

'Aghrim's blood-stained field'

Battle of Aghrim

Thomas Babington Macaulay, Lord

On the eleventh of July, Ginkell, having repaired the fortifications of Athlone, and left a garrison there, fixed his headquarters at Ballinasloe, about four miles from Aghrim, and rode forward to take a view of the Irish position. On his return he gave orders that ammunition should be served out, that every musket and bayonet should be got ready for action, and that early on the morrow every man should be under arms without beat of drum. Two regiments were to remain in charge of the camp : the rest, unencumbered by baggage, were to march against the enemy.

Soon after six, the next morning, the English were on the way to Aghrim. But some delay was occasioned by a thick fog which hung till noon over the moist valley of the Suck : a further delay was caused by the necessity of dislodging the Irish from some outposts ; and the afternoon was far advanced when the two armies at length confronted each other, with no-thing but the bog and the breastwork between them. The English and their allies were under twenty thousand ; the Irish above twenty-five thousand.

Ginkell held a short consultation with his principal officers. Should he attack instantly, or wait till the next morning? Mackay was for attacking instantly ; and his opinion prevailed. At five the battle began. The English foot, in such order as they could keep on treacherous and uneven ground, made their way, sinking deep in mud at every step, to the Irish works. But those works were defended with a resolution such as extorted some words of ungracious eulogy even from men who entertained the strongest prejudices against the Celtic race. [1] Again and again the assailants were driven back. Again and again they returned to the struggle. Once they were broken, and chased across the morass : but Talmash rallied them, and forced the pursuers to retire. The fight had lasted two hours : the evening was closing in ; and still the advantage was on the side of the Irish. Ginkell began to meditate a retreat. The hopes of Saint Ruth rose high. " The day is ours, my boys," he cried, waving his hat in the air. " We will drive them before us to the walls of Dublin." But fortune was already on the turn. Mackay and Ruvigny, with the English and Huguenot cavalry, had succeeded in passing the bog at a place where two horsemen could scarcely ride abreast. Saint Ruth at first laughed when he saw the Blues, in single file, struggling through the morass under a fire which every moment laid some gallant hat and feather on the earth. " What do they mean?" he asked ; and then he swore that it was pity to see such fine fellows rushing to certain destruction. " Let them cross, however," he said. " The more they are, the more we shall kill." But soon he saw them laying hurdles on the quagmire. A broader and safer path was formed : squadron aftersquadron reached firm ground : the flank of the Irish army was speedily turned. The French general was hastening to the rescue when a cannon-ball carried off his head. Those who were about him thought that it would be dangerous to make his fate known. His corpse was wrap-ped in a cloak, carried from the field, and laid, with all secrecy, in the sacred ground among the ruins of the ancient monastery of Loughrea. Till the fight was over, neither army was aware that he was no more. The crisis of the battle had arrived ; and there was none to give direction. Sarsfield was in command of the reserve. But he had been strictly enjoined by Saint Ruth not to stir without orders ; and no orders came. Mackay and Ruvigny, with their horse, charged the Irish in flank. Talmash and his foot returned to the attack in front with dogged determination. The breastwork was carried. The Irish, still fighting, retreated from enclosure to enclosure. But, as enclosure after enclosure was forced, their efforts became fainter and fainter. At length they broke and fled. Then followed a horrible carnage. The conquerors were in a savage mood. For a report had been spread among them that, during the early part of the battle, some English captives who had been admitted to quarter had been put to the sword. Only four hundred prisoners were taken. The number of the slain was, in proportion to the number engaged, greater than in any other battle of that age. But for the coming on of a moonless night, made darker by a misty rain, scarcely a man would have escaped. The obscurity enabled Sarsfield, with a few squadrons which still remained unbroken, to cover the retreat. Of the conquerors, six hundred were killed, and about a thousand wounded.

The English slept that night on the ground which had been so desperately contested. On the following day they buried their companions in arms, and then marched westward. The van-quished were left unburied, a strange and ghastly spectacle. Four thousand Irish corpses were counted on the

field of battle. A hundred and fifty lay in one small enclosure, a hundred and twenty in another. But the slaughter had not been confined to the field of battle. One who was there tells us that, from the top of the hill on which the Celtic camp had been pitched, he saw the country, to the distance of near four miles, white with the naked bodies of the slain. The plain looked, he said, like an immense pasture covered by flocks of sheep. As usual, different estimates were formed even by eye-witnesses. But it seems probable that the number of the Irish who fell was not less than seven thousand. Soon a multitude of dogs came to feast on the carnage. These beasts became so fierce, and acquired such a taste for human flesh, that it was long dangerous for men to travel that road otherwise than in companies. [2]

The beaten army had now lost all the appearance of an army, and resembled a rabble crowding home from a fair after a faction fight. One great stream of fugitives ran toward Galway, another toward Limerick. The roads to both cities were covered with weapons which had been flung away. Ginkell offered sixpence for every musket. In a short time so many wagon-loads were collected that he reduced the price to twopence ; and still great numbers of muskets came in. [3]

The conquerors marched first against Galway. D'Usson was there, and had under him seven regiments, thinned by the slaughter of Aghrim, and utterly disorganized and disheartened. The last hope of the garrison and of the Roman Catholic inhabitants was that Baldearg O'Donnell, the promised deliverer of their race, would come to the rescue. But Baldearg O'Donnell was not duped by the superstitious veneration of which he was the object. While there had been any doubt about the issue of the conflict between the Englishry and the Irishry, he had stood aloof. On the day of the battle he had remained at a safe distance with his tumultuary army ; and, as soon as he had learned that his countrymen had been put to rout, he had fled, plundering and burning all the way, to the mountains of Mayo. Thence he sent to Ginkell offers of submission and service. Ginkell gladly seized the opportunity of breaking up a formidable band of marauders, and of turning to good account the influence which the name of a Celtic dynasty still exercised over the Celtic race. The negotiation, how-ever, was not without difficulties. The wandering adventurer at first demanded nothing less than an earldom. After some haggling he consented to sell the love of a whole people, and his pretensions to regal dignity, for a pension of five hundred pounds a year. Yet the spell which bound his followers to him was not altogether broken. Some enthusiasts from Ulster were willing to fight under the O'Donnell against their own language and their own religion. With a small body of these devoted adherents, he joined a division of the English army, and on several occasions did useful service to William. [4]

When it was known that no succor was to be expected from the hero whose advent had been foretold by so many seers, the Irish who were shut up in Galway lost all heart. D'Usson had returned a stout answer to the first summons of the besiegers : but he soon saw that resistance was impossible, and made haste to capitulate. The garrison was suffered to retire to Limerick with the honors of war. A full amnesty for past offences was granted to the citizens ; and it was stipulated that, within the walls, the Roman Catholic priests should be allowed to perform in private the rites of their religion. On these terms the gates were thrown open. Ginkell was received with profound respect by the Mayor and Aldermen, and was complimented in a set speech by the Recorder. D'Usson, with about two thousand three hundred men, marched unmolested to Limerick. [5]

[1] " They maintained their ground much longer than they had been accustomed to do," says Burnet. " They behaved themselves like men of another nation," says Story. " The Irish were never known to fight with more resolution," says the London Gazette.

