

The Battle of Aughrim, A.D. 1691.

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Historical Manuscripts Commission

“ 19. The loss of Athlone on the 30th of June rises up in judgement against the opponents of Tyrconnel in his opinion : which if followed, would have preserved that town, and in sequel the province of Connaught, as all now do confess. When the newes of this misfortune came to the Duke of Tyrconnel, then at Lymerick, he groaned thereat :—and redoubled his sorrow, that he was so unfortunat as not to be believed, when he proposed clear and sure wayes of saving his country from a total ruin. However, he must needs again deliver his opinion concerning the operation of the remaineing campagne. Which is : he would not now lay the kingdom upon a single battle, haveing heard of such a dessigne: but he would make a defensive and dilatory warr in expectation to be superior the next year by succours out of France. In the interim, and offhand (the foot being brought to Lymerick) he would send the Irish cavalry over Banhoer bridge into the province of Leinster, for to bring away from thence great booty : and also recruits from the Catholic inhabitants. This enterprize would oblige General Ginckle to send his hors after them, for to secure Leinster, from whence he had his sustenance. And his hors being gon ; his infantry could not stay behind : and so Connaught would be still left to the Irish. There was noe reason to fear, that the Irish horse would be in danger. For being lighter, they would fatigue the heavy cavalry of the English host : and they had allwayes, upon a necessity, a safe retreat into Lymerick.

“ 20. But General St. Ruth, knoweing that he could not well justify his looseing of Athlone at the head of a considerable army before the King, and his own royal master, thought it not fitt to pursue the sentiment of Tyrconnel : and so he chose to putt the kingdom upon a fayr combat, being unalterably resolved to bury his body in Ireland, or regain it speedily. Whereupon, observeing the strength of his army, he commanded the same to de-camp from Athlone in the afternoon of that day, [1] wherein it was taken. He marched towards Lymerick : and proceeded with small marches, untill he came a litle beyond the village of Aughrim 20 miles from Athlone, and 30 from Lymerick, in the county of Galway. Where vieweing the ground, he judged it convenient for his dessigne : and so fixed there his camp in wayteing for the enemy. His army fronted Athlone to the east : and Lymerick was in the rear, and to the west. Before his front he had a morass : over which foot could come, but not horse. At each end of this morass, there was a passage ; thro’ which the enemys horse could com to his right and left flanck. That on the right was a litle forde caused by a stream issueing from the morass. That on the left was an ould broaken causeway, onely large enough for two horses to pass it at a tyme ; and was 60 yards long. Beyond this causeway was the castle of Aughrim on a line and on the left within 40 yards : into which St. Ruth putt that day Collonell Walter Bourk, and two hundred men. He marshalled his army in two lines. The cavalry on his right was the regiments of the Duke of Tyrconnel ; of the Earl of Abercorn ; of Collonell Edmund Prendergast, before this of Sutherland, besides dragoons. This wing was to see that the enemy’s horse did not breake in on the right of the army thro’ the poss of the forde, and thro’ the narrow ground lyeing between two morasses after passing the forde. For the English had double the number in cavalry : tho’ the Irish had some advantage in the infantry. ’Twas here Lieutenant-General de Tessé, and Major-General Sarcefield, now Earl of Lucan, were posted. The other Lieutenant-General, the Marquis D’Usson, after the siege of Athlone went to Galway. On the left the Marquis of St. Ruth placed the Earl of Lucan’s regiment of horse, and those of Collonell Henry Lutterel, of Collonell John Parker, and Collonell Nicholas Purcell, with a body of dragoons. The Lord of Galmoy with his regiment was putt behind the second line of the foot, in the nature of a reserve for to answer occasions. The conduct of this left wing was given to Major-General Sheldon : the first line of which Brigadier Henry Lutterel commanded. Their business was to defend the pass of the causeway : near to which, for more

security, there was sett two regiments of foot. Close before the first line of the Irish infantry there was a few ould ditches ; which were serviceable to them at the first charge of the enemy. The management of the infantry was assigned to Major-General Dorington, and to Major-General John Hamilton. Thus was the disposition of the army. Noe doubt St. Ruth shewed good skill in chooseing ground, and in ranging his host for this fight, where his all, and the all of the nation lay at stake. The day before the combat he pronounced some words, wherein he manifested his desire, that all men would withdraw, and reserve themselves for garrisons, who were sickly, or unable to fight, as they should do ; because he expected on the morrow to come to an engagement.

