

The Siege of Athlone 1691

from

Revolutionary Ireland and its settlement

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While the Irish Government was organising its forces beyond the Shannon, the English Government was gathering together its forces on the other side of the river. About the middle of September the Lords Justices left the camp, and returned to Dublin. They were crippled in the same way as the twelve civil administrators in Limerick, for neither body could take any share in the control of the army. The Mutiny Act had just been passed, but notwithstanding this measure it proved extremely difficult to control the licence of the men. When an ordinary man steals his act does not incite many other men to commit such a deed, but when a soldier steals, at once his example becomes contagious. The Lords Justices were well aware of this, but were equally well aware that no very exceptional powers had been lodged in their hands in order to curb this licence. The soldiers took advantage of their comparative immunity and plundered on all sides, sparing neither friend nor foe. [1] The Lords Justices at Dublin were engaged in hearing complaints from the soldiers that their pay was in arrears, and from the settlers that they were being robbed. Colonel Wolseley declared that his troops robbed all without distinction to such an extent that he was ashamed to speak of it. He excused them only because there was a lack, of provisions ; if there had been no such want, this wise disciplinarian, like Wellington, declared he would hang them to the last man. Much as the settlers disliked the Dutch they were forced to admit that they were the least guilty, while the English and the Danes were almost equally guilty, and upon a large scale. No doubt the men were paid irregularly, and this must be a plea of extenuation. As the Lords Justices paid them regularly the pillage diminished, though it never completely disappeared.[2] Coningsby, one of the Lords Justices, enclosed a proclamation to restrain the men, and complained to Clarke, the Secretary, that “ Sir John Lanier had given orders to secure all people who carried any commodities out of the country for six miles round his quarters, and that his officers at Trim had placed guards upon all the high roads, and other goods of the poor country people passing to any market out of his allotment.” [3] The proclamation forbade officers and soldiers in the English army to plunder, or to take horses or any other cattle out of the plough against the will of the owner, or to exact or levy money from their Majesties’ subjects. The need for the proclamation was evidenced by the fact that Colonel Columbine burned all the corn from Nenagh to the Shannon ; another force destroyed all the houses from Clonmel to Limerick. [4] On the 4th of February 1691, General Ginkell issued a declaration stating that their Majesties, King William and Queen Mary, had no desire to oppress their Roman Catholic subjects, either in regard to property or religion, and that they had authorised him to grant reasonable and easy terms to all who would consent to lay down their arms and to live at peace. In this declaration the Irish discerned signs of weakness, deeming it to signify that the English, conscious of their small force, were willing to treat with them.

Ginkell, however, like a wise commander, was steadily increasing his resources. Day after day men and means came from England : all the troops received new clothing, and depots of transport and supplies were formed at Mullingar and Belturbet. [5] A train of artillery, on a scale hitherto unknown, was also made ready at Dublin. [6] This train was composed of thirty-nine pieces of cannon, six mortars, and twelve field-pieces, along with five hundred draught horses. On the 14th of March 1691, Mary consented to an attack upon Athlone as a preliminary to the capture of Limerick. [7] To Mullingar, therefore, large supplies of stores were being steadily sent. Nothing was wanting save horses. Schravemoer thought that the severity

of the winter would prove fatal to the garrons, but this opinion turned out to be incorrect.[8] The Irish were equal to the English in horse and dragoons and superior to them in infantry. Lieutenant-General Schravemoer, Major-General Mackay, and Ruvigny went to Mullingar. Mackay, fearing a repetition of Sarsfield's exploit at Ballyneety, augmented the guards and patrols in order to afford adequate protection to the vast military stores collected there. Ginkell, fearing that the inhabitants were corresponding with the enemy, expelled them from the town, and obliged them to sleep in the open air. [9] He made this important town his headquarters, and in May he opened the campaign. Sir Martin Beckman, who had made his reputation in Tangier, came to act as chief engineer. Douglas brought down the troops from their winter quarters in the north, Wurtemberg gathered the foreign regiments at Thurles, the great siege train came from Dublin, and all these were to rendezvous at Banagher. Wurtemberg was appointed General of the infantry, and Schravemoer of the cavalry. Major-General Mackay had come from Scotland, where he had won fame at Killiecrankie ; with him were associated Generals Ruvigny and Talmash. Mackay, Ruvigny, and Talmash occupied in the coming campaign the places filled in the preceding by Douglas, Kirke, and Lanier. Lanier had been blamed for carelessness in his pursuit of Sarsfield at Ballyneety, Douglas and Kirke disliked one another as much as Sarsfield did Tyrconnel. The farmers made complaints against the three Generals and Ginkell superseded them.