[2] Story's Continuation ; London Gazette, July 20, 23, 1691 ; Mémoires de Berwick ; Life of James, ii., 456 ; Burnet, ii., 79 ; Macariæ Excidium ; Light to the Blind ; Letter from the English camp to Sir Arthur Rawdon, in the Rawdon Papers ; History of William the Third, 1702.

The narratives to which I have referred differ very widely from each other. Nor can the difference be ascribed solely or chiefly to partiality. For no two narratives differ more widely than that which will be found in the Life of James, and that which will be found in the memoirs of his son.

In consequence, I suppose, of the death of Saint Ruth, and of the absence of D'Usson, there is at the French War-office no despatch containing a detailed account of the battle.

[3] Story's Continuation.

[4] Story's Continuation ; Macariæ Excidium ; Life of James ii. 464 ; London Gazette, July 30, Aug. 17, 1691 ; Light to the Blind.

[5] Story's Continuation ; Macariae Excidium ; Life of James ii. 495 ; London Gazette, July 30, Aug. 3, 1691

The history of England from the accession of James II (1856)

Author : Macaulay, Thomas Babington Macaulay, 1st Baron, 1800-1859

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History of Ireland

W.C. Taylor, Esq

The annalists of the time record with surprise, that Ginkle would not allow his soldiers to kill the sleeping men ; and some bigots were greatly scandalized at the respect which the general expressed for the officers and soldiers of this gallant garrison. He learned from them, that the Irish suspected James and Louis of an intention to unite Ireland to France, and that they would much rather be connected with England; if their rights were respected. " It is your fault," said they, " that you have so many enemies. We are sensible of our unhappiness in de-pending on the French; but you have made it necessary for us. We must, and will, and are preparing to fight it out."

His narrow escape from utter ruin made Ginckle anxious to terminate the war on equitable conditions ; and after infinite difficulty, he obtained a proclamation from the lords-justices, far different from any they had previously issued. It set forth the greater blessings that Ireland would enjoy under the dominion of England, rather than of France ; it offered a free pardon to all who should surrender within three weeks ; security in person and property to all officers and governors of garrisons, with a promise of equal or superior rank under William's government ; and a free exercise of religion, with such security as the king and the Irish parliament could devise.

The French laboured strenuously to destroy the effect of this proclamation. They declared, that Louis had determined to make more vigorous exertions in behalf of his Irish allies than he had hitherto done, and that he was preparing to send a powerful fleet and army to their assistance. This was in fact true ; but the hope of succour would scarcely have overcome the disinclination of the Irish to unite with the French, had not the efforts of Louis's friends been ably seconded by the castle faction in Dublin. The underlings of administration exerted them-selves in this, as on countless other occasions, to defeat the wise and beneficent measures of their superiors. The misgovernment of Ireland has scarcely ever been owing to the different English noblemen and statesmen who filled the office of chief governor or chief secretary. It was owing to the organized faction of their inferiors, who had acquired a thorough know-ledge of all the tricks and chicanery of office, from their long monopoly of place and power. On this occasion, their avarice and greedy desire after forfeiture, was further stimulated by their pride. They were, for the most part, men of mean birth and obscure parentage, the sons of those who had been elevated to fortune by the strange chances of the Cromwellian war ; and they felt that they would be humbled, even in their own eyes, if compelled to sit on the same bench with the genuine aristocracy of Ireland, whether of Norman or native descent. The representations of this vile faction led the Irish to believe that the government was in-sincere in its offers, and they therefore resolved to abide the chances of the field.

After the loss of Athlone, St. Ruth retired with his army to the hill of Kilcommeden, in the county of Roscommon, and prepared to decide the fate of Ireland by a pitched battle. The position which he selected was truly formidable ; the left was protected by a small stream running down through abrupt hills, and beyond this lay an extensive morass, through which there was only one narrow road. The

passage was commanded by the ruinous castle of Aughrim, and might easily have been made impregnable. St. Ruth believed that it was so already. The bog extended in front of the Irish position to the right, where there were some hills opening to more level ground. A little in advance stood the house and grounds of Urachree, which were occupied by a party of horse.

The English army prepared to attack this position on the twelfth of July at noon. The battle commenced on the part of Ginckle by an attempt to force the Pass of Urachree. The Danish horse, to whom the service was intrusted, broke when led to the charge ; two English regiments of dragoons were successively beaten in the same attempt ; and the Earl of Port-land, whose regiment next advanced, found that the Irish had left Urachree, and taken a better position behind the stream, which flanked their right wing. Ginckle's mind was shaken by the spirit shown in the defence of this post. He drew off his men, and summoned a council of war. It was at first resolved to delay the battle until the following morning ; but anxiety for the result, and an impatience of anxious suspense, induced the leaders to change their resolution. In consequence of this delay, the engagement did not commence until half-past four in the evening, when Ginckle pushed some battalions of infantry over the ground that had been already so well contested. The rivulet was soon crossed ; but the English were forced to sustain a close and heavy fire from the Irish, posted behind hedges that intersected the hill. Between these hedges the Irish had cut lines of communication ; so that when they retired, the English infantry advancing in pursuit were exposed to destructive volleys on both flanks, and forced to give ground in their turn. The manifested intention of the English general to force his right, induced St. Ruth to bring up fresh troops from the centre ; and Ginckle seized the opportunity to cross the bog, and attack the front of the Irish position. Four regiments were ordered on this service ; and they waded through the morass with great difficulty. From the enemy they met no opposition, until they had reached the foot of the hill, when the Irish pursued the same plan that had been already successful on the right, firing from behind hedges, and retiring until the English became entangled in the difficult ground, when they suddenly poured in a close and destructive fire. The English recoiled and made a stand at the edge of the bog. The Irish followed up their success by a furious charge. The four regiments were broken and driven across the bog, quite to the muzzles of their cannon. Most of the principal officers remained prisoners. Two other divisions had crossed the bog ; but they maintained their position, and could not be tempted to advance. Completely successful on the right and centre, St Ruth, in the fulness of his Joy, exclaimed, " Now will I drive the English to the walls of Dublin!" — a boast which the special interposition of Providence alone pre-vented him from accomplishing. Ginckle's last hope depended on the success of Talmash's cavalry on the left ; but that leader had to contend with no ordinary difficulties. The pass by the castle of Aughrim would only admit two horsemen abreast ; and it was commanded by a small battery, which, however, was badly served. Just as St. Ruth was about to charge the divisions that still maintained their ground, his attention was directed to Talmash's movement on his left. He expressed great admiration of their valour, and regret for their certain destruction. He ordered the cavalry to be brought up to attack them as they emerged from the defile, and rode himself to direct the fire of the battery. Ten minutes more would have completed the ruin of the English army. An attack, however weak on Talmash's detachment, must have sealed its ruin. The Irish horse were far more numerous. They had never yet been beaten in any encounter ; and now, had they rushed on the English dragoons, making their way through a narrow defile, and broken by the fire of the battery, the event could not have been doubtful. At this critical moment, St. Ruth fell by a ball from the English cannon beyond the bog. The battery ceased firing— the cavalry halted, waiting for orders ; and Talmash, seizing the un-hoped for opportunity, galloped without interruption to take a share in the contest at the centre.

