a tremendous fire, which they bore manfully, and returned with little effect ; for the smoke was so dense that they could not see their enemies, or even distinguish each other. At this time victory was in favour of the Irish — so much so, indeed, that the officers who surrounded De Ginckell expressed their belief that before a quarter of an hour would have expired the Irish would be masters of the battle-field. The Irish troops fought bravely, and most of them drawing their long skians and daggers, which had round wooden handles, now placed them in the muzzles of their muskets, and, giving a loud cheer, charged with such determination, that they drove the foot which composed the English centre back to the very mouths of their own cannon, planted on the margin of the bog. This was the greatest success achieved by the Irish army during the day, as the English were now prevented from using their ordnance, lest they should destroy their own men, who were intermingled with the Irish. The number of the slain in the Williamite army was very large ; but still they continued to fight on bravely, although they had the worst of it in every part of the field. Three times they compelled the Irish to retreat with great loss, but as often were obliged to retire themselves before the equally obstinate native and Anglo-Irish troops, who stoutly maintained their centre against all the force of the Williamites. In the various assaults up to this hour, Ireland lost a large number of her most distinguished and devoted sons, and several were severely wounded. In the last charge, Colonel Constantine Macguire, of Tempo, in the county Fermanagh, surnamed More from his tall stature, a chieftain of ancient lineage, considerable influence, and much ability, was surrounded by great numbers of the enemy ; but, together with a few of the Irish soldiers, he made a desperate resistance for some time. Captain Forster, observing the odds were against them, quickly charged with a large party of his troop, amongst whom were Sergeant Power and Ralph Malbrough, and made a fierce dash against the English forces. At this moment the brave Colonel Macguire was shot through the heart, and Sergeant Power severely wounded. Three infuriated Dutch soldiers, advancing from the ranks, now attacked Captain Forster, seeing he was the leader of the assault, which being observed by Donal Bran, he called on Conor O'Shaughnessy and Kelly of Loughcutra to follow

him manfully, as he was resolved, at all risks, to fight his way to where the young Captain was engaged with the enemy. In the meantime, after a short combat, the young Captain succeeded in killing two of his assailants ; but the third, having rapidly retreated to some distance, took deliberate aim, and fired at him ! Owing to his excitement, the soldier allowed the muzzle of his gun to drop at the moment of pulling the trigger, and, missing his object, the ball entered the breast of the horse, which immediately fell dead under the gallant Irish Captain. The disappointed Dutchman then rushed forward, with an oath, to slay him. Captain Forster raised his sword to defend himself, at the same time endeavouring, with difficulty, to become disengaged from his fallen horse, which had rolled over his legs. Finding himself in this awkward and painful position, he resolved to sell his life as dearly as possible, believing there was now no hope for him ; but he had scarcely parried three thrusts, when a shot, fired by a cornet who had advanced from the Irish ranks, laid the Williamite dead. In the confusion which ensued, Captain Forster had only time to exclaim hurriedly to his deliverer — “ If you survive this battle, call at Clooneene, near Gortinsigoara, and your services to me will be rewarded.” “ I will,” said the soldier; “ my name is O’Flanagan”. Captain Forster having disengaged himself from his horse, beheld Donal Bran and Kelly, who quickly mounted him on one of their horses, while Conor O’Shaughnessy placed the wounded Sergeant Power before him on the saddle, and conveyed him to the rere, where his wounds were carefully bound up by Ralph Malbrough. When Conor O’Shaughnessy returned, he took the standard from the firm grasp of Malachy Hanrahan, who was shot through the head during his absence ; and Donal ordered some of the Rapparees to dismount, and, under the command of O’Shaughnessy, to pursue the English across the bog.