On the 30th of May Ginkell joined his army at Mullingar. Dressed in their new uniform, the troops presented a fine appearance, rejoicing the soldierly heart of their General. [10] Mackay afterwards testified that he had never seen an army whose leader and common soldiers, though composed of four or five nationalities, lived in greater harmony with each other. Among the officers, he says, there may occasionally have been some differences of opinion as to the best means of reaching some desirable end ; but when a measure was once adopted, whether by the decision of the Commander-in-Chief or by a plurality of voices, each officer strove as earnestly to carry it out as if the plan adopted had been his own. [11] Herein lies the secret of the success of the English and of the failure of the Irish.

The experience of Douglas at Athlone in the previous year discouraged Ginkell from attempting the capture of this town, but his council of war thought the plan worth trying. When St. Ruth perceived his design, he marched with twenty thousand foot and five thousand horse from Loughrea towards Athlone, and encamped at Ballinasloe. In order to supply the deficiency of horses a curious trick was employed. The gentlemen volunteers throughout Connaught were asked to appear mounted at Limerick. They all came, expecting to receive some mark of favour from the King. When they paraded on King's Island they were, to their astonishment, ordered to dismount, and to hand over their steeds for the use of the King.

On leaving Mullingar for Athlone the English found their way barred at Ballymore by a strong garrison of Irish. [12] The village lies about half-way between these two towns and its fort gave it some small importance. It was defended by about a thousand men under Colonel Ulick Bourke with only two cannon, which were Turkish pieces mounted on cart-wheels. After a brave display of resistance the garrison surrendered on the 8th of June. [13] Its capture cost St. Ruth one of his best regiments, for the men were sent to Lambay. In order to preserve his line of communication Ginkell fortified and garrisoned Ballymore, leaving Colonel Toby Purcell in command. As the English approached the neutral ground lying between their own territory and that occupied by the Irish they saw some of the horrors of war. When the Irish fell back on the banks of the Shannon as their defence, the English found they had many old men, women, and children to feed. Captain Parker, a competent eye-witness, narrates how the Irish had, during the winter, sent all their people useless for war over to the English side of the Shannon, either to die or live as best they could. The English naturally could not afford to feed this multitude of hungry beings. These wretches, driven by hunger, crowded around the new camp, devouring everything they could meet with, and gathering up the refuse thrown away by the soldiers in order to allay the cravings of nature. " Our dead horses," Parker tells us, " crawling with vermin, as the sun had parched them, were delicious to them ; while their infants sucked those carcasses with as much eagerness as if they were at their mothers'