It is impossible to discover the circumstances that left the Irish without a commander after the fall of St. Ruth. Sarsfield was probably not in the field ; for his indignation, after the loss of Athlone, led him into a serious quarrel with the French general

No other leader would venture to undertake the direction, and the consequence of course was fatal. The appearance of Talmash so unexpectedly was mistaken by both armies for a token of victory. The Irish, having heard a confused account of some great calamity on the left, believed that wing totally defeated. The English of course thought that their general must have obtained some signal advantage, before he could have penetrated so far. The remaining English divisions now forced their way over the morass, and the Irish began to retreat. At first their movements were performed with great regularity ; but as each troop and battalion now acted independently, their evolutions soon interfered with each other. Cavalry became mingled with infantry ; and before the evening closed, their retreat was a complete rout. They were pursued with merciless slaughter. Before the death of St. Ruth, the Irish lost

scarcely a man, while the loss of the British had been very severe. The tide of fortune was now turned ; for the Irish were cut down in crowds, without attempting any resistance. The number of the British killed and wounded was over two thousand ; that of the Irish exceeded seven thousand.

Ginckle was not much intoxicated by his victory at Aughrim. He felt that it was nothing better than a lucky escape ; and, from the spirit displayed by the enemy, feared that the termination of the war was still at a distance. Neither were the Irish so greatly dispirited as might have been expected. They felt that victory had been wrested from them by one of those chances which baffle ordinary calculation and did not yet despair of success in another field.

History of Ireland, from the Anglo-Norman invasion till the union of the country with Great Britain (1833)

Author : Taylor, W. C. (William Cooke), 1800-1849 ; Sampson, William, 1764-1836

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History of Ireland Mac-Geoghegan, Abbé

After Athlone was taken the army of King James marched to Ballinasloe, where they stopped the day following. It was here that Tirconnel gave up the command. He surrendered it to the Marquis de Saint Ruth. This general marched his army the day following, and having crossed the river Suck, he encamped at Aughrim, which was a very advantageous position. The castle of Aughrim, situate at the head of a causeway, being the only place through which the enemy could pass, protected its front ; on the other side it was surrounded by a bog of great extent. The enemy, who were in pursuit of the Irish array, appeared on Monday the 22d, within view of the camp, and began to defile through the causeway. Colonel Walter Burke was posted with his regiment in the castle to oppose their passage, but, through some error fatal to the cause he was engaged in, he was prevented from accomplishing his object. Having ordered the necessary ammunition to be sent for to the camp, four barrels of powder, and as many of ammunition were forwarded ; but instead of musket he found cannon balls, which were of no use. In consequence of this, the enemy's cavalry passed safely through the causeway, while the infantry were crossing the bog, and were drawn up in order of battle before the Irish army. Saint Ruth, like a skilful general, omitted nothing to resist them with effect. The battle began at one o'clock with equal fury on both sides, and lasted till night. James's infantry performed prodigies of valor, driving the enemy three times back to their cannon. It is said that at the third repulse Saint Ruth threw his hat into the air with joy ; but immediately after he unfortunately fell by a cannon-ball. His death soon changed the fortune of the day ; dreadful disorder followed ; the soldiers being left without a commander, the infantry, unsupported by the cavalry, were crushed by the enemy's horse, and the rout became general. The flower of the Irish army perished on this unhappy day, and had it not been for the presence of mind of the almoner of a regiment, called O'Reilly, who made a drum-major beat to the charge on a hill near the bog through which James's army was to march, the loss would have been still greater. By this stratagem the vanquished gained sufficient time to take the road for Limerick.

The history of Ireland : ancient and modern, taken from the most authentic records, and dedicated to the Irish Brigade (1851)

Author : Mac-Geoghegan, abbé (James), 1702-1763 ; O'Kelly, Patrick, 1754-1835?

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The people's history of Ireland John Frederick Finerty

De Ginkel Marches After St. Ruth—The Latter Prepares to “ Conquer or Die”—His Speech to the Irish Army on the Eve of Fighting

ENFORCEMENTS continued to reach De De Ginkel's camp near Athlone, where he lingered much longer than he originally intended, owing to the utter ruin which the bombardment had wrought. Another cause of his delay was his anxiety to obtain fresh supplies of ammunition, and he judged correctly that St. Ruth, rendered desperate by his late misfortune, would give him decisive battle at the very first opportunity. But, about July 10, all was in readiness, and leaving in Athlone a powerful garrison, the Dutch general and his fine army set out in pursuit of St. Ruth, who had now so many days “ the start” of his enemy. The English halted that night at Kilcashel, on the road to Ballinasloe. On the nth they reached the fords of the Suck, and the scouts reported the Irish pickets in full view on the heights of Garbally now the domain of the Earl of Clancarty, whose ancestor distinguished himself as an artillerist on the English side at Aughrim. De Ginkel, taking with him a formidable force of cavalry, crossed the river by the ford and rode forward to reconnoitre St. Ruth's position. The Irish pickets fell back as he advanced, and, reaching the crest of the heights, he beheld, through his field-glass, on an opposite elevation, about a mile and a half distant, the Irish army drawn up in “ battle's magnificently stern array,” matches lighted at the batteries, and their colors advanced, challenging to combat. He rode forward farther still, to get a closer view, and St. Ruth allowed him to gratify his curiosity unmolested, although he came within less than half a mile of the Irish lines. What he saw made De Ginkel thoughtful. His military glance showed him the strength of the Irish position, and St. Ruth's reputation as a competent general stood high in all the camps of Europe. He rode back to his camp and called a council of his officers, Mackay, Ruvigny, Talmash, and the rest. Having explained the situation, he asked for their opinion. Some were for trying a flank movement, which would draw St. Ruth from his chosen ground, but the bolder spirits said they had gone too far to turn aside without loss of honor, and a forward movement was decided on. The camp, guarded by two regiments, was left undisturbed. All superfluous clothing was laid aside, and, in light marching order, De Ginkel's army crossed the Suck, the movement being visible to St. Ruth from Kilcommodan Hill, “ the foot,” as Story has it, “ over the bridge; the English and French [Huguenot] horse over the ford above, and the Dutch and Danes over two fords below.” It was six o'clock in the morning of Sunday, July 12, 1691 (July 23, new style), while the early church bells were ringing in Ballinasloe, when they prepared to march on Aughrim. English annalists, intending, perhaps, to minimize the prowess of the Irish army, place De Ginkel's strength at 18,000 men of all arms, but the roster of his regiments, as given by Story and other contemporaneous writers, shows conclusively that his force 'could not havd' been less than from 25,000 to 30,000 men, nearly all seasoned veterans. The Williamite chaplain's map of Ginkel's order of battle shows over seventy (70) regimental organizations, not including Lord Portland's horse, which joined after the line was formed. Some of the bodies shown as regiments may have been battalions or squadrons, but, making due allowance for these, and counting 400 men as the average of seventy distinct formations, which is an almost absurdly low estimate, the Williamite army could not, possibly, have been less than 28,000 men. Its artillery was formidable, and the cavalry British, Dutch, Danish, German, and Huguenot was accounted the best in Europe. As this fine force advanced toward its objective, the scared rural folk fled before it, remembering, no doubt, the excesses committed by the armies, of William and Douglas in Leinster and Munster during the preceding year. The writer lived for some years almost within sight of Kilcommodan Hill, and heard from the simple, but intelligent, peasantry, whose great-grandfathers had spoken with soldiers of King James's army, how De Ginkel's troops defiled in four great, glittering columns of scarlet and blue and steel, horse, foot, and cannoneers, over the Suck and took up .their positions on the Galway side of the river. Their brass field-pieces shone like burnished gold in the morning sun. They halted where the road from Ballinasloe, running west by south, branches around the north side of Kilcommodan, toward Kilconnell, Athenry, and Galway, and around the south end of that elevation toward Kiltormer, Lawrencetown, .and Clonfert. The Irish pickets fell back before them, firing as they retired, from the heights of Knockdunloe, Garbally, and Liscappel. De Ginkel marshaled his army into two lines of