“ 21. The day Athlone was taken, the English army and the Protestants of the town, made great joy for so unexpected a victory: in gaineing of which they own to have spent nigh fifty tun of powder : many a tun of stones shott out of mortars : 12,000 canon-bullets : and 600 bombs : which is a great expence. So haveing rested here for some dayes, the army decamped on the 10th of July, and marched towards the Irish camp. On the 11th it came to Ballinasloe, three miles from Aughrim. The next day being Sunday, it arrived at Aughrim a little after six in the morning : where haveing rested a little while, the whole army was drawn up in two lines of battle. The Irish at that juncture were assisting at the sacrifice of mass : and a litle after prepared for meridian repast. But General St. Ruth observeing the enemy a-ranging in order for fighting, commanded his men to be marshalled according as we mentioned above.

“ 22. Both sides being fully prepared, action began a little after eleven : which mostly consisted in the playeing of the artillery, and in skirmishes for gaineing and defending some advanced posts and litle passes towards the right of the Irish : and which lasted thus till about six in the evening, when the main bodyes deeply engaged. In that while, the English were first repulsed : and afterwards they acquired those outward places. I mean, under the word English, the forraigners also : who were the better moyety of the army. Both partyes, to give them their due, contended with extraordinary valour ; in so much, that their combat was comely, amidst death and wounds, because fought with military skill.

“ 23. But General Ginckle, not satisfied with the obtention of those litle advanced posts, resolved to come closer to the matter, and make himself master of the forde on the right of the enemy, that he might gett in that way with his cavalry amongst the Irish foot : which he perceaved, was somewhat superior, at least upon the account of the ground : and which therefore he seemed to fear most that day. Upon this, he ordered down at two o'clock a great body of horse from his left, to attack the pass of the forde. Here the dispute was rude, because it was for a thing of consequence : wherein the English were first repulsed : until the Earl of Portland's regiment of horse, which then arrived in the camp, joyned them : and thereby they pushed the Irish from the forde to the body of their cavalry, which was hard by : where they stood firm their ground all the day in spight of several attempts made on them ; because the English horse, even after passing the forde, could not spread, being enclosed on the right and left by the above said morasses.

“ 24. General Ginckle did not like hitherto the countenance of the contention, because he saw no way to weaken the Irish infantry with his horse, if he should generally engage. This consideration put him in a doubt whether he should continue and come to a close fight that day. But it was soon resolved, that it was so best. Whereupon he commands his left wing to charge again violently the right of the Irish horse thro' the forde at 5 in the afternoon. Which they did with great bravery ; and as well they were resisted ; General St. Ruth takeing care to provide timely against danger. He shewed himself that day a good general : and did strain a point to recover the loss he had sustained in the miscarriage of Athlone. Between these wings the conflict was fierce. But at the end the English were forced to recoyl, not being able to compass their aym,

“ 25. 'Twas at the period of this action, and about 6 o'clock, the main bodies of foot on both sides came to close fight : and sharp it was. The English charged : and in their advancing, the Irish slew numbers from their little ould ditches. The English gained them : and flew in bouldly among the enemies. The Irish returned the charge : and broake and pursued them with great slaughter.

“ 26. Fresh bodies of English came on again, and held the strife a good while in ballance. Major-General Dorington being pressed, sent for the two regiments of foot, which were placed in the beginning of the day to garde the pass on the left. At the same tyme, General Ginckle ordered down four fresh regiments more of foot to re-inforce his combattants which made the contention very sanguinary : till at last the English gave ground and the Irish advanced near the enemy's field of battle.