breasts.” [14] Despite these horrors, Ginkell crept steadily on towards Athlone. On the 18th of June Wurtemberg and Count Nassau joined his eleven thousand men with seven thousand additional. Mackay warmly counselled this union, holding it possible that the Irish might attack them when divided. In Wurtemberg’s contingent was the Marquis de la Forest. He stated that a French engineer, who had laboured the year before at the fortifications of Athlone, informed him that on the east side of the river there were heights which overlooked the town, and that there was a ford below, near the bridge, over which he had often seen soldiers passing. The receipt of this valuable news made the council of war determined to attack Athlone. When Douglas had ventured to besiege it the preceding year, English Town had been deserted and burnt. In the interval no attempt had been made to strengthen it, though in Irish Town earthworks had been raised without the walls. [15] The Marquis d’Usson and the Chevalier Tessé commanded the garrison. Tetteau advanced and drove the enemy’s scouts to Irish Town. A battery was immediately erected north-west of English Town, and another was planted beneath it by the river-side, while a third was placed over against the Dublin gate. Light twenty-four pounders were mounted, and under Mackay’s direction they opened fire. A breach appeared in the north-west bastion, and the council of war resolved to storm the place that evening. The storming party of three hundred Grenadiers was at five in the afternoon to advance along a paved way. Brigadier Stuart and Prince Frederick with two battalions of his own regiment, the 9th Foot, were to support the grenadiers, and Stuart in turn was to be supported by two hundred foot and the regiments of Brewer, the 12th Foot, and Count Nassau. Mackay gave clear orders and watched how they were carried out. The Irish immediately began firing, but the assailants reserved their fire until they were upon the enemy. Brigadier Stuart gave the grenadiers vigorous support, and the other regiments did likewise. The Irish forsook the breach and ran towards the bridge, with the storming party in close pursuit ; they chased them to the drawbridge, and in their flight some of the fugitives were crushed to death. [16] A few escaped by the shallow ford below the bridge. English Town was now in possession of the English, and the cost of securing it was not heavy. [17] Their loss was twenty killed and forty wounded. Only one officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Kirke, fell, and he, curiously enough, was not fighting but viewing the fight from the side of a hill. It is probable that if the English had followed up their triumph they might have captured Irish Town also. The lack of artillery horses, however, hindered the heavy cannon, the pontoons, the ammunition, and the provisions being there in time. There were few troops across the river, and the Irish army were still encamped at Ballinasloe, some twelve miles beyond Athlone. The taking of the town was delayed, and might have been delayed indefinitely had it not been, Mackay remarks, “ for that manifest providence which makes up for all defects.” [18]

Ginkell immediately threw up entrenchments at the foot of the bridge to prevent the surprise of English Town, and fresh batteries were mounted within it. As soon as St. Ruth heard the news of the capture of English Town he marched towards Athlone with fifteen hundred men, and pitched his camp about two miles away. The defenders were relieved by fresh battalions from the camp, and the cavalry conveyed fascines to the town in order to fill up the breaches made by the enemy. St. Ruth was as deficient in transport as Ginkell, and neither could do much to defend or to attack the position. Ginkell found considerable trouble in securing provisions for his men ; but he at least was in sole command while the imperious St. Ruth suffered cruelly from the interference of Tyrconnel. Sarsfield and his followers felt more bitterly indignant than ever against the Viceroy.

On the 22nd of June the new batteries in English Town commenced a lively cannonade against the north-east side of the Castle, and that night this whole side was battered down. The same day Colonel Wolseley arrived from Ballymore with cannon, mortars, floats, and pontoons escorted by the Blues and the 6th Dragoon Guards. Shot and shell, powder and provisions, were arriving every day from the depots at Mullingar. As the tin-boats, floats, and pontoons were insufficient to convey the army across the rapid river, the Shannon was minutely examined in order to discover a ford. Somewhat over a mile above Athlone, in the Lanesborough direction, one was discovered, and a lieutenant of horse was despatched to recon-

noitre it, with positive orders to return the moment he had tested the ford by crossing it. The English infantry might then pass over and attack the entrenchments, co-operating with those who were attempting the passage of the bridge. Maclcay did not quite approve of the plan ; he thought it more perilous than to attempt the passage opposite to the town. [19] The latter, at the worst, could only end in a repulse, whereas the former might result in a very serious loss of either of the detachments. The indiscretion of the lieutenant, however, settled the knotty point effectually. He forded the river and espied a large herd of black cattle. Recollecting that meat was much wanted in camp, he carried them off, thus showing St. Ruth that the ford was known. St. Ruth in a few hours erected earthworks and a battery commanding the passage ; he also established a chain of communication between it and his camp. Colonel O'Reilly was ordered to resist to the utmost all attempts to cross, and Lord Antrim's regiment was stationed close at hand to support him. It is easy to speculate in if's. Yet if the lieutenant had obeyed his orders, no battle of Aughrim and no second siege of Limerick need have taken place. He was court-martialled and cashiered, but the results of his indiscretion were irreparable. This incident confirms the truth of Napoleon's view that war is made up of accidents.