While the battle raged thus in the Irish centre, an obstinate fight was also taking place at the Pass of Urachree between the Irish right — except that portion kept out of action for the purpose of watching the Danes — and the remainder of the English left. This wing was composed of foreign troops, under the immediate direction of the Baron de Ginckell himself. About six o’clock in the evening, when the attack between the centres of the Sieur de St. Ruth’s and Baron de Ginckell’s armies took place, the latter ordered a general assault on the Irish line — that is, that part of it which extended from the border of the bog, near the Pass of Urachree, to the hedged and entrenched ground occupied by the Irish foot, who were opposed to the three Huguenot regiments already mentioned. This assault was made with great bravery, but notwithstanding De Ginckell’s utmost efforts to make it effectual, his troops were beaten back by the Irish cavalry, which compelled him to call to his assistance portions of two cavalry regiments, the Marquis de Ruvigny’s and Sir John Lanier’s, which formed part of the strong force on the right under orders to attack Aughrim. Until these troops came up, which took a considerable length of time, owing to the broken nature of the ground between Aughrim and Urachree, the contest was not here renewed. By thus repulsing their assailants the Irish cavalry obtained the double advantage of insuring the defeat (to their left) of Colonel Earle’s and the other divisions of the infantry stationed in the centre of the Williamite army, which undoubtedly would not have occurred had De Ginckell’s foreign horse succeeded in getting round by the bog near Urachree. This was of great importance to the Irish, as it prevented the march of De Ginckell’s troops up the Hill of Kilcomedan.

In the meantime the three Huguenot infantry regiments were engaged in a fierce conflict with the Irish stationed in the hedges and behind the banks of earth which were thrown up one above another. This attack, which was ordered by De Ginckell solely for the purpose of driving the Irish from the excellent position they held in the hedges, had exactly the opposite effect, for the regiments of Du Cambon, La Mellionere, and Belcassel found it almost impossible, although protected by their *chevaux-de-frize*, to resist the charge of the Irish, who frequently repulsed them with great loss. So successful were they that instead of maintaining the defensive position they at first occupied, they now became the assailants, and having taken possession of the enemy’s outer defences, either shot or cut down a great number of them, and twice made themselves masters of the *chevaux-de-frize*. De St. Ruth, observing how valiantly the Irish infantry maintained their ground against the superior numbers of the enemy, became so excited — at the time when he should be most cool — that he threw his hat into the air with delight on seeing the Williamite infantry repulsed for the third time in disorder to the mouths of their own cannon. Indeed, on witnessing the wretched condition of the enemy, he felt certain of success, and with the lively imagination of a Frenchman already beheld the English retreating from the field before his victorious troops. Turning to his officers he said — “ By St. Louis, Monsieurs, I will now beat their army back to the gates of Dublin.” Those memorable words clearly

prove that De St. Ruth was fully satisfied with the progress his army had made ; that he was proud of their conduct, and confident of success. The divisions that marched from the Irish left centre to the right at Urachree succeeded in frustrating the plans of the English, Huguenots, and Danes there. In fact, their assaults against the Irish centre were scenes of slaughter and confusion. The only matter De St. Ruth had now to rectify was a lodgment made on the left of his army by some English infantry, where the troops had been withdrawn to reinforce Urachree. The right wing of De Ginckell's army, comprising his choicest regiments of cavalry and some battalions of infantry — including Majors-General Kirkes and Gustavus Hamilton's — marched towards Aughrim by the narrow pass which lay between the two bogs. They had with them some field pieces, which they planted on the firm land that jettied into the bog, near the Pass of Aughrim. Having accomplished this, they dislodged the Irish outpost at the mouth of the defile, but the battery which was erected by the Sieur de St. Ruth on the side of the hill did not open fire on them, owing to the English and Irish being so much mixed. The English, however, hesitated to pass on, for in the fields beyond the central marsh and the small river which crossed the road leading to Aughrim, and flowed into the bog to the right, they observed the Irish strongly posted, their infantry in the hedges, and their cavalry in the background, preparing to charge to their aid at a moments notice. The Irish were most successful up to this time, but all the advantages they had gained were now nearly lost to them, either through the treachery or mistake of one of their officers. The Sieur de St. Ruth ordered Brigadier-General Henry Luttrell to march with the *second line* of the Irish stationed there to the Pass of Urachree, but that officer led off *a battalion of the first line* to march with the rest. The English, who did not venture to pass while this battalion remained, now laid a number of hurdles across the bog and passed over. This breach of the Sieur de St. Ruth's orders greatly weakened the Irish, as several strong bodies of both horse and foot were removed. Their loss was soon felt, and the remainder of the Irish lay under the impression that they were betrayed by Luttrell, which still made matters worse, as they soon became disheartened, and, consequently, did not make as determined a resistance as they otherwise would have done. The foot, who had fought all day with an undaunted courage that any nation might feel proud of, now fled from hedge to hedge before the English, halting at each to return the deadly fire of the enemy with ill-directed discharges which had little effect. The Irish continued to retreat until they reached the hollow plain at the rere of the old castle. Here the Sieur de St. Ruth had stationed a reserve of Irish cavalry, and now part of them, coming to relieve the flying foot, charged the English with such vehemence that they were driven back to the ditches with great slaughter, where having taken shelter, they opened fire on their pursuers. As the foot did not come up to second the cavalry, who had so bravely rescued them, the latter were obliged to retreat outside the range of the enemy's fire, who did not pursue them, feeling it safer to keep the hedges between themselves and their foes. By this time the regiments of Lord George Hamilton and Sir Henry Bellasyse had advanced across the widest part of the bog, in the direction of the lined hedges, and the right wing of De Ginckell's cavalry, having with them some large field-pieces, were endeavouring to march round by the old castle to rescue their foot, who were compelled by the Irish cavalry reserve to shelter themselves behind the hedges, and afterwards to aid the foot regiments of the centre, who were then struggling in the bog, at the foot of Kilcomedan Hill. On the advance of this wing of the army over the narrow road leading to the Pass of Aughrim, it was reinforced by the regiments of Major-General Kirke and Colonel Hamilton. It was previously arranged that these two latter regiments were to attack the outer defences of the old castle, and that the cavalry were to pass by the narrow way adjacent to that fortress.