“ 27. This repulse was no sooner given than a grand cône comes poureing down on the Irish for the third tyme. 'Twas now the combat seemed more violent than before, and as if it were the last effort. After an obstinat storm, the English were constrained to retreat. The Irish followed, makeing use of club muskett : whereby the forraigners suffered much. The regiment of Guards, and the whole royal brigade was particularly noted by the field to have performed uncommon execution. The Irish pursued so farr that they gained the enemy's ground, and maintained themselves thereon. Collonel Gordon Oneil with his regiment took some of their canon.

“ 28. At this, General Ginckle seeing his center wholly broake : his left wing to have noe small losses, without being able to have gained their point : that his right wing could not with any safety gett over to the left of the Irish : and that the foe was on his field of battle, he became so disturbed in his thoughts, that he could not well resolve, what to do, unless to take his flight : of which some marks appeared immediately.

“ 29. On the other side, General St. Ruth remarking the condition of the enemy, and his own success, cryed out in his language with joy : ‘ Le jour est à nous, mes enfants’ : ‘ the day is our own, my boyes.’ To whom I thus address on this occasion : ‘ Great General, you may well say, if God gives you life, nay an hower of life, you will presente a kingdom unto his Majesty of Great Brittain, as a grateful return for the honour, he had don you, in makeing you Mareshal General of of Ireland. If the powers above shall think fitt to suffer your vital thread [2] be cutt on this place ; at least you may dye with this comfort, that you have left the army entering upon possession of the realm ; and if their leaders will not perform so easy a task, as to take absolut possession thereof, the fault is not yours, but theirs alone.’ And in truth it proved so.

“ 30. Amidst that confusion of General Ginckle, some of his great officers advised him for his last remedium, to attempt once the sending his right wing of horse over the pass of Aughrim-castle, notwithstanding the danger thereof. The General took this desperat advice : and so ordered it to be executed. Upon which the cavalry marched ; Rouvigny's regiment being the first.

“ 31. The Marquis of St. Ruth observeing the enemy coming towards the pass, he gave orders to the left wing of his horse, that had been idle all the day, to goe and oppose him, which he knew was easily don : and therefore he continued his joy, as being sure of his point. Here we are to take notice, that this long-bloody contention is just a ending : that the victory is so certainly in the hands of the Irish, that nothing can take it away but the gaineing of that most perillous pass by the castle of Aughrim : that the defending of it is so easy, that a regiment may perform the task. At least four regiment of hors and four of dragoons might make the passage impossible. This being so : what a pity it is, to loose a kingdom at so slight a rate, as not to venture a few men ! What a pitty to bring thus thousands of familyes into slavery ! To suffer religion, the true worship of Allmighty God, to be suppressed ! To keep, in

fin, a mighty monarch in exile ! What excuse can the left wing of the Kings cavalry make for themselves, if they will not hender the enemy's gaineing the said pass, and obstruct thereby the ensuing calamities ? Their bleeding country requires it : their suffering Prince exacts it : and their oppressed kindred implorés it, and expects it. They have had all the day conspicuous examples of bravery before their eyes : their companions on the right fought like heroes : their foot in the center threw all down before them like thunder-bolts : so that there is nothing wanting to make them all an eaver happy nation, but the easy concurrence of the cavalry on the left, which in reason, in honour, in friendship, and in loyalty cannot be denied. Is there not here some zealots, who opposed the Duke of Tyrconnel, because they thought him not zealous enough for his country ? Now, therefore, lett them show to the world, that their zeal was solid, and their intention sincere. But alas ! these remonstrances will prove in vain, tho' the great officers of that cavalry must needs have had the same thoughts more or less at that juncture.