From the 24th to the 28th the guns kept up an unceasing fire. A fierce struggle now ensued for the possession of the bridge, and the Irish gallantly disputed the attempts to capture it. [20] The English gained ground literally only inch by inch. Upon the bridge stood an old mill-house, and the grenades of the besiegers fired it with the result that out of a garrison of sixty-two, sixty were burned alive before they could escape. Under this precious bridge lay a dry arch. When searching for plunder there, one of Lisburn's regiment saw a pair of colours clenched in the hands of a man who had doubtless courageously defended them in life. The soldier unfurled his trophies and the Irish fired upon him, but he escaped and his General gave him five guineas for his curious capture. Each side erected fresh batteries, and the contest to gain possession of the bridge became more and more vigorous. The carelessness of the lieutenant had made the crossing by the upper ford impossible, and therefore all attention was now concentrated upon the bridge. Arch by arch the English crept along till by the night of the 26th of June the whole bridge, save one broken arch on the Connaught side, belonged to them. As the arches were taken they were repaired in order that the storming party might have an easy passage. The Irish put forth their utmost efforts to retake the captured arches, but in vain. Inch by inch they fought to regain them, and inch by inch they were beaten back. The bridge was so narrow that a few determined men might hold it against a large army. St. Ruth saw this and expressed his wonder that so experienced a commander as Ginkell should persist in his design. " His master should hang him for trying to take Athlone, and mine ought to hang me if I lose it." [21] Ginkell, however, persisted in his resolution and the Irish firmly held their ground. The French officers were compelled to admit that they had never seen more grim determination, and that the Irish were as brave as lions. [22] Ginkell saw that his attempt to cross by the bridge was wellnigh hopeless, and he thought of other devices. He might build a bridge of boats, but the men constructing it would be exposed to the guns of the enemy. He might attempt to pass the ford, but the enemy would be on the look out. In fact, to all the alternative schemes came the inevitable " but." He was reluctantly driven to the conclusion that he must take the stone bridge : the two broken arches were repaired, though the constant fire forbade the mending of the last. All the attention of the English was bestowed upon the ruined arches. On the night of the 26th of June they possessed the stone bridge save the one arch nearest the Connaught side, which the Jacobites had smashed. On the evening of the following day the breastworks of fascines erected by the Irish at their end of the bridge were set on fire by the grenades thrown into them. There now remained the task of spanning the chasm that yawned between that end of the stone bridge and the broken arches. That night the English laid planks across the opening. The Irish at once perceived the grave danger that now threatened them. At all costs the planks must be removed. On Sunday morning, the 28th, from Brigadier Maxwell's Scotch regiment a sergeant and ten men volunteered to don armour in order to destroy the beams. The eleven dauntless soldiers grasped their axes and saws, and boldly advanced. On both banks of the river there came a deep hush, the hush of amazement and admiration. The cannon fired, the musket-shot rattled, and the hand grenades fell. When the smoke cleared away the eleven lay in the silence of death, but their work in part was

done. Such heroism is contagious. Eleven others rushed forward to complete the task. Plank after plank was torn up and flung into the waters of the Shannon. Man after man fell amidst the ruthless rain of shot and shell, but the survivors gallantly persisted. The last plank was at length flung into the river. Eleven set out, but only two of the noble band returned. [23] The poet sings :

With weeping and with laughter
Still is the story told.
How well Horatius kept the bridge
In the brave days of old,

But the courage and self-devotion of these twenty-two men have been almost forgotten. Their very names are unknown. Yet surely their fame ought not to be allowed to perish. They shed their life's blood in defence of the trust committed to their charge ; and their example should remain an undying inspiration for succeeding generations to sentiments of daring and devotion, and to deeds of self-sacrifice and valour in the service of their country. The Irish are indeed a strange race. Perhaps no people think more and speak more of " famous men and our fathers that begat us" and of their noble works, but rarely does the thought take a tangible form. No monument marks the site where the Irish hero and the Irish thinker repose. The graves of a patriot like Owen Roe O'Neill and of a statesman like Archbishop King — to take widely different examples — are unknown. The thrill that an Englishman feels in Westminster Abbey when he enters the presence of the mighty dead is denied an Irishman, for he has not taken care of the dust of his immortals.

