

BATTLE OF RATHMINES

Colonel Michael Jones (–1649)

to William Lenthall (1591–1662), Speaker of the House of Commons (1640–1655, 1659–1660)

Dublin, 6 August 1649

Since Ormonde's¹ first setting himself before this place (where he has continued from 20 June to the 2nd instant), little has been by him done against this city, he aiming first (it seems) at the gaining the principal out-garrisons—Drogheda, Dundalk, and Trim, the last being taken the 21st past.

On the twenty-second, Colonel Veneables landed with his foot, the twenty-fifth landed Colonel Reynolds with his horse, the twenty-sixth, Colonel Moore and Colonel Thurkes with their foot, and Captain Norwood and Major Elliott with their troops; whereby this party became in some sort considerable. Wherewithal, and by the report of the Lord Lieutenant's following soon after with the whole army, the enemy being awakened, they thereupon resolved on setting themselves wholly to this work, and in the first place did they cut off that water whereby our mills were driven, and thereby was our condition something straitened.

But principally, on the second instant, they cast up a work at Baggotsrath (commonly called Baggarath) within a quarter of a mile of this city, whither having drawn about 1500 foot, besides horse, they thence purposed to work themselves forward in their approaches, and to take from us our forage for our horse and grass for our cattle, without which this place could not have long subsisted. Also, by building forts towards the sea, was to be taken from us the landing-place for our coming supplies.

Hereby was I necessitated to attempt something for diverting this evil, this being the very ready way for distressing us, and debarring us of our forces expected, and this the only safe landing-place left them in the dominion of Ireland.

The enemy's horse and foot, therefore, appearing before us at Baggotsrath, the 2nd instant, about nine in the morning drew I out 1200 horse and 4000 foot, not then intending further than the beating up of the enemy's quarters only, without further engaging with so small a party, their camp being at Rathmines, within less than a mile of Baggotsrath.

But the Lord blessing us with success in that part of the work, and by the coming on of parties on all sides, it came at length to a general engagement; and, by the same power of our God, ours so gained on the enemy that, after more than two hours' hot dispute with them, they were totally routed.

Ormonde hardly escaped with eight horse, and few had escaped of their whole numbers but that there was cause to provide against a body of one thousand fresh horse of the enemy's, commanded by Sir Thomas Armstrong, which coming up fresh, and in our disorder, might have endangered all; but they, instead of advancing, which we expected, fled towards Drogheda.

Our loss of men was little, there not being twenty missing, but many wounded. Of the enemy were slain about four thousand, and 2517 taken prisoners. We took on the place three demi-cannons, one large square gun, carrying a ball of twelve pounds, one saker-drake, and one mortar piece; all these brass.

Then we also gained about 200 oxen for the train, besides carriages. The next day we seized a brass cannon within five miles of the camp.

It was for our advantage that Inchiquin² had, some days before, gone towards Munster, yet intending to return shortly. That also we so engaged before Clanricarde's³ coming up with his 3000 men of Connaught and 7000 Ulster Scots, also upon advancing.

¹ James Butler