“ 32. So we will proceed and say : that General St. Ruth haveing sent his command to the horse to marche and oppose the enemy at the pass, he himself must needs goe along for to see them perform their duty, that there may be noe faylure in the last scene of this bloody tragedy. They moved : and the General followed with his guards. But as he was rideing down a litle hill, a canon-ball from the other side directed by the canoniere amongst the troops, that were going to defend the pass, missing all others, struck the Marquis of St. Ruth in the head : at which he fell : and at the same tyme it layed the nation prostrat at his feet. A cursed ball, that carryed such a measure of woe ! O people of Ireland ! you were not, it seems, judged by heaven worthy of those blessings, which you expected by undertakeing this warr : that is, to re-inthroné your King : and in sequel to establish your religion, your property, and liberty. Your sins, your sins have been the barriere to that felicity. As soon as the body was down, one of the retinue carryed it off : and brought the corps to the town of Loughreagh, and there interred it privately.

“ 33. Behould this great man gon at the height of his greatness ! Which showes, we must be allwayes mistrustful amidst the smiles of fortune. Let us see what immediat effects produced this death in the field. We find in history, that some armyes in battle have despayred of victory upon the killing of their General, and so retreated : that others gained the day much the sooner upon the like disaster ; because they were carryed on with a violent zeal to revenge the death of their leader. But we neaver have read, that an army overcoming all the day, and ending victoriously the combat without any considerable loss on their side, and their being noe difficulty to accomplish the petty remnant of the fight ; that such an army, I say, gave up the victory of their own accord at the death of their general commander. 'Tis onely the Irish army, or, more truly, a wing of it, at Aughrim, in the province of Connaught and kingdom of Ireland, that began this precedent in the year 1691.

“ 34. As soon then, as the Marquis de St. Ruth was slain, the Guards withdrew from the field. Brigadier Lutterell, who was at the pass with the advanced troops heareing of it, did the like after a small resistance. Major-General Sheldon with the main body of the left wing followed, makeing their way to Loughreagh ; and thence to Lymerick. At the same tyme the Irish infantry went on thundering : and their cavalry on the right stood firm to their ground, being prepared at every moment to encounter bravely, as they had don several tymes that day ; litle dreameing that their horse on the left would abandon them : or that the enemy could gett any way to snatch the laurells, which they had reaped in the field of blood for several howers.

“ 35. It would be a satisfaction to the nation to know, what solid reasons these great officers have for their going off the field, of their own accord, and without any compulsion, at a tyme when their presence was so necessary, that the safety of the realm depended thereon. They say they had this one reason for so doeing, because there was no General to command them to oppose the enemy at the pass. To the annulling of this reason, we answer in

several wayes thus : First, the end of their being in the army was to serve the King and country upon all occasions in general, and particularly in suppressing the present rebellion. Here was for them a fayr occasion to compass that end : and the best that ever they had, or eaver will have, which was warrant enough for their encountering the foe at that juncture without any special command. For by their fighting in this occasion, noe dammage could ensue to King, country or the army : and by not combatting, the destruction of all would follow, as it proved in fact. The nicety of martial lawes ceases, when an inevitable ruin is at hand, unless you do the moment before obstruct it; and when therefore there is noe tyme to gett positive orders from higher powers for preventing the same. In such case there is a tacit order allwayes supposed, which order in like to the law of self-preservation : which warrants my opposing the person, that invades my life, without my recurring to the magistrat because such delay would prove my death. Moreover there comes under this case the law of society: whereby I may without command, and I ought, if able, to preserve the members and head thereof from any imminent danger. This sort of procedure is justified by necessity which is above the laws politick : in so much that the lawes of warr, forbidding the souldier or subordinat officer to assault the enemy without orders from the superior or supreme commander, are dormant in the case of necessity, as was evidently that of defending the pass of Aughrim-castle. So we'll proceed, and say secondly : that the great officers of the left wing of the Irish cavalry, were placed by General St. Ruth on that ground in the beginning of the fight, for to secure that very pass, to the end, that the hostile cavalry might not come over to the endangering of the King's army. This was a particular order to them to watch the enemy's motion, and fly to his resistance, whenever he attempted to gain the said pass. Thirdly : the General in a few minutes before his death, when he saw the enemy coming towards the pass, gave them fresh and positive orders to marche and oppose him, for to make the victory compleate by frustrating the foe of his last endeavour : and both the King's cavalry and the General himself were actually in their march towards the place. Sure this was warrant enough for their continueing the dessigne, whether the general were present or absent ; whether dead or alive. Nay, I should think, this order was binding till executed : so that those officers disobeyed the command by turning their back to the foe : and consequently they stand guilty of a breach in military disciplin. Fourthly : they were absolutely certain that it was the General's will all along : that all the General Officers on the right and in the center required it : and that the whole army expected it, that the left wing should secure the pass above all things for their safety, and for making sure the day. Was not this a high-commanding order ? Was it not instruction enough unto them, what to do in the case ? Certainly it was : and so farr, that they cannot possibly pleade ignorance, nor fear of offending higher powers, or going against the rules of martial disciplin. Fifthly : They knew that, if they quitted their post, their infantry would be murdered, as exposing them thereby all naked to the fierce assaults of the hostile cavalry, at the nick of tyme, when they were weary conquering, and had consumed their ammunition and consequently lay defenceless. They also knew, that, if their foot was gon, the day was lost ; and in sequel the nation was enslaved : their own kindred and families were destroyed : and the King undon. Now to prevent these calamities, was a supreme authority unto them to goe and keep the enemy beyond the pass. And for soe doing, their country would have blessed them : the King would have been redevable [3] unto their prowess : rebellion and usurpation would have been ended : the end of the warr would have been obtained : and heaven with blessings would have crowned them.