battle, corresponding almost exactly to the Irish formation, the infantry in the front line, and strongest, finally, toward the centre, and the cavalry on the flanks, supported by the cannon.

Up to about 7.30 o'clock, tradition says, the morning remained beautifully clear, and the Irish camp, on the rising ground, was plainly visible to the enemy. St. Ruth's army, except the officers and men on duty and the few non-Catholic Jacobites who followed its fortunes, was observed to be assisting at mass altars having been erected by the chaplains at the head of every regiment. It was, according to the imposing French custom, which St. Ruth closely followed, military High Mass, during which, at the elevation of the Host, there was rolling of the drums and blare of trumpets, instead of the pealing of cathedral bells. The horses of the Irish cavalry were "on herd" along the grassy hillside, under guard; but, when the English advance was sighted, the bugles sounded "To Horse" and there was "mounting in hot haste" of Sarsfield's and Galmoy's and Kilmallock's bronzed and bearded troopers: the paladins of the Boyne and Ballyneety. Divine service over, the Irish army at once occupied the positions assigned to the several corps by their general on the preceding day. Story and some other English writers claim that, on that day, also, St. Ruth addressed to his army a pompous, vain-glorious, and rather insulting speech, which he caused to be translated into English and Irish, by his interpreters, for the benefit of those to whom it was directed. But Irish chroniclers aver that he spoke to the troops with paternal consideration, reminded them of their country's sufferings, and their own duty, and called upon them, in words of nervous eloquence, in the name of honor, religion, and liberty, and for Ireland's military glory, to conquer or die.

Decisive Battle of Aughrim —It Opens Favorably for the Irish—Desperate Fighting in the Centre and at Urachree —Fortune or Treason Favors De Ginkel

BUT the fog, "arising from the moist valley of the Suck," had, meanwhile, gathered so densely that the rival armies, for a time, lost sight of each other, and De Ginkel's forward movement was suspended; but his soldiers rested in the positions previously determined on, although the formation had to be somewhat modified later in the day. It was about noon when the fog finally rolled away, and Ginkel's line of battle moved slowly onward, until, at last, to use the graphic words of Lord Macaulay, the rival armies "confronted each other, with no-thing but the bog and the breastwork between them." The Irish historian, John Boyle, states, in his fine account of the conflict at Aughrim, that, at sight of the Williamite array, on the other side of the morass, the Irish army broke into loud shouts of defiance, which were vigorously responded to by their foes. There was a mutual mortal hatred expressed in those cheers. It meant "war to the knife," and, as at our own Buena Vista,

" Who heard the thunder of the fray
Break o'er the field beneath,
Well knew the watchword of that day
Was 'Victory or death!'"

Observing the strength of the Irish left at Aughrim Castle, De Ginkel resolved to manoeuvre toward Urachree, where his horse had a better chance, and, about one o'clock, began the battle with a cavalry advance in the direction of the latter point. The first charge was made by a Danish troop on an Irish picket. The latter met the shock so fiercely that the Danes, although superior in numbers, by the admission of Story, fled in great haste. Another party was sent forward, and still another the Irish responding with fresh bodies of their own, until, at last, Cunningham's dragoons, Eppinger's cavalry, and Lord Portland's horse all under the veteran General Holzapfel were drawn in on the English side. They charged furiously, and, for a moment, the Irish cavalry gave ground, drawing their opponents after them. The English, carried away by apparent success, rode at a gallop past the house of Urachree and were immediately charged in flank by the brave Lord Galmoy. A murderous conflict followed, but, as at the Boyne, the Irish horsemen showed their superiority, and their gallant enemies were forced to fall back in terrible disorder, leaving hundreds of their comrades dead or dying on the ensanguined field. Many of the Irish troopers fell also, and, on both sides, every man was killed or wounded by the sabre. The English left their heroic commander, General Holzapfel, among their dead. When De Ginkel saw his chosen cavalry repelled with slaughter from Urachree, he became profoundly anxious. There had been, up to this time, only a few partial demonstrations by the Anglo-Dutch infantry which had produced no impression whatever on St. Ruth's sturdy foot, who lay quietly in their works, waiting for their foes to advance to closer quarters.

De Ginkel, in deep distress of mind, summoned a council of war, which debated whether it were better to defer the battle until next day or renew the attack immediately. At one time, during the discussion, it was determined upon to send back to Ballinasloe for the tents, and encamp for the night where the army stood. This decision was afterward set aside, and, says Chaplain Story, “ it was agreed to prosecute the battel on the enemies’ right, by that means proposing to draw part of their strength from Aghrim [so he spells it] Castle, nigh which their main body was posted, that so our right might have the easier passage over to attack their left, and then our whole army might have opportunity to engage. This, I am told, was the advice of Major-General Mackay, a man of great judgment and long experience, and it had its desired success.”