Napoleon remarked of the English at Waterloo that he had beaten them though they did not seem to know it. Ginkell too had been beaten but he was unaware of it. He was endowed with all the perseverance and doggedness of the race whose forces he was commanding. He determined to build a close gallery, and under its cover the workmen might span the last arch. Again he meditated on the enormous difficulties that barred the passage of the bridge, and he began to reconsider his alternatives. The ford below the bridge now loomed large in his thoughts. The Shannon lay unusually low, for the summer had been dry, and he therefore resolved to ascertain to what extent it was fordable. At that time three Danish soldiers lay under sentence of death for military offences. They were promised their lives if they discovered the ford could be passed over by a man on foot. [24] They plunged into the river at some distance from each other. Their comrades pretended to fire at them, but the bullets flew over their heads. While the enemy were thus deceived, Ginkell possessed ocular evidence that the deepest part of the stream merely reached a man's waist. The general officers, Wurtemberg, Tetteau, and Ruvigny, all — save Mackay — advised an assault, and Major-General Talmash urged that it should be made at once.

St. Ruth perceived that Ginkell had relaxed his efforts to gain the bridge, and he began to suspect that his adversary was meditating a forcible entry through Irish Town. In case this should be the new design, he commanded M. de Suzon on the evening of the 29th to level the rampart there in order to permit troops from his camp to march rapidly to the defence of the town. [25] Unfortunately for the Jacobites, M. de Suzon did not possess the sense of the importance of time owned by St. Ruth, and he delayed a day in executing the order. Ginkell ordered that on the 30th an endeavour to pass the river should be made at three places simultaneously. [26] The stone bridge, the floats and pontoons, and the ford furnished the three ways. At six in the morning a storming party was waiting, each man having fifteen rounds of ammunition. In an unforeseen fashion the plan broke down. While the pontoons were being launched the grenadiers on opposite sides of the ruined arch began in sport to throw grenades at one another. While they were amusing themselves, the Irish set on fire some fascines near them. In an instant the blaze shot up and the whole breastwork was crackling with heat. Another breastwork was speedily erected, but it was now twelve o'clock and St. Ruth easily divined their intention. Ginkell had lost all the advantages of an early morning attack and he held a council of war. [27] The troops withdrew, and the Irish Commander assumed that he

had no more to fear that day. He went to his camp in order, so the story runs, to prepare a dinner for the ladies and gentlemen he had invited. De Suzon, the Commander of Irish Town, did not demolish the ramparts. When his three regiments saw the retreat of the English his sentinels became less watchful than usual. The English were still holding their council of war, when two Irish officers asked to see Ginkell, informing him that the present was his time for action, that the Irish felt quite secure, for St. Ruth was near them and they thought the English were therefore quite unable to cross, and that three of the worst regiments in the Irish army were at that very moment on guard. Ginkell wanted Talmash to lead the attack. It was, however, Mackay's turn to command, and he refused to give way. [28] Major-General Tetteau and the Prince of Hesse accompanied the obstinate Scotch Commander. Talmash came too as a simple volunteer in the advance party commanded by Colonel Gustavus Hamilton of the 20th Foot. The assault was ordered for six o'clock that same evening, the usual hour for the relief of the guards. That summer day, instead of the measured tramp of a few sentries coming to succeed their comrades, there marched down to the trenches about two thousand troops, consisting of forty-three men from the grenadier companies and eighty-three picked soldiers from the battalion companies of every regiment, each detachment having with it three captains, six subalterns, and seven sergeants. To every man was served out fifteen rounds of ammunition and, as at the Boyne, all carried ready to place in their hats a green bough as the sign of battle. At six the angelus bell rang and the attack began. The English batteries covered the advance of the attacking party. Colonel Gustavus Hamilton led the assailants, followed by the Prince of Hesse. Surprised by the unexpected movement, the enemy saw the English well across the ford in a line of twenty abreast before they grasped the situation. A second body waited at the bridge, and a third lay ready near the pontoons now being laid. Impetuously the ford was passed and the ramparts scaled. As Mackay entered the breach Brigadier Maxwell at once gave up his sword. Leaving Lieutenant-Colonel Columbine with two hundred fusiliers of the 6th Foot to hold the castle in check, the stormers hastened to the bridge — this time from the Connaught side. The planks fell on the broken third arch, and the British troops poured over. [29] Their onward rush was so impeded by the masonry and rubbish thrown down by their own guns that they began to curse and swear. Their General heard, and amid the din of the assault his Puritan training asserted itself. "My lads," he spoke, "you are brave fellows, but do not swear. We have more reason to thank God for the goodness which He has shown us this day than to take His name in vain." [30]