“ 36. Neither could they alleadge for their justification an inability in stopping the foe. For the General knew the contrary. So did the enemy, who all the day, though he was sincking in his center and on his left, yett durst not once, for his relief, attempt to traverse the cawsway, till despayr at the end compelled him to trye that experiment at all hazards. So reason shewed the easiness of the fact without controul, and experience confirmed it. For as the right wing made good their ground and guarded the infantry where the enemy had som access unto them, so with more ease might the left (that was also somewhat superior) foyle the enemy at a pass thro' which the access was exceedingly difficult. And, in verity, if the enemy had gott the passage, it was expected that the cavalry on the left now swollen with the success

of the army, and inflamed with a desire of shareing in the honour, and of putting an end to the happy battle, and to their own calamities, would have been match enough for him, and especially reinforced (as they soon might be) With some battalions from the second line of their infantry, which had not toved near so much as the first line had don all the day. In fin : since the King's cavalry on the left ware resolved to retreat, an indispensable obligation lay on them to send warning to their foot to goe off with all speed, while they themselves should cover their retreat, which they might have don without any sensible loss, especially assisted by the right wing, as a few regiments of horse brought off the right of their foot at the Boyn by a running fight for two miles.

“ 37. The necessary result of this discourse is that the commanding officers of the left wing, by abandoning their station without compulsion, nay, without a stroake, were either traytors to their King and country ; or, by exposing their foot to a certain murder, they shewed a barbarous indifference for the safety of their friends and countrymen ; or, in fin, were notorious cowards. And so lett them keep their prideing cavalry to stop bottles with.

“ 38. But to proceed. By the time the King's horse went off the field the enemy's whole right wing arrived at the pass, and seeing noe opposition beyond, they confidently ventured to goe through, notwithstanding the fire from the castle on their right, which fire was insignificant ; for it slew but a few in the passage. The reason of it was given, because the men had French pieces, the bore of which was small, and had English ball, which was too large. Here is a new miscarriage thro' heedlessness. Why was not this foreseen and the dammage prevented ?

“ 39. As soon as the hostile cavalry was gott over, they immediately invellped the Irish foot, who were surprized at their hard fate, while they were moweing the field of honour. They had noe other remedy for their preservation, than to retreat as fast as they could, making their way to Portumny, and so forward to Lymerick, Most of the horse on their right made off likewise. Onely the Earl of Lucan, with some troops thereof, and the Lord of Galmoy, with his regiment, did good service in covering their retreat as prosperously as so small a body could do. This and the arriveing night and some morasses brought them off indifferently well 'Twas their officers respectively that suffered most. In the same evening, late, the castle of Aghrim was taken, and the commander, Collonel Bourk, with his Major, eleven officers, and 40 souldiers, were made prisoners. Thus you have seen a victory snatcht out of the hands of the victorious. What recompense the commanding officers of the Irish cavalry on the left can make to King and country for the loss of that day, we shall be able to judge when they are Emperors in Europe. What punishments in the interim they deserve, we leave it to the judgement of those who are most knoweing in art military.