We will take the Williamite chaplain’s account of the movement against the Irish right wing, which immediately followed the council of war : “ About half an hour past four in the afternoon, a part of our left wing moved toward the enemy,, and, at five o’clock, the battel began afresh. A party of our foot marched up to their ditches, all strongly guarded with musketers, and their horse posted advantageously to sustain them : here we fired one upon the other for a considerable time, and the Irish behaved themselves like men of another nation [mark the ungracious sneer], defending their ditches stoutly; for they would maintain one side till our men put their pieces over at the other, and then, having lines of communication from one ditch to another, they would presently post themselves again, and flank us. This occasioned great firing on both sides, which continued on the left nigh an hour and a half, ere the right of our army or the centre engaged, except with their cannon, which played on both sides. All this time, our men were coming up in as good order as the inconveniency of the ground would allow, and now General Mackay and the rest, seeing the enemy draw off several bodies of horse and foot from the left, and move toward their right, when our men pressed them very hard; they [the English generals] laid hold on that advantage, and ordered the foot to march over the bogg, which fronted the enemies’ main battel. Colonel Earl, Colonel Herbert, Colonel Creighton, and Colonel Brewer’s regiments went over at the narrowest place, where the hedges on the enemies’ side run farthest into the bogg. These four regiments were ordered to march to the lowest ditches, adjoining to the side of the bogg, and there to post themselves till our horse could come about by Aghrim Castle and sustain them, and till the other foot marched over the bogg below, where it was broader, and were sustained by Colonel Foulk’s and Brigadier Stewart’s [forces]. Colonel Earl advanced with his regiment, and the rest after him, over the bogg, and a rivulet that ran through it, being most of them up to their middles in mudd and water. The Irish at their near approach to the ditches fired upon them, but our men contemning all disadvantages, advanced immediately to the lowest hedges, and beat the Irish from thence. The enemy, however, did not retreat far, but posted themselves in the next ditches before us, which our men seeing and disdaining [sic] to suffer their lodging so near us, they would needs beat them from thence also, and so from one hedge to another, till they got very nigh the enemies’ main battel. But the Irish had so ordered the matter as to make an easy passage for their horse amongst all those hedges and ditches, by which means they poured in great numbers both of horse and foot upon us : which Colonel Earl seeing, encouraged his men by advancing before them, and saying : ‘ There is no way to come off but to be brave!’ As great an example of true courage and generosity as any man this day living [1693], But, being flanked and fronted, as also exposed to the enemies’ shot from the adjacent ditches, our men were forced to quit their ground, and betake themselves to the bogg again, whither they were followed, or rather drove [sic] down by main strength of horse and foot, and a great many killed. Colonel Earl and Colonel Herbert were here taken prisoners; the former, after twice taking and retaking, got free at last, tho’ not without being wounded.

“ While this was doing here, Colonel St. John, Colonel Tiffin, Lord George Hambleton, the French [Huguenots] and other regiments were marching below on the same bogg. The Irish, in the meantime, laid so close in their ditches that several were doubtful whether they had any men at that place or not; but they were convinced of it at last; for no sooner were the French and the rest got within twenty yards, or less, of the ditches, but the Irish fired most furiously upon them, which our men as bravely sustained, and pressed forwards, tho’ they could scarce see one another for the smoak [sic] . And now the thing seemed so doubtful, for some time, that the by-standers would rather have given it on the Irish side, for they had driven our foot in the centre so far back that they were got almost in a line with some of our great guns, planted near the bogg, which we had not the benefit of at that juncture, because of the mixture of our men and theirs.

“ Major-General Ruvigny’s French horse and Sir John Lanier’s, being both posted on the right, were afterward drawn to the left, where they did very good service. And the right wing of our horse, in the meantime, were making what haste they could to succor our foot ; for, seeing the danger, and, in fact,

that all was in hazard by reason of the difficulty of the pass, they did more than men, in pressing and tumbling over a very dangerous place, and that amongst showers of bullets, from a regiment of dragoons and two regiments of foot, posted conveniently under cover by the enemy, to obstruct our passage. Our horse at this place were sustained by Major-General Kirke and Colonel Gustavus Hambleton's foot, who, after we had received the enemies' fire for a considerable time, marched under the walls of the castle, and lodged themselves in a dry ditch, in the throng of the enemies' shot [globular buttons cut from their jackets, when their ammunition failed], and some other old walls and ditches adjoining."

Commenting on the foregoing account of the Williamite chaplain, Mr. O'Callaghan, in his "Green Book," page 224, says : " He [Story] has the same fraudulent coloring I have previously exposed respecting this [the Huguenot] portion of the English left having ' kept their ground.' The Huguenot narrative [of the battle] is only wrong in the supposition that La Forest [Huguenot general] on the English left was successful with the French [Huguenot] infantry, before Ruvigny [Huguenot general], with his horse, had conquered in the centre; the first progress of the English having been on their right opposite Aughrim . . . where Sir Francis Compton with the van and Mackay with the rest of the English horse succeeded in forcing a passage; secondly, on the centre, where Talmash next to Mackay, and Ruvigny next to Talmash advanced ; and, thirdly, on the left, where La Forest first, and then the Danish horse and foot were enabled to cross."

*Battle of Aughrim Continued—Its Crisis—The English Turn Irish Left—St. Ruth Killed
by Cannon Ball—Confusion and Final Defeat of Irish Army*

THE lodgment made by the English, or, rather, Ulster regiment of Gustavus Hamilton in the dry ditch, as described by Chaplain Story, together with another lodgment made in front of the Irish left centre by some of the infantry who escaped the slaughter when they were so gallantly repulsed at that point shortly before, however effected, threw the chances of victory, for the first time that day, heavily on the side of De Ginkel. St. Ruth, whose sharp attention was, doubtless, mainly drawn off toward his centre and right, where the battle had raged fiercely and continuously for nearly two hours, soon became aware of the movement inaugurated by the enemy's cavalry at the castle pass. He seemed astonished, conceiving that the point was strongly garrisoned, and asked of his officers : " What do they mean ?" The reply was : " They mean to pass there and flank our left !" St. Ruth observed them for a moment, laughed incredulously, having still " that fatal confidence in the strength of his left flank," and exclaimed in his impetuous fashion: " Pardieu ! but they are brave ! What a pity they should be so exposed!" A few minutes previously, exhilarated by the splendid prowess of the Irish infantry, in the centre and at Urachree, he threw his plumed hat in the air and shouted : " Well done, my children ! The day is ours ! Now we will beat them back even to the gates of Dublin!"