When the English entered on this road, the Irish garrison who defended the Castle of Aughrim, having no bullets, were directed by Colonel Burke to break open eight barrels of ammunition which he had received from the camp, and four of which, he stated, contained bullets, and the remainder powder. The rage and disappointment of the garrison baffles description when, on staving these casks, they found them to contain cannon ball, instead of musket bullets. They resolved, however, not to allow the Williamites to advance without making an effort to prevent them, and for this purpose, in their wild excitement, they actually tore the buttons from their clothes, which they used as a substitute for bullets. When these were exhausted, they next had recourse to pebbles which they found in the building. At last, in despair they fired their ramrods into the ranks of the enemy, who continued to press forward. Further resistance on the part of the garrison was now impossible, but the Irish soldiers stationed in the outer fortifications still exerted themselves in opposing the progress of the Williamite troops, who were well supplied with ammunition. While the English cavalry were thus slowly advancing, the two infantry regiments before mentioned were engaged in barricading the broad way, or open

ground which led to the rear of Aughrim Castle, and which was made by order of lieutenant-General de St. Ruth, to facilitate the charge of the cavalry reserve stationed to the rear of that place. The English now boldly pressed forward, the Irish having no means of opposing them, save the wretched fire already mentioned, and without much loss took possession of the outer fortifications, those who defended them being obliged to retreat into the castle. While the Irish were being thus beaten from the outworks, their cavalry resolved, if possible, to capture the artillery, which the Williamites had brought up. Taking a semi-circular route, they wheeled to the left to the rear of De Ginckell's cavalry, where the cannon were planted, but finding it impossible to take them on account of the strong position which the Williamites now occupied, they retired in good order. The English cavalry still continued to press forward, though very slowly, owing to the difficult ground over which they had to pass. Sir Francis Compton, with part of his troop, was the first to engage the Irish, on the firm ground beyond Aughrim Castle, but with little or no success. The Irish maintained their position manfully, and twice caused De Ginckell's cavalry to fall back with great loss. The Williamites, being then reinforced by some of Major-General the Marquis de Ruvigny's, Colonel Byverley's, and Colonel Langston's regiments of horse, and Brigadier Levison's dragoons, again renewed the assault, and gained ground on the enemy, although with great loss to themselves.

Before the English had succeeded in passing the Castle of Aughrim, lieutenant-General de St. Ruth, being informed of the fatal result of Brigadier Henry Luttrell's having removed the *front battalion* instead of the *second line*, rode forward to rectify in person this grievous disaster. The Commander-in-chief, for this purpose, took with him the cavalry which during the battle had formed his body-guard, and left at the rear of the Irish centre, as a reserve, the larger portion of his cavalry, under the command of the Earl of Lucan, whom he directed to remain there until he received further orders. De St. Ruth having perceived on his march the right wing of the English horse endeavouring to pass by the narrow path near the Castle of Aughrim, and not being aware that the garrison were without bullets, with surprise asked the Chevalier de Tessé —

“What do they mean by trying to pass there?”

The Chevalier replied —

“General, they are certainly endeavouring to pass there for the purpose of attacking you on the left wing.”