“ 40. In this long and bloody strife, both on the field of bravery and in the accidental retreat, there was slain of the Irish officers and souldiers about 2,000, and 600 wounded. The wounded recovered soon almost all, and joynd the army at Lymerick within six weeks after. Amongst the slain was the great General St. Ruth, worthy of lasting memory. Next after him the noble youth, the Lord Bourk, Viscount of Galway, son to the potent Earl of Clanrickard. He was dispatched by forraigners, after quarters given, as 'tis said : Brigadier Connel, Brigadier William-Mansfield Barker, an English gentelman, earely killed by a canon ball ; Brigadier Henry Mac John Oneil, Colonel Charles Moor, of Kildare, with his Lieutenant-Collonel and Major ; Collonel David Bourk, Collonel Ulick Bourk, Collonell Constantin Macguire, Collonell James Talbot, of Tampleogue ; Collonell Arthur, Collonell Mahoni, Lieutenant-Collonell Morgan, an English gentelman ; Major Purcel, Sir John Everard, of Fethard, in the county of Tipperary ; Collonell Felix Oneil ; and Dean Alexius Stafford, of Wexford, an undaunted zealot, and a most pious churchman, who fell in the front of the Royal regiment as he was encourageing them upon the first charge. There was made prisoners : The Lord of Duleek, the Lord of Slane, the Lord of Boffin, son to the Earl of Clanrickard ; the Lord of Kenmare, Major-General Dorington, Major-General John Hamilton,

who dyed at Dublin soon after of his wounds ; Brigadier Tute, Collonell Walter Bourk, Collonell Gordon Oneil, Collonell Thomas Butler, of Kilcash ; Collonell Oconnol, Collonell Edmund Madden, and several others, Lieutenant-Collonels, Majors, Captains, and subalterns.

“ 41. On the other side, of the English and forraigners there was killed officers and souldiers above 5,000, besides a great many wounded. Amongst the slain, that we could learn, was Major-General Holstaple, Collonell Herbert, Collonell Mongats, Major Devonish, Major Cornwall, Major Fox, and Major Colt.

“ 42. The next day of the battle, the English buried their own, and part of the Irish, that lay on the ground, where General Ginckle was to fix his camp. The rest they left unburied. In this same day, Ginckle sent Brigadier Epinger with 1,200 horse and dragoons, to take Portumna and Banhoer, two passes on the Shanon : which yealded the 14 of July, on condition that the garrisons might marche away with their arms and baggage.

“ 43. On the 13 of July in the morning, the Viceroy, Tyrconnel, being at Lymerick, received the sad newes of the King’s misfortune at Aughrim : whereby he was struck with a deep wound of sorrow : and the more because the battle was lost so unexpectedly. However, he rowsed his courage, and kept hope alive, resolveing to continue the warr since he found the excellent magnanimity of the army ; and that the loss of that day was not very considerable. Upon which, in the first place, he dispatches away into France three expresses one after the other, the Earl of Abercorn, the Lord Thomas Howard of Norfolk, and Mr. Doran, his own secretary : that, if one or two should fayl in the journey, the third might safe arrive at St. Germains, for to give the King a true account of the combat at Aughrim. Secondly : he requests by those couriers a reinforcement of trained men out of France at the farthest by the next spring : and in the interim provisions and ammunition for the array. For he did not doubt to preserve Lymerick ; tho he would fayn keep off a siege for the rest of the campagne chooseing at the present to stand upon his defence, rather than give another battle : which yett he might do by the healp of an advantagious ground, being still superior in foot. Thirdly : he goes out of Lymerick on the 4th morning after the battle for to receive the cavalry six miles of the town, which he cantoned near Lymerick in the county of Clare, while he was expecting the foot to come in : and then he will enter upon a consultation, what is best to be don in this streightness of tyme.