The unlooked-for passage of the English horse on the Irish left has been variously explained, or, rather, sought to be explained. Almost every Irish writer, the careful O'Callaghan included, attributes the disaster to a lack of proper ammunition on the part of Colonel Walter Bourke's regiment, to which was committed the defence of the castle. Having exhausted their original supply, the soldiers opened the barrels in reserve and found that the bullets were cast for the calibre of the English guns which they had used earlier in the war, and were too large for the bore of the French muskets, which they carried at Aughrim. Other authors aver that when the Irish left was weakened, to strengthen the right, the front instead of the rear line of the covering brigade (Henry Luttrell's) was withdrawn, thus enabling the infantry that accompanied Sir Francis Compton's horse who were twice repulsed, but, being heavily rein-forced, again advanced to post themselves in " the dry ditch" referred to by Chaplain Story ; while General Talmash made a corresponding lodgment, with his rallied foot, on the right centre. Gross carelessness, deliberate treason, or both combined, contributed to the Irish disaster. St. Ruth himself, however, would not seem to have been much concerned by the apparition of the English cavalry forming toward his left flank, in the small area of firm ground, just across from the old castle. On the contrary, like Napoleon before the final charge at Waterloo, " the flash of victory passed into his eyes," and, as he observed the enemy forming with some difficulty in that narrow space, while the single infantry regiment in the dry ditch cowering under the rain of Irish bullets, cried out to his staff, " We have won the battle, gentlemen! They are beaten. Now let us beat them to the purpose!" His bodyguard was formed in rear of the staff and he had already ordered his cavalry reserve to report to him. Therefore, these formidable squadrons came up at a trot that shook the ground over the hill behind him. We are not informed of the name of the officer who led them fortunately for his fame, for he must have been either a dastard or a traitor. Instead of committing the command to a subordinate

general, as he should have done, St. Ruth prepared to lead the attack in person, and the mass of horsemen, proud and confident, began to move slowly down the slope in the direction of the disheartened but still determined enemy. The general, dismounting, halted for a brief space at the battery which defended that flank of the army, addressed some remarks to the officer in command, and, it is said, directed the fire of one of the cannon, with his own hand, toward a particular point of the causeway leading to the castle. Then he remounted his superb gray charger the third he had ridden that fatal day and, dressed as he was in full uniform, made a conspicuous mark for the English gunners. He drew his sword, his hard features, according to tradition, kindling with enthusiasm, and was about to utter the command to charge Compton's and Levinson's cavalry a charge that must have given the victory to Ireland, because, according to Macaulay, De Ginkel already meditated a retreat when, right before the eyes of his horrified followers, his head was dashed from his shoulders by a cannon shot, fired from the English battery at the other side of the bog! His sword remained firmly gripped in his right hand, but his affrighted horse galloped down the hill, the body of the rider remaining erect in the saddle, until it was knocked off by the over-hanging branches of a tree whose remnants are still pointed out to the traveler. A general paralysis of the Irish left wing, chiefly among the horse, would seem to have immediately followed the sudden and ghastly death of St. Ruth. The French attendants at once threw a cloak over the headless trunk, with the well-meant, but, as it turned out, ill-considered object of concealing the general's unlooked-for fall from the all but victorious Irish army.

St. Ruth's bodyguard halted the moment he fell, and, when the servants bore the body over the hill toward the rear, they acted as escort. The Irish horse, through the timidity or treachery of their chief, halted also, and, unaccountably, followed the movement in retreat of the body-guard. The single word "Charge!" uttered by any general officer, before the cavalry retired, would have saved the day; but it was never uttered. The stubborn Mackay and his lieutenants, from their position near the castle below, divined, from the confusion they observed on the near hillside, that something fatal had occurred. They took fresh heart. More of their cavalry, strongly supported by infantry, came up. All these reheartened troops began to push forward beyond the pass, and even on their beaten centre and left the long-baffled British and their allies again assumed the offensive. No orders reached the Irish troops mainly foot still in position on the right and centre and even on a portion of the left for the order of battle had perished with St. Ruth. Was it possible that, impressed by repeated dissensions, he doubted the fidelity of his chiefs and feared to take any of them into his confidence? He must have misjudged most of them sorely if this was the case. Mere selfishness or vanity can not explain his fateful omission. The English cavalry, now practically unopposed, poured through the pass, penetrated to the firm ground on the north slope of the hill, and, finally, appeared in rear of the infantry of the Irish left wing. Their foot, too, had succeeded in making firm lodgment in the lowest ditches. The Irish still continued to fight bravely, "but without order or direction."

At the sight of the repeatedly routed British infantry crossing the bog in the centre, and the cavalry threatening their left and rear, it is averred by Boyle that a cry of "Treason!" rang through the ranks of the regiments so placed as to be able to observe the hostile movements. The enemy now vigorously attacked the Irish right and centre, but were as vigorously met, and again and again repulsed. For a long time, on the right particularly, they were unable to advance, and it would appear that the Irish soldiers in their front were totally ignorant of what had occurred in other parts of the field. The Irish infantry on the left, destitute of ammunition and having ejapended even their buttons and ramrods for projectiles, retired within the castle, where nearly all of them were finally slaughtered; or else broke off to the left, toward Kilconnell, and made for the large, red bog, which almost surrounded that flank, where many of them found refuge from the sabres of the pursuing cavalry. But even still the devoted centre and right, although furiously assaulted, refused to give way. At last, the uproar toward Aughrim, and the bullets of the outflanking enemy in the left rear, taking them in reverse, warned these brave troops that their position had become desperate. Twilight had already set in it was more than an hour after the fall of St. Ruth when the English horse and foot appeared almost behind them, toward the northwest; while the Dutch, Danish, and Huguenot cavalry, so long repelled at Urachree, supported by the foot that had, at long run, crossed the morass began to hem them in on all sides. Their bravest leaders had fallen, but this admirable infantry retired slowly from inclosure to inclosure, fighting the fight of despair, until they reached their camp, where the tents were still standing in the order in which they were pitched. Here they made their last heroic stand, but were, at length, broken and fled toward the red bog already mentioned. The English leveled the tents, so as to render pursuit more open, and then a dreadful slaughter of the broken Irish foot followed. Few of these brave men, worthy of a better fate, escaped the swords of the hostile horse. "Our foreigners, and especially the Danes, make excellent pursuers," writes Chaplain Story grimly. Irish historians say that two of the

Irish regiments, disdainful to fly, took position in a ravine, and there waited “till morning’s sun should rise and give them light to die.” They were discovered by the enemy next morning and perished to a man! The spot where they died is still pointed out and is called by the peasantry “the glen of slaughter.”

We have, unhappily, no better authority than tradition for stating that, toward the end of the battle, a part of the Irish cavalry, led by Sarsfield, covered the retreat of the survivors of the Irish foot on Loughrea and Limerick. In fact there seems to be a complete mystery about the action of the Irish cavalry after the death of the French general. Certain it is that this force did not act with the vigor it showed in the early part of the combat on the right or with the spirit it displayed at the Boyne; and this fact deepens the doubt as to whether Sarsfield was in the fight or not. Had it not been, as we are informed by the learned Abbe McGeoghegan, in his able “History of Ireland,” for one O’Reilly, the almoner of a regiment, who caused the charge to be sounded as the fugitives passed through a boggy defile on the line of retreat, the entire Irish infantry might have been destroyed. They were also aided by darkness, caused by “a thick misty rain,” brought on, no doubt, by the detonations of the firearms, acting on a humid atmosphere. Numbers of small arms and other munitions were abandoned in the flight; all the cannon, most of the colors, and the whole camp material fell into the hands of the enemy. Aughrim was to Ireland what Culloden was to Scotland and Waterloo to France an irretrievable military disaster, redeemed only by the desperate valor of the defeated army.