So well was the surprise carried out that at half-past six the English had gained complete possession of the town. [31] Half an hour's fighting had saved the Irish from complete destruction at the Boyne almost exactly a year ago, and half an hour's fight now achieved their ruin at Athlone. When the Irish saw the first soldier breast the ford they acquainted St. Ruth. He replied that "the thing was impossible; that the English would not attack a town at such a disadvantage, when he was near with his army to succour it; and that he would give a thousand pistoles to see them make the attempt." Napoleon disliked "that beast of a word, impossible," and well would it have been for his countryman if he had shared that dislike. He despatched men too late, and when they approached the town they found themselves unable to enter, for de Suzon had not demolished the ramparts. For once St. Ruth and Tyrconnel had agreed when they ordered the demolition of these fortifications, but their orders had not been carried out. When the Irish arrived at Athlone they saw their own gates shut in their faces, the drawbridge raised, and their own guns fired upon them. Instead of being the besieged they were the besiegers, and they did not relish the transformation. [32] The news was carried to the amazed General. "Taken!" St. Ruth exclaimed; "it cannot be! A town taken, and I close by with an army to relieve it!" The impossibility of six o'clock became the possibility, then the certainty, of half-past six. Nothing remained for St. Ruth but to retreat. [33] Early the next morning he silently withdrew, leaving the castle in the hands of Captain Wauchope and his five hundred men. When Wauchope learnt of his General's retreat he at once submitted. Captain Parker writes of this surrender: "Here I had a narrow escape of my life. A stone which had been thrown from the top of the castle as I passed under it, fell on my shoulder; the effects of which I feel to this day, on every change of weather. This, indeed, I deserved for being so fool-hardy as to put myself on this command when it was not my turn; but it was a

warning to me ever after. It is an old maxim in war, that he who goes as far as he is commanded is a good man, but he that goes farther is a fool.”

At the cost of twelve killed and thirty wounded, Athlone had fallen. [34] The tame contest in Irish Town contrasts strangely with the heroic struggle at the stone bridge. Of course the element of surprise counted enormously in the success of the final assault. For a force of two thousand men to make an attack, to ford a rapid river, and to capture a fortified town in the face of a large army was a marvellous feat. Six brass guns, two mortars, twenty barrels of powder, and large quantities of provisions were taken. The peasants flocked in large numbers to the camp seeking letters of protection, and these were given them on condition that they promised henceforth to live as loyal subjects of King William and Queen Mary. Deserters also came in greater numbers than before. The small garrisons guarding the fords of the Shannon saw their occupation gone by the fall of Athlone, and consequently they rejoined the Irish army. The end of the struggle now seemed to be within reasonable distance. Louis's hopes of abundant employment in Ireland for William were becoming fainter and fainter. For the way now lay open to Connaught where the last stand must take place.

[1] *C.S.P., Dom.*, 1690-91, p. 154; *S.P., Ireland*, King's Letter Book I., p. 200.

Nottingham to Ginkell : “ The King has received complaints of very great disorders and spoils committed by the officers, as well as the soldiers of the army in Ireland, to the oppression of his subjects, in taking away cattle, stock, and goods, both of protestants and of such papists as have submitted ; he would therefore have you take all possible care to prevent such disorders or spoils for the future.” *C.S.P., Dom.*, 1690-91, p. 155 ; *S.P., Ireland*, King's Letter Book L, pp. 200-201. Nottingham to Douglas, complaining of the disorders of him and his officers. The like letters were sent to Kirke and Lanier. Kirke replied, *C.S.P., Dom.*, 1690-91, p. 161. Cf. *Clarke Correspondence*, vol. ii. f. 1 17, 128, 140 ; vol. iii. f. 257 5 *Macariae Excidium*, 399 ; Dalrymple, pt. ii. bk. v. vol. iii. 48-49.

[2] *C.S.P., Dom.*, 1690-71, p. 145 ; *S.P., Ireland*, King's Letter Book I., p. 197.

[3] *Clarke Correspondence* (T.C.D.) ; *C.S.P., Dom.*, 1690-91, pp. 130-131, 142-143.

[4] Story, 53-54.

[5] *Clarke Correspondence*, lii. 271, 285.

[6] Story, 58, 71-72, 77-80.