“ 44 While these things were a-doeing : the threee expresses, that were sent for France ; went on in their voyage. But one of them, the Earl of Abercorn, niett a Dutch man of warr near Brest : by whom the ship was taken, and the Earl killed in a fight, after escaping death in the bloody field of Aughrim : where he gallantly comported himself with his regiment on the right. He was a person of great bravery : zealous for his country : and most loyal to his Prince, He was of the noble family of Hamilton in Scotland : wherein he was Earl of Abercorn ; and in Ireland, his native soyl, Baron of Strabane. The like fate the Lord Thomas Howard did meet with : whose son is now Duke of Norfolk, a Catholic. The third envoy arrived safe at St. Germains : where he delivered his accounts of Ireland. The newes touched his Majesty very sensibly, seeing his affayrs grow worse and worse everyday. Against which the best remedy he had, was his usual resignation to the will of God. At the same time he took some comfort at the consideration of the couragious behaviour of his loyal people : and fell into consent with Tyrconnel, that matters might be retrieved with some small assistance from France. The King made the whole story known unto the Gallick monarch : who heard it with sufficient sorrow for his royal friend’s sake : and yett was pleased that the courage of the Irish did answer his expectation. But his most Christian Majesty was not in a condition at the present to send any succours of men to the Duke of Tyrconnel ; tho’ against the next campagne he might be able to afforde them. In the mean tyme, he could supply the Irish army with provisions, ammunition, arms, and other necessaryes of warr : and actually did grant them : and ordered them with all convenient speed to be transported from Brest to Lymerick : of which beneath.

“ 45. General Ginckle haveing refreshed his army at Aughrim, decamped on the 16 of July, and marched towards Gallway, in order to besiege it, bringing along with him onely his field pieces : haveing left his heavy canon at Athlone. It seems by this, that he presumed on good fortune, that Gallway would make litle resistance. This town is marittim, and chief of the province of Connaught. It is pritty-strong by scituation : but might have been made a noble fortress with an indifferent expence, which had been neglected dureing the warr, as other works of moment were. The howses within are built like castles for strength : so that a smart resistance may be given to the enemy, even after entering the town : the Governor whereof was at that tyme the Lord Dillon, as above said : and to his assistance Lieutenant-General D’Usson entered.

“ 46. On the above said 16th day, General Ginckle with his army came to Loughreagh, on the 17 to Athenree, within 8 miles to Galway. On the 18 Galway was invested : In which there was seven regiments of foot, not full, nor well armed. Baldarg O’Donnel was expected there with 1,000 men of reinforcement. But he came not ; who afterwards made conditions for himself; and took the Prince of Orange his side at the end of the warr. This gentilman was descended of the family of the ould Earl of Tyrconnel in Ulster : who was forced to fly into Spain upon a false impeachment in the reign of King James the First, where he was owned Earl of Tyrconnel, and his heys after him. This present O’Donnel was the acknowledged Earl at this tyme : who heareing that his nation was in warr for King James the Second, came into the kingdom a litle after the action at the Boyn, in order to assist his countrymen : tho’ he was suspected by some, as not true to the cause. He bore the nickname of Baldarg, or a red place, or a red spott, upon the account, that some of the family foolishly believed that the true Earl of Tyrconnel, marked on his body with such a spott, would come from abroad into Ireland, and do there great matters for his country : and they applied their ridiculous belief impertinently to this man.