Fully confident of success, De St. Ruth remarked —

“They are brave fellows. It is a pity they should be so exposed.”

The overthrow of De Ginckell's cavalry by the Irish would easily allow of Kirke's and Hamilton's regiments being driven back, together with three other battalions in the hedges, for now all was against the English, owing to the great difficulty of the pass. When De St. Ruth saw the position the English held, he rashly determined to abdicate the functions of a general and become a fighting soldier. His manner of arranging and carrying into effect during the entire day, all his masterly plans was admirable, and he had also confined himself strictly to his proper duty as a general, in superintending the various movements which he directed to be made, and which were so successfully carried out by the Irish soldiers to his full satisfaction. He now, however, unwisely resolved to head in person, a charge which he knew if made would be successful, and have the effect of putting an end to Baron de Ginckell's attacks, and consequently gain the victory for the Irish. Had the Sieur de St. Ruth directed any of his officers to head this charge, while personally at a distance he superintended the operations of his army, all would have been well; but his prudence now appeared to forsake him, and he seemed to forget that the whole plan of battle was confined to his own mind, as he had not communicated it to any of the Irish generals under his command. Mounted on a splendid and favourite white charger; dressed in his magnificent uniform, and wearing the decorations of his order of knighthood, he placed himself at the head of his brigade of horse, and continued to ride slowly on towards the struggling wing of De Ginckell's army. When he arrived near his battery on the left side of Kilcomedan Hill, he made himself still more conspicuous by leaving the brigade of horse, and riding over to the battery. Here he halted, and directed the gunner to point his fire in a particular direction

against the enemy. He then returned to the head of his brigade, and pushed on to the place where the English had endeavoured to come over, and reach the spot of ground opposite to the emerging enemy, which was on the slope of Kilcomedan Hill, under the Irish camp.

A better situation for the charge of his cavalry brigade could scarcely be imagined.

The Irish cavalry, in addition to the advantage of being able to charge with full force down the hill, were not fatigued, as they had been kept as a reserve during the previous part of the day. The Williamite cavalry, who by this time had reached the firm ground beyond Aughrim Castle, consisted of four squadrons, quite worn out by the severe work they had performed, and were now slowly forming into order. Lieutenant-General de St. Ruth, confident of success, now placed himself at the head of the cavalry, at the same time remarking to those about him — “Monsieurs, they are beaten : let us beat them to the purpose.” This Lieutenant-General the Sienr de St. Ruth was, unfortunately for Ireland, unable to do, for he had scarcely uttered the last syllable when a cannon-ball swept off his head, and in a few moments after the headless body of the man on whom the destiny of Ireland depended fell from his horse a disfigured corpse.

Though Lieutenant-General de St. Ruth was thus unexpectedly slain at a time so favourable to the Irish, his death was not caused by a stray shot, but was owing to the perfidious treachery of two wretches who were traitors to their country. These individuals were a farmer named Kelly, and Mullen, his herd. It appears that on the 11th, the day previous to the battle, some of the Irish soldiers, being in need of food, took possession of a few of Kelly's sheep. Being informed by his herd of the circumstance, both went before the Commander-in-chief, who after having heard their complaint, addressing Kelly, said he was more than astonished that any Irishman would refuse food to the brave soldiers who were now making a last stand against an usurper whose army was superior in number, discipline, clothing, arms, and pay — an army which, if successful, would deprive him not only of all his stock, but his property also, and perhaps even of his life, or force him to become an exile far away from the land that gave him birth. The patriotic sentiments expressed by De St. Ruth had no effect on Kelly, who was of a penurious disposition, and who, not fearing the future, continued to demand the restoration of his stock. The General, being enraged at the despicable selfishness of Kelly, ordered him to quit the camp at once on pain of instant death. Seeing remonstrance was in vain he desisted, and turning to Mullen, addressed him in the Irish language as follows —

