

For the Honourable William Lenthall, Esquire, Speaker of the Parliament of England: These.

Castletown, 15th February, 1649.

MR. SPEAKER,

Having refreshed our men for some short time in our Winter-quarters, and health being pretty well recovered, we thought fit to take the field; and to attempt such things as God by His providence should lead us to upon the Enemy.

Our resolution was to fall into the Enemy's quarters two ways. The one party, being about fifteen or sixteen troops of horse and dragoons and about two-thousand foot, were ordered to go up by the way of Carrick into the County of Kilkenny under the command of Colonel Reynolds; whom Major-General Ireton was to follow with a reserve. I myself was to go by the way of Mallow, over the Blackwater, towards the County of Limerick and the County of Tipperary, with about twelve troops of horse, and three troops of dragoons, and between two and three hundred foot.

I began my march upon Tuesday the Nine-and-twentieth of January, from Youghal: and upon Thursday the One-and-thirtieth, I possessed a Castle called Kilkenny, upon the edge of the County of Limerick; where I left thirty foot. From thence I marched to a Strong-house belonging to Sir Richard Everard (called Clogheen), who is one of the Supreme Council; where I left a troop of horse and some dragoons. From thence I marched to Roghill Castle, which was possessed by some Ulster foot, and a party of the Enemy's horse; which upon summons (I having taken the Captain of horse prisoner before) was rendered to me. These places being thus possessed gave us much command (together with some other holds we have) of the White-Knights' and Roche's Country; and of all the land from Mallow to the Suir-side;-especially by 'help of' another Castle called Old Castletown, 'which,' since my march, 'was' taken by my Lord of Broghil. Which I had sent to his Lordship to endeavour; as also a Castle of Sir Edward Fitzharris, over the Mountains in the County of Limerick:-I having left his Lordship at Mallow, with six or seven hundred horse, and four or five hundred foot, to protect those parts, and your interest in Munster; lest while we were abroad, Inchiquin, whose forces lay about Limerick and the County of Kerry, should fall in behind us. His Lordship drew two cannon to the foresaid Castle; which having summoned, they refused. His Lordship, having bestowed about ten shot upon it, which made their stomachs come down,-he gave all the soldiers quarter for life; and shot all the Officers, being six in number, to death. Since the taking of these Garrisons, the Irish have sent their commissioners to compound for their contribution as far as the walls of Limerick.

I marched from Roghill Castle over the Suir, with very much difficulty; and from thence to Fethard, almost in the heart of the County of Tipperary; where was a Garrison of the Enemy. The Town is most pleasantly seated; having a very good Wall with round and square bulwarks, after the old manner of

fortifications. We came thither in the night, and indeed were very much distressed by sore and tempestuous wind and rain. After a long march, we knew not well how to dispose of ourselves; but finding an old Abbey in the suburbs, and some cabins and poor houses,-we got into them, and had opportunity to send 'the Garrison' a summons. They shot at my trumpet; and would not listen to him, for an hour's space: but having some Officers in our party whom they knew, I sent them, To let them know I was there with a good part of the Army. We shot not a shot at them; but they were very angry, and fired very earnestly upon us; telling us, It was not a time of night to send a summons. But yet in the end, the Governor was willing to send out two commissioners,-I think rather to see whether there was a force sufficient to force him, than to any other end. After almost a whole night spent in treaty, the Town was delivered to me the next morning, upon terms which we usually call honourable; which I was the willinger to give, because I had little above Two-hundred foot, and neither ladders nor guns, nor any thing else to force them. That night, there being about Seventeen companies of the Ulster foot in Cashel, above five miles from thence, they quit it in some disorder; and the Sovereign and the Aldermen sent to me a petition, desiring that I would protect them. Which I have also made a quarter.

From thence I marched towards Callan; hearing that Colonel Reynolds was there, with the Party before mentioned. When I came thither, I found he had fallen upon the Enemy's horse, and routed them (being about a hundred), with his forlorn; 'he' took my Lord of Ossory's Captain-Lieutenant, and another Lieutenant of horse, prisoners;-and one of those who betrayed our Garrison of Enniscorthy; whom we hanged. The Enemy had possessed three Castles in the Town; one of them belonging to one Butler, very considerable; the other two had about a hundred or hundred-and-twenty men in them,-which 'latter' he attempted; and they, refusing conditions seasonably offered, were put all to the sword. Indeed some of your soldiers did attempt very notably in this service:-I do not hear there were six men of ours lost. Butler's Castle was delivered up on conditions, for all to march away, leaving their arms behind them. Wherein I have placed a company of foot, and a troop of horse, under the command of my Lord Colvil; the place being six miles from Kilkenny. From hence Colonel Reynolds was sent with his regiment to remove a Garrison of the Enemy's from Knocktofer (being the way of our communication to Ross); which accordingly he did.

We marched back with the rest of the body to Fethard and Cashel: where we are now quartered,-having good plenty both of horse meat and man's meat for a time; and being indeed. we may say, even almost in the heart and bowels of the Enemy; ready to attempt what God shall next direct. And blessed be His name only for this good success; and for this 'also,' That we do not find our men are at all considerably sick upon this expedition, though indeed it hath been very blustering weather.-

I had almost forgot one business: the Major-General was very desirous to gain a Pass over the Suir; where indeed we had none but by boat, or when the weather served. Wherefore, on Saturday in the evening, he marched with a party of horse and foot to Ardfinnan; where was a Bridge, and at the foot of

it a strong Castle. Which he, about four o'clock the next morning, attempted;- killed about thirteen of the Enemy's outguard; lost but two men, and eight or ten wounded: the Enemy yielded the place to him, and we are possessed of it,-being a very considerable Pass, and the nearest to our Pass at Cappelquin over the Blackwater, whither we can bring guns, ammunition, or other things from Youghal by water, and 'then' over this Pass to the Army. The County of Tipperary have submitted to 1,5000l. a-month contribution, although they have six or seven of the Enemy's Garrisons yet upon them.

Sir, I desire the charge of England as to this War may be abated as much as may be, and as we know you do desire, out of your care to the Commonwealth. But if you expect your work to be done, if the marching Army be not constantly paid, and the course taken that hath been humbly represented,-indeed it will not be for the thrift of England, as far as England is concerned in the speedy reduction of Ireland. The money we raise upon the Counties maintains the Garrison forces; and hardly that. If the active force be not maintained, and all contingencies defrayed, how can you expect to have but a lingering business of it? Surely we desire not to spend a shilling of your treasury, wherein our consciences do not prompt us. We serve you; we are willing to be out of our trade of war; and shall hasten, by God's assistance and grace, to the end of our work, as the labourer doth to be at rest. This makes us bold to be earnest with you for necessary supplies:-that of money is one. And there be some other things,-which indeed I do not think for your service to speak of publicly, which I shall humbly represent to the Council of State, - wherewith I desire we may be accommodated.

Sir, the Lord who doth all these things, gives hopes of a speedy issue to this business; and, I am persuaded, will graciously appear in it. And truly there is no fear of the strength and combination of enemies round about, nor of slanderous tongues at home. God hath hitherto fenced you against all those, to wonder and amazement; they are tokens of your prosperity and success:- only it will be good for you, and us that serve you, to fear the Lord; to fear unbelief, self-seeking, confidence in an arm of flesh, and opinion of any instruments that they are other than as dry bones. That God be merciful in these things, and bless you, is the humble prayer, of Sir,

Your most humble servant,
OLIVER CROMWELL.