“ 47. On the 19 of July, General Grinckle planted a battery against a litle new fort, which the Irish had made near the town. He took it that same day. Immediately after he rayed his batteryes against the town. On the 21, the Governor haveing considered the great declension of the Irish affayrs, thought it fit not to hould out the place any longer ; and so, the same day, he called for a parley. The treaty was concluded on the 24th of July, whereby the garrison gott their own demands, and the town also for enjoying their estates, the exercise of their religion, and other rights and privileges, that are due to free-born subjects. On the 26th, the Marquis D’Usson went to Lymerick ; so did the Lord Dillon, with the garrison, being about 2,300 men, and with six pieces of canon.

“ 48. The Duke of Tyrconnel had great expectations, that Galway would make a long resistance, which would be to his advantage. For thereby he hoped, that the campagne would be so farr spent, that the besieging of Lymerick could not be undertaken in that season. But the town being so speedily lost, gave him a deep wound of sorrow ; because it abbreviated too much his tyme, wherein he expected succours out of France or a favorable answer to his request, as aforesaid.

For new the citty of Lymerick was the onely fortress of note, he had in possession, which his Excellency knew the enemy would besiege immediately. How to keep off this beleagur, the Duke was at a stand for a while. Until at last he resolved upon this followeing stratagem, for to gain a litle tyme.

[Siege of Limerick, A.D. 1691.]

“ 49. The whole Irish Army, tho’ scattered in the day of Aughrim fight, yett, reassembled within twelve dayes, hard by Lymerick, in the county of Clare. And those officers thereof, who had been violent factioneers against the Duke of Tyrconnel, do now owne their fault, and

acknowledge that his Grace was all along in the right, tho' 'twas a submission made too late. However, the Lord Lieutenant ordered the army to pass from the other side of the river Shannon thro' Lymerick, and encamp close to the town on the east side. When this was don ; he issued a proclamation, commanding all men in the Irish quarters from the age of 16 to 60 to joyne the army, for to fight immediately the enemy. In order to which, he made some other preparations. The whole citty of Lymerick, and the army believed, that there would be soon a second battle. And they conseaved much alacrity thereat, especially after taking notice of an ould-pretended prophecy, which said that there would be a fight in the place (called Singland) where the army then was fixed, between the Irish and the English, and that the Irish would so overcome them, that the English should be for eaver disabled to make head against the Irish. But the Viceroy thought it not fitt to give battle without a reinforcement of trained foot, for to supply the want of horse : tho' I should side with that opinion, which would assent, that the Irish host now resolut to obstinacy ('tis this gives alwayes the day) together with the voluntiers and their zeal, and the advantagious scituation of the place, was sufficient to gett the victory, considering, what numbers of the enemyes were lost at Aughrim ; and what were left to garrison Gal way, Athlone, and to take Sligo ; and the apprehension, that must needs have been struck into the hostil infantry by the remembrance of Aughrim field : it being found often true, that superior numbers are vanquished by the healp of other advantages. There are many examples antient and modern of this kind. But the few shall here suffice from antiquity drawn : as is that of Alexander the great his army overcoming Darius with six tymes more forces : Hannibal with lesser multitudes overthrowing the Roman Generals Paulus Æmilius, and Terentius Varro : Julius Cæsar with allmost half the number putting the great Pompey to the rout in the field of Pharsalia ; where Pompey, hitherto esteemed the greater captain (for none before had conquered so many nations for Rome) managed very ill the battle that day, especially in this point, that he hendered the young fiery nobility of Rome to give the charge : which had they don, they would have crushed Cæsar's army to morsels, tho' made up of veterans ; their most violent assault with such numbers not being supportable. Which crafty Cæsar knoweing, commanded his army to begin the fight with charginge bouldly those youthful Hectors, for to dash their first swelling courage.

“ 50. General de Ginckle haveing taken Galway, and garrisoned it, decampeth from thence on the 28 of July, with a resolution to lay siege to Lymerick in that very season, as being violently desireous to end the warr by the present campagne, for to please his master the Prince of Orange, who was impatient at the delay.

[1] 30th June, 1691.

[2] *thread*] thrid, MS.

[3] Redevable (French), indebted to.

The manuscripts of the Marquis of Ormonde, the Earl of Fingall, the corporations of Waterford, Galway, [etc.] .. (1885)

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