“Mark the appearance of the Frenchman well, in order that we may know him again.” The herdsman replying in the same tongue, said he would do so, and added — “Master you are robbed, but ask the Frenchman at least for the skins of your sheep.” Rain having fallen on that day, and the soldiers, being badly supplied with bedding, required the skins for that purpose, and the General, being surprised at this request, after the determined manner in which he had already spoken, said — “If you do not quickly depart, I will immediately order you to be hanged.” Kelly and Mullen took the hint, and, determined to have revenge, repaired to the Williamite camp, and gave themselves up to the Marquis de Ruvigny's horse, demanding to be brought into the presence of the Baron de Ginkell. The Dutch General listened attentively to what they stated, and then sent for an experienced artillery officer of his, whose name was Finch, and commanded him to take Kelly and Mullen with him, and when Lieutenant-General de St. Ruth was pointed out by them, to endeavour to bring him down. Finch took with him some of the best gunners, and pushed over the bog to the English right, on the Aughrim side, a light piece of cannon, by means of shifting planks, and then lay in wait a long time for the appearance of De St. Ruth. At length the herdsman exclaimed in Irish — “Master, master, I see the Frenchman,” as Lieutenant-General de St. Ruth appeared mounted on his white charger. He was pointed out by the herdsman to the sergeant who accompanied the party, and the field-piece being brought to bear upon him, the gallant General fell. When the smoke cleared away. Finch said to Mullen — “Is the Commander-in-chief hit.” The herdsman replied — “He is on his horse still ; you have only blown off his hat.” But, taking a second glance, he continued — “The head and hat are both off, for I see them rolling down the hill together.”

As soon as Lieutenant-General the Sieur de St. Ruth fell from his horse, his martial cloak was thrown over his body, which was quickly conveyed by some soldiers to the rere. Notwithstanding all the endeavours that were made to conceal the death of the Commander-in- chief, the first squadron of the Life Guards discovered the fact and halted, and the remainder doing the same, caused great con-

fusion and delay, and no orders were now given when most required. The report of De St. Ruth's death spread quickly from man to man, and the cavalry commenced to retreat. In a short time, however, they recovered from their confusion, but it was too late. Valuable time had been lost, and in the great delay which had taken place the Williamite horse were allowed to effect a passage through the pass at Aughrim Castle. The Irish now drew up and formed in order, but Major-General Mackay, who commanded at Aughrim, instead of Major General Tollemache, whom he had sent to rally the Williamite broken centre, now pushed forward with a large division of the English, Dutch, and foreign cavalry ; and, taking advantage of the confusion of the Irish in this wing, compelled by dint of numbers, the Duke of Tyrconnell's regiment of horse to retreat, while a portion of the Marquis de Ruvigny's horse, with some difficulty, drove a regiment of Irish dragoons from a good position, which they had held with determination. However, two lines of the Irish foot still preserved order, regardless of the enemy's fire, in the hope that the Earl of Lucan and his large body of fresh cavalry would charge down the hill to their speedy assistance. But no assistance whatever came, owing to his Lordship not having heard of De St. Ruth's sudden death, until it was too late to send succour to them, and they were taken in flank by Mackay, who was reinforced by the English infantry, and, after a long and obstinate resistance, at last broken.

The success which attended Major-General Mackay, and Sir Francis Compton on the right, enabled Major-General Tollemache to repair the great disorder of the English centre, and make another attack on that of the Irish. On arriving at the middle of the bog, where the English regiments were being defeated, two hundred yards distant from the outmost ditch at the foot of the hill, Tollemache re-formed, and strengthened with fresh troops the defeated and disordered regiments, and then drove back, after a fearful resistance, the Irish with a loss of about 300 men.

A result equal to that obtained by these successive movements of De Ginckell's right and centre, was also gained by his left at Urachree. The detachments from the Marquis de Ruvigny's and Sir John Lanier's regiments, arrived from Aughrim just in time to aid the foreign cavalry, in their endeavour to force their way round the bog. De Ginckell directed De Ruvigny to take command of the detachments of his own regiment. Sir John Lanier's the Queen's Regiment of Horse Guards, and the Earl of Portland's or King William's own Regiment of Horse Guards, amounting to between 1,000 and 1,300 choice men. At last, the English succeeded, with great difficulty, in getting round the bog ; and, so determined was the opposition they had to encounter, that their Commander, for a long time, entertained serious doubts of their ever being able to accomplish their design.

Notwithstanding that the two lines of the Irish were now broken and in disorder, and that they were in want of a leader to give them uniform orders, they still bravely and resolutely fought on. Now, the Williamite cavalry and infantry on the right, mixing with those of the Irish left, a heavy and continued fire was exchanged, and a desperate dispute, fiercely maintained all along their line. The Irish, bravely resolved to keep possession of their ditches, while the English, Dutch, Danes, and other foreign troops, were as fully determined to drive them out of them. The old Castle of Aughrim still resolutely held out, but, as the entire of the English right wing had already passed, its possession was of no further consequence to the Irish army.

