

**Journal of the Cork Historical and
Archaeological Society**

www.corkhist.ie



Title: The Irish attack on Youghal in 1642

Author: Townshend, Dorothea

Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society, 1904, Vol. 10, No 62,
page(s) 100-102

Published by the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society

Digital file created: August 7, 2013

Your use of the JCHAS digital archive indicates that you accept the Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.corkhist.ie/info/tandc.pdf>

The Cork Historical and Archaeological Society (IE-148166, incorporated 1989) was founded in 1891, for the collection, preservation and diffusion of all available information regarding the past of the City and County of Cork, and South of Ireland generally. This archive of all content of JCHAS (from 1892 up to ten years preceding current publication) continues the original aims of the founders in 1891. For more information visit www.corkhist.ie.

They are great lovers of women, especially such of their own country ; and so unsensible of the guilt, that they glory in the crime, and brag of their spurious issue.

A gentleman of good note, whom I knew, had so many that he knew them not when he saw them : several strange women, whom he knew not, taking notice of this advantage, did frequently send their children to him, who to be rid of them quickly, gave them his formal blessing with some small piece of money.

More might be said in *laudem & vituperium*, in the praise and dispraise of Montecapernia ; but my stay being there but a very little, I wanted both information and further observation.

FINIS.

The Irish Attack on Youghal in 1642.

BY MRS. DOROTHEA TOWNSHEND.



TRACT in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, which gives an account of an exciting incident in the defence of Youghal, seems to have hitherto escaped the notice of Munster antiquaries. It is particularly interesting, as it supplies a blank in the "Lismore Papers." The Earl of Cork's Diary practically ceases about the beginning of 1642 ; and when the Irish were scaling his battlements he must have been a great deal too busy to write letters. So it chances that the whole episode has been unknown ; and the characteristic anecdotes of the great Earl come as fresh to us as they did to the English readers who bought the Newsletter.

The Tract is dated 1641, which, of course, is 1642 new style, and it is called :—

"God's Providence to the Distressed Protestants of Ireland, and the last Proceedings in the Province of Munster. Attested by two letters from Robert Pickering, clerk unto Sir Symon Harcourt, sergeant major of all the horse there arrived. The one dated Tollogh (sic), Jan. 20. The other at Youghal, Jan. 23, 1641. London. Printed for John Thorne." 6 pages.

The letters begin by telling that in the beginning of January Youghal

had surrendered to the Irish under Lord Roche and General Barry, "none of the town making any colour of resistance against them, though walled on the land side, and my lord of Cork there with 600 men; which is a sign that they were welcome unto the town, whatsoever they were unto the Earl. My Lord had some small notice of their coming, and therefore got with all his men into the castle very happily, and with what provision he could get either in the town or about, with leave or without. His Honour hath by credible report been at great charge in fortifying the Castle, which stands upon a rock and is very strongly seated; but it is very greatly to be feared that he will want victuals before he can obtain relief." It may be remembered that the great Earl of Cork was at this time seventy-five years of age, and so hardly fitted to endure the hardship of a siege. The narrative continues that Lord Cork then sent for an Irish footman whom he had trusted for many years, and promised him if he would go to Tallow, then to Lord Dungarvan at Lem Con, and to Lismore to the Earls of Barrymore and Kildare, to beg for help, he should have a reward of a hundred pounds, and a pension for life of twenty marks. "And so let him down the castle wall by a knotted rope, when the tide had only flowed one hour, first taking him by the hand; for on other occasions he had used the passages of the ford and knew them well," and that no one was likely to venture to pursue him. "And Domenick being down, only said, I warrant you, my Lord; and gave the rope three shakes, and away in such a stealing manner they could not hear the water stir," and "came that very evening about nine of the clock unto Tologh, related unto Sir Symon the Earl's estate and how he came forth, and to what end, eat something with us, and away to Lismore, eighteen long Irish miles, and from thence to Lem Con, nine miles." Meantime Lieut-Colonel Douglas, who was at Tallough, "with 500 tall Scots," started "at his own entreaty, unto the aid of my Lord of Cork," but taking only his footman, an Irishman, as guide, a man whom he had trusted and employed for long, was led by him into an ambush three miles from Youghal, where the Scots were set on by Sir Denis Butler and driven into the bogs, where they stuck fast and were cut off to a man." The English and Scots were evidently unused to bogs and exceedingly terrified by them—the dangers of sinking in bog are dwelt on again and again.

Dominic had however sped better than the Scots, and did his business so well, that on the Thursday, Lord Cork's sons-in-law, the Earls of Kildare and Barrimore, with Captain John Paget, Capt. Herbert

Nicholas, "a gentleman well experienced in the wars in the Queen's time," Captain Bannister, and Captain Ducke, were under arms with 4,000 men, "the chiefest and most being my Lord's tenants. These marched in good order and better resolution, vowing that they would either quite clear my Lord, their great Landlord, or that Youghal should prove their grave." "When this resolute crew came within a mile and a half of Youghal the rebels united came out stoutly in battalia against us, in number, to our deeming, some 6,000, having the odds of us in number somewhat, although we had it of them in arms and men. Sir Symon did not approve of charging them with horse at the first because he was jealous of the ground, hearing of so miserable a chance of the Scots but three days before." Captain Baget assured him that he knew the ground perfectly, and that it was firm and sure both for horse and man; yet Sir Symon would not charge with horse, but only flanked them and brought up the foot "in main battalia very slowly, commanding to give fire at such and such distances." The enemy received the first and second volley very manfully and answered it resolutely; but at the third volley they began manifestly to fail, whereon grew a difference between Sir Symon and Captain Paget," and the van marched up to the very beards of the rebels who dropped exceeding fast, and not able to withstand the fierceness of our fire they not only retreated but took to their heels, then Sir Symon cried, "After them, Cavaliers, but not too far, for fear of bogs." General Barry was mortally wounded in this encounter, so the English lost no time in hanging him, and set up his head on the walls. Lord Cork met his rescuers "in the midst of the town and heartily congratulated us all, for his keepers [jailors] would wait no longer upon him, seeing they were likely to lose both fees and prisoner."

The Irish had attacked the Castle furiously with light wooden and rope ladders and got up on the battlements, "but were sent down in greater haste than they came thither."

This appears to have been the only time that the Irish actually got inside Youghal; but they kept it closely besieged, and its defenders suffered such hardships "as made," wrote the Earl of Cork, "a rich churchyard." For eighteen months longer the gallant old man defended Youghal, counselling and heartening the Munster garrison with his last breath; and there under his great tomb in Youghal church he lies at rest,