Even the most bitter and partisan of the English annalists admit, although with manifest reluctance, that the Irish army fought heroically in this murderous battle. Its losses are placed by Story, who witnessed the conflict throughout, at 7,000 killed on the spot and 500, including officers, made prisoners. This statement of his shows conclusively that almost all of the Irish wounded were put to the sword. Other writers, including King James himself, make the Irish loss somewhat less, but we are inclined to think that Story, in this case, came pretty near to the truth. He says in his interesting narrative, “looking amongst the dead three days after, when all of ours and some of theirs were buried, I reckoned in some small inclosures 150, in others 120, etc., lying most of them in the ditches where they were shot, and the rest from the top of the hill, where their camp had been, looked like a great flock of sheep, scattered up and down the country for almost four miles round.” The bodies had been stripped by the camp followers, which accounts for the white appearance to which Story makes allusion. Most of these corpses were inhumanly left above ground, to be the prey of birds and beasts, by the conquerors, and thus Aughrim is known to the Irish people as the “Field of our Un-buried Dead.” It was customary a generation ago, and may be so in our day, for the Catholic peasantry passing along the roads that wind around Kilcommodan, to uncover their heads reverently and offer up prayers for the souls of the heroes of their race who died there for faith, land, and liberty.

Story says he never could find out what became of St. Ruth’s corpse, “some say that it was left stripped amongst the other dead when our men pursued beyond the hill, and others that it was thrown into a bog.” In the neighborhood of Aughrim it was long believed that while still the left of the Irish army remained in position, the French staff officers laid the remains to rest under the chancel floor of the adjacent Abbey of Kilconnell. Other traditions are to the effect that they were buried in Loughrea Abbey, or beside those of Lord Galway, who fell in the same battle, in the ruined church of Athenry. Boyle, after mentioning the two last-named probabilities, says: “There is, however, reason to doubt both, and the writer is aware that the people of the locality where the battle was fought, directed by tradition, point to a few stunted white thorns, to the west of the hill toward Loughrea, beneath which, they say, rest the ashes of that great but unfortunate general.”

*Mortality Among Officers of Rank on Both Sides Acknowledged
English Loss at Aughrim English and Irish Comments
on Conduct of Battle*

BESIDES St. Ruth, the chief officers killed on the Irish side were, according to Story’s account, General Lord Kilmallock, General Lord Galway, Brigadier-General Connel (O’Connell), Brigadier-General W. Mansfield Barker, Brigadier-General Henry M.J. O’Neill, Colonel Charles Moore, his lieutenant-colonel and major; Colonel David Bourke, Colonel Ulick Bourke, Colonel Connor McGuire, Colonel James Talbot, Colonel Arthur, Colonel Mahony, Colonel Morgan, Major Purcell, Major O’Donnell, Major Sir John Everard, with several others of superior rank, “besides, at least, five hundred captains and subordinate officers.” This latter statement has been challenged by Irish historians, who claim that non-commissioned officers were included in the list. Story omitted from the

number of superior officers slain the name of Colonel Felix O'Neill, Judge-Advocate-General of the Irish army, whose body was found on the field. Of the less than five hundred Irish prisoners taken, twenty-six were general or field officers, including General Lord Duleek, General Lord Slane, General Lord Bophin, General Lord Kilmaine, General Dorrington, General John Hambleton (Hamilton), Brigadier-General Tuite, Colonel Walter Bourke, Colonel Gordon O'Neill, Colonel Butler, Colonel O'Connell (ancestor of Daniel O'Connell), Colonel Edmund Madden, Lieutenant-Colonel John Chappel, Lieutenant-Colonel John Butler, Lieutenant-Colonel Baggot, Lieutenant-Colonel John Border, Lieutenant-Colonel McGinness, Lieutenant-Colonel Rossiter, Lieutenant-Colonel McGuire, Major Patrick Lawless, Major Kelly, Major Grace, Major William Bourke, Major Edmund Butler, Major Edmund Broghill, Major John Hewson, " with 30 captains, 25 lieutenants, 23 ensigns, 5 cornets, 4 quarter-masters, and an adjutant."

Chaplain Story, to whom, with all his faults, we are much indebted for the details of this momentous battle one of the few " decisive battles" of the world says : " We [the English and their allies] lost 73 officers, who were killed in this action, with in wounded, as appears by the inserted lists [vide his History of the " Wars in Ireland"] of both horse and foot, given in two days after by the general's command, and sent to the king." The lists referred to acknowledged, also, 600 soldiers killed and 906 wounded. The allied losses were, no doubt, under-estimated for political effect in England, which had been taught that one Englishman could kill any number of Irishmen without much fear of a fatal result to himself. And this superstition was useful, we believe, to the morale of the British soldiers of the period, whose stomachs failed them so notably when they were " up against" the defences of Limerick, as will be seen hereafter. Captain Taylor, a Williamite writer, who was present at the battle and published a graphic account of it, says that the loss of the allies (British, Dutch, Danes, Germans, and Huguenots) was little less than that of the Irish, most of the latter having fallen in the retreat after the death of General St. Ruth. Of the Anglo-Dutch troopers, there were killed by the Irish cavalry at the pass of Urachree, in the early part of the fight, 202, and wounded 125, thus showing the superior strength, reach of arm, and dexterity of the Irish horsemen. In hand-to-hand conflicts, whether mounted or on foot, the Irish soldiery, in whatever service, ever excelled, with sword or battle-axe, pike or bayonet. Clontibret and the Yellow Ford, Benburb and Fontenoy, Almanza and Albuera, Inkerman and Antietam bear witness to the truth of this assertion. As a charging warrior, the Irishman has never been surpassed, and, no matter how bloodily repulsed, an Irish regiment or an Irish army is ever willing to try again. There may be soldiers as brave as they, but none are braver, even when they fight in causes with which they have no natural sympathy. It may be set down as a military axiom that the Irish soldier is, by force of untoward circumstances, frequently a mercenary, but rarely, or never, a coward.

The principal officers who fell on the English side, at Aughrim, were Major-General Holzapfel, who commanded Lord Portland's horse at Urachree ; Colonel Herbert, killed in the main attack on the Irish centre ; Colonel Mongatts, who died among the Irish ditches while trying to rally his routed command ; Major Devonish, Major Cornwall, Major Cox, and Major Colt. Many other officers of note died of their wounds at the field hospital established on the neighboring heights of Garbally now converted into one of the most delightful demesnes in Europe ; and some who survived the field hospital died in the military hospitals of Athlone and Dublin. Those who fell in the battle were buried on the field, with the usual military honors.