It was now very near eight o'clock in the evening, and Major-General Mackay on the right marched with horse and foot against the Irish left wing. Major-General Tollemache pushed up from the centre, and was joined by the Marquis de Ruvigny's horse, from Baron de Ginckell's left wing at Urachree, and all advanced together up the hill. Still, with their two lines of battle broken, the Irish contended stoutly against those three hostile bodies, and defended every ditch along the hill to the camp. In the struggle to reach the top of the hill, the Williamite infantry threw off their coats, and the prophecy of the Irish was thus fulfilled, that the Gauls, which meant English, or other foreigners, would find their coats too heavy going up the hill at the fight of Aughrim O'Kallagh. The Earl of Lucan, who was stationed on the top of Kilcomedan Hill, to the rear of the Irish centre, impatiently waiting for orders from Lieutenant-General de St. Ruth, did not once during the day take part in this sanguinary battle, or assist his countrymen in fighting, until now, as he was not aware of the death of the Commander-in-chief, and was too good a soldier to disobey orders. Seeing that all was now lost, owing to the death of their leader, he resolved to render his unfortunate countrymen all the assistance in his power, by seeing that they retreated in regular and proper order. The English pursued the Irish infantry to the

top of Kilcomedan Hill, with a cry of ' Blood, blood,' and resolved to give no quarter. Here, having destroyed the camp which had protected the Irish, the latter fled in the direction of the large red bog, while their cavalry, under the gallant Lord Lucan, retreated towards the town of Loughrea, bringing with them the remains of the brave, but unfortunate, Sieur de St. Ruth.

The events which had taken place on the right and centre occurred opportunely for the safety of the Huguenot regiments, for, after being repeatedly repulsed with great loss by the Irish, they took shelter behind a *chevaux-de-frize*. But, notwithstanding this defence, the Huguenot infantry were on the point of being cut to pieces by the Irish, who rushed upon them, sword in hand, when a regiment of Danish Guards — the King of Denmark's — about 800 strong, came up to their aid, and rescued them from the impending danger, by attacking the Irish flank, and compelling them to fall back. However, as soon as the Irish recovered from the effects of the charge, they again, not fearing the reinforced Huguenots, boldly renewed the attack, and drove them back with the same success they had achieved before the King of Denmark's Foot Guards had come up. Major-General the Marquis la Forrest, observing the great danger to which his brave countrymen were exposed, resolved to bring to their assistance a still greater force. The arrival of this second body of troops gradually gave a turn to this long-continued and deadly struggle. The Marquis la Forrest then formed the three Huguenot regiments, the Danes, and all the others he had brought up, into one division, which charged the Irish most determinedly. The first battalion of Irish, after making a last struggle, were compelled to retreat before this strong host. This disaster threw the Irish in the rear also into a state of disorder, and the whole of their battalions, after standing their ground up to this so manfully, now gave way before the superior force of the Marquis la Forrest. The loud and rapid report of musketry was now heard by them from the top of the hill, and they saw with dismay that De Ginckell's troops had succeeded in depriving them of any assistance, by defeating their left and centre. Thus the brave Irish, who for over two hours had fought without intermission, and maintained the Pass of Urachee, were reluctantly obliged to give way, and do the best they could to save themselves. However, the Danish cavalry on the extreme left were kept at bay by the Irish there ; and many of the latter afterwards effected their retreat, but so slowly that a great number of them were put to the sword by the enemy. The Irish force stationed along the little river, on the most remote part of De Ginckell's left, still held their ground. They comprised horse and foot, and were closely watched by De Ginckell's Danish cavalry and infantry. The Danes acted very cautiously, however, and did not venture to attack the Irish here, until certain that Mackay had succeeded at Aughrim, and that the whole of De Ginckell's army were marching up the hill. When the Danes engaged the Irish, the latter, though disheartened by the defeat of the rest of their army, resolved to make all the resistance in their power, which they did most creditably for over half an hour, at the expiration of which time they were obliged to retreat before the overwhelming numbers brought to bear against them. All the foreign cavalry in the Williamite army, but particularly the Danes, now fell upon the broken and disordered Irish ranks, instead of pursuing the Irish cavalry, who were retreating in perfect military order under Lord Lucan ; and a scene of the most disreputable slaughter took place. Those who survived of the Irish generals, captains, other officers, and chaplains, made every exertion to facilitate the safe retreat of the defeated troops.