[7] On Athlone the authorities are Kane, Mackay, *Macariae Excidium*, Parker, and Story. Cf. the *London Gazette*.

[8] *Clarke Correspondence*, iii. 284.

[9] Story, 68.

[10] *An Exact journal of the Victorious Progress of their Majesties Forces under the Command of General Ginckle this Summer in Ireland, 1691.*

[11] Add. 33,264 (Brit. Mus.).

[12] On Ballymore the authorities are Harris, Parker, and Story. Ulick Burke to Ginkell, June 11, 1691 (*Clarke Correspondence*).

[13] Clarke, *James II.*, 452.

[14] Parker's *Memoirs*, p. 25.

[15] *Macariae Excidium*.

[16] Compare the parallel incident at the second siege of Limerick.

[17] *Diary of the Siege of Athlone, by an Engineer of the Army, a witness of the Action 1691;*
June 28

Fumeron to Louvois, July 8, 1691

[18] Add. 33,264 (Brit. Mus.).

[19] Add. 33,264 (Brit. Mus.).

[20] Story, 94-98 ; *Macariae Excidium*, 419-420.

[21] Story ; *Macariae Excidium*, 420 ; *Light to the Blind*. St. Ruth and the French officers believed that it was impossible to force the river. Mémoires du Maréchal de Berwick, i. 97-98. Contrast Goltz, 383 : “ In war, nothing rational must be considered impossible as long as it has not been tested ; and we may dare everything we believe we can carry out.”

Ibid. 261 : “ The defence of rivers . . . has hardly ever been successful for any length of time. Neither the Danube nor the Rhine has stopped armies. ... A river, like a mountain, is an insurmountable impediment which is invariably surmounted.” Cf. Hamley, *Operations of War*; pt. v. ch. iii.

[22] *Rawdon Papers*, 346-348.

[23] *Macariae Excidium*, 423-424 ; Story, 102-103.

[24] *Macariae Excidium*, 427 ; *C.S.P., Dom.*, 1690-91, p. 429.

[25] *Jacobite Narrative*, 131 ; *Macariae Excidium*, 121-122, 425; Clarke, ii. 455. Brigadier Kane remarks : “ Here the old proverb was verified, that security dwells next door to ruin. Saint-Ruth thought it impossible for us to pass the river before he could be down with the army, and it is most certain nothing but neglect of their duty (by the officers) was the occasion of it ; for they, seeing their general secure in himself, thought all was safe, which made them neglect keeping their men strictly to their duty, and having a vigilant eye on us. Had they done thus, it would have been impossible for us to march, but they might easily see us from the castle, and give timely notice to their general, which would have prevented what followed. The great oversight St. Ruth committed in leaving the works on the back part of the town standing, was the only motive that induced our general to pass the Shannon at this place.” Captain Parker agrees : “ Had he (i.e. St. Ruth) destroyed these works, we should never have been able to defend the town against the whole army, especially as the castle, which still held out, was crowded with men ; for though we had battered down that face of it which lay to the water, yet the other parts remained entire, and had a number of men in them.”

[26] *Macariae Excidium*, 122, 426-427.

[27] *Diary of the Siege of Athlone ; Exact Journal* ; Story ; Mackay. On Councils of War, cf. Goltz, 64. Frederick the Great forbade his Generals to hold such councils.

[28] Add. 33,264 (Brit. Mus.).

[29] *Macariae Excidium*, 129-130; Story, 106-110 ; *Jacobite Narrative* (1688-91),

[30] Add. 33,264 (Brit. Mus.).

[31] Burnet, ii. 78-79 ; *Diary of the Siege of Athlone ; Exact Account ; Macariae Excidium.* 421 ; Story; Fumeron to Louvois, June 30 1691

July 10 *Mémoires du Marechal de Berwick*, 1,97-98 ;

Clarke, ii. 453-454; *Memoirs of Captain Parker*, 25; *Rawden Papers*, 344- 347, 349.

[32] *Macariae Excidium*, 428.

[33] Clarke, 11. 4i:c: Story: Fumeron to Louvois, June 30 1691

July 10

[34] During this siege of eleven days the English had, according to Story, fired away 12,000 cannon balls, 600 bombs, and nearly 50 tons of powder, besides a great many tons of stones discharged from mortars.

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