Captain Parker, who fought in the English army in this battle, and who has left a narrative, frequently quoted by O'Callaghan, Haverty, Boyle, and other historians, says : " Our loss was about 3,000 men in killed and wounded," and, as he was in the thick of the fight and came out unwounded, he had full opportunity, after the battle closed, to verify his figures. He certainly could have no object in exaggerating the English loss, for the tendency of all officers is to underrate the casualties in their army. And Captain Parker says, further: " Had it not been that St. Ruth fell, it were hard to say how matters would have ended, for, to do him justice, notwithstanding his oversight at Athlone, he was certainly a gallant, brave man, and a good officer, as appeared by the disposition he made of his army this day His centre and right wing [after his fall] still held their ground, and had he lived to order Sarsfield down to sustain his left wing, it would have given a turn to affairs on that side" or, " O'Callaghan says in comment, " in other words, have given the victory to the Irish."

Lord Macaulay anti-Irish as all his writings prove him to have been says in his " History of England" : " Those [the Irish] works were defended with a resolution such as extorted some words of ungracious eulogy even from men who entertained the strongest prejudices against the Celtic race."

He then quotes Baurnett, Story, and, finally, the London "Gazette," of July, 1691, which said : "The Irish were never known to fight with more resolution."

In his interesting, but partial, "Life of William III," published in the beginning of the seventeenth century, Mr. Harris, a fierce anti-Jacobite, says : "It must, in justice, be confessed that the Irish fought this sharp battle with great resolution, which demonstrates that the many defeats before this sustained by them can not be imputed to a national cowardice with which some, without reason, impeached them ; but to a defect in military discipline and the use of arms, or to a want of skill and experience in their commanders. And now, had not St. Ruth been taken off, it would have been hard to say what the consequence of this day would have been."

Now we will give a few comments of the Irish historians upon this Hastings of their country : O'Halloran, who was born about the time the battle was fought, and who, as a native of Limerick, must have been, at least, as familiar with soldiers who fought in the Williamite wars as we are with the Union and Confederate veterans, in Vol. i, page 106, of his "History of Ireland," replying to some slurs cast by the Frenchman, Voltaire, on the Irish people, says : "He should have recollected that, at the battle of Aughrim, 15,000 Irish, ill paid and worse clothed, fought with 25,000 men highly appointed and the flower of all Europe, composed of English, Dutch, Flemings, and Danes, vicing with each other. That, after a most bloody fight of some hours, these began to shrink on all sides, and would have received a most complete overthrow but for the treachery of the commander of the Irish horse, and the death of their general [St. Ruth] killed by a random shot."

On pages 532-533 of the same work, the historian says : "Sir John Dalrymple tells us that [at Aughrim] the priests ran up and down amongst the ranks, swearing some on the sacrament, encouraging others, and promising eternity to all who should gallantly acquit themselves to their country that day. Does he mean this by way of apology for the intrepidity of the Irish, or to lessen the applause they were so well entitled to on that day ? Have they required more persuasions to fight the battles of foreign princes than the native troops, or are they the only soldiers who require spiritual comfort on the day of trial ? I never thought piety was a reproach to soldiers, and it was, perhaps, the enthusiasm of Oliver's troops that made them so victorious. This battle was, certainly, a bloody and decisive one. The stake was great, the Irish knew the value of it, and, though very inferior to their enemies in numbers and appointments, and chagrined by repeated losses, yet it must be owned they fought it well. Accidents which human wisdom could not foresee, more than the superior courage of their flushed enemies, snatched from them that victory, which already began to declare in their favor. Their bones yet (1744) lie scattered over the plains of Aughrim, but let that justice be done to their memories which a brave and generous enemy never refuses."

Rev. Thomas Leland, an Irish Protestant divine, who published a history of Ireland about 1763, after describing the catastrophe which befell St. Ruth, says: "His [St. R.'s] cavalry halted, and, as they had no orders, returned to their former station. The Irish beheld this retreat with dismay ; they were confounded and disordered. Sarsfield, upon whom the command devolved, had been neglected by the proud Frenchman ever since their altercation at Athlone. As the order of battle had not been imparted to him, he could not support the dispositions of the late general. The English, in the meantime, pressed forward, drove the enemy to their camp, pursued the advantage until the Irish, after an engagement supported with the fairest prospect of success, while they had a general to direct their valor, fled precipitately."

The Right Rev. Dr. Fitzgerald, Episcopalian bishop, in his "History of Limerick," published some sixty years ago, says : "It [Aughrim] was the bravest battle ever fought on Irish soil." The bishop, evidently, had not read the lives of Art MacMurrough, Hugh O'Neill, Hugh O'Donnell, and Owen Roe O'Neill, when he penned the words.

"Such," writes O'Callaghan, at the conclusion of his account of it, in the "Green Book," page 230, "was the battle of Aughrim, or Kilconnell, as the French called it, from the old abbey to the left of the Irish position ; a battle unsuccessful, indeed, on the side of the Irish, but a Chaeronea, or a Waterloo, fought with heroism and lost without dishonor."

A. M. Sullivan, in his fascinating "Story of Ireland" (American edition, page 458), says, or rather, quotes from a Williamite authority : "The Irish infantry were so hotly engaged that they were not aware either of the death of St. Ruth or of the flight of the cavalry, until they themselves were almost

surrounded. A panic and confused flight were the result. The cavalry of the right wing, who were the first in action that day, were the last to quit the ground. ... St. Ruth fell about sunset [8.10], and about 9, after three hours' [nearer four hours'] hard fighting, the last of the Irish army [who were not killed, wounded, or captured] had left the field."

De Ginkel's army remained in the neighborhood of the field of battle long enough to give it an opportunity of burying all of the Irish dead, were it so disposed. The country-people remained away, in terror of their lives and poor belongings particularly cattle until decomposition had so far advanced as to make the task of sepulture particularly revolting. And thus it came to pass that nearly all the Irish slain were left above ground, "exposed to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field ; many dogs frequenting the place afterward, and growing so fierce by feeding upon man's flesh that it became dangerous for any single man to pass that way.

"The Lamentation of Aughrim,"

Thomas Moore

"Forget not the field where they perished,
The truest ; the last of the brave
All gone and the bright hopes we cherished
Gone with them and sunk in the grave.

"Oh, could we from death but recover
Those hearts as they bounded before,
In the face of high heaven to fight over
That combat for freedom once more.

"Could the chain for a moment be riven
Which Tyranny flung round us then
No, 'tis not in man, nor in heaven,
To let Tyranny bind it again !

"But 'tis past; and tho' blazoned in story
The name of our victor may be ;
Accurst is the march of that glory
Which treads on the hearts of the free !

"Far dearer the grave, or the prison,
Illumed by one patriot name,
Than the trophies of all who have risen
On liberty's ruin to fame !"

Ireland : the people's history of Ireland (1907)

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