A circumstance now occurred which shows clearly how capable the Irish are of remaining cool, even on the most trying occasions, and which saved the lives of several of them. Father James O'Reilly on the retreat of his regiment, observing it was closely followed by the enemy, commanded a drummer to beat a charge. This stratagem had the desired effect. The Baron de Ginckell's troops, imagining the Irish soldiers were about to stand and attack them, halted, and formed in order to resist them, and the time thus gained enabled the Irish to gain the bog, and get beyond the reach of their enemies. It was now after eight o'clock, and, as if to cast a veil over the scene of slaughter, a fog arose, and thick misty rain began to descend. This was providential, as it aided the Irish infantry to retreat, some of whom wended their way towards Galway, but the greater portion to Limerick. De Ginckell, seeing matters were to his satisfaction, captured the old castle of Aughrim, and massacred all the Irish there, with the exception of Colonel Burke, his major, eleven officers, and forty soldiers. This was an instance of great clemency on the part of the English, contrasted with their treatment of others who belonged to the Irish army, both here and at the Boyne, for not more than 450 were taken prisoners, including the officers, and the wounded Irish, who were very numerous, were mercilessly put to death.

A body consisting of 2,000 of the Irish, who were cut off by the movements of De Ginckell's army, threw down their arms, and asked for quarter, but were all murdered on the spot, and Viscount Galway was perfidiously slain after the English had promised to give the Irish quarter.

Owing to the retreat of the Irish from Aughrim, the bodies of their slain were left unburied on the battlefield, with very few exceptions ; and, consequently, great numbers of dogs, ravens, and other carnivorous animals collected to feast on the dead. A remarkable instance of the gratitude and affection of the canine species occurred on the field of Aughrim, under the following circumstances. An officer in the Irish army had a favourite wolf-dog, to which he was very much attached. This faithful animal had followed him all through the war, and during the warmest attacks could not be separated from him. At length when the officer bravely fell in charging the English ranks, the wolf-dog lay across the dead body, whining piteously, until forced by hunger to seek food. It then joined the other dogs, and satisfied its appetite on other bodies, but on no account would allow anything to meddle with the remains of its departed master. It thus continued alternately to keep guard, and appease its hunger, until at last, all the bodies were devoured with the exception of its master's. The wolf-dog still remained, though there was now nothing left but the skeleton, retiring each night to the neighbouring villages to procure food. In this manner, the noble animal continued until the month of January, a period of nearly six months, when a soldier in Colonel Ffoulke's Regiment, being stationed near the place, one day accidentally passed where the skeleton lay. The ever watchful dog, imagining he had come for the purpose of disturbing his master's bones, sprang at the Williamite, and endeavoured to seize him by the throat. The former stepping aside with great agility raised his musket to his shoulder, took steady aim and fired. In a second the faithful dog fell dead over the relics of its master.

The loss sustained by the Irish army in this battle was about 4,000 killed and 450 prisoners. It must be also remembered that previous to the sudden and unexpected death of Lieutenant-General de St. Ruth, their Commander-in-chief, the Irish had not lost many men, while the Williamite forces under Baron de Ginckell were beaten back with great slaughter in several unsuccessful attempts, which they made upon the Irish army up to that time. The number of Irish officers taken prisoners was 111, and those killed between 500 and 600, including De St. Ruth, and others of distinction. It will be observed by these figures that the Irish gentry were not sparing of their blood in the cause of their religion and country, and that they intended keeping their word, when they unanimously said that at Aughrim they were resolved to die or conquer ; and their descendants should feel justly proud of the long and noble struggle which they maintained against superior numbers, for although they were defeated at Aughrim it cannot be alleged that they lost that bloody battle dishonourably.

Baron de Ginckell's loss in killed and wounded was something more than 3,000 men, including seventy-three officers killed — namely, one major-general, two colonels, one lieutenant-colonel, four majors, nineteen captains, twenty-four lieutenants, and twenty-two ensigns and comets. Amongst the wounded were one hundred and eleven officers, most of whom died. Baron de Ginckell captured all the tents of the Irish army, their military stores, provisions, a great quantity of arms, nine heavy field-pieces, thirty-two colours, and eleven standards.

The Irish chieftains ; or, A struggle for the crown (1872)

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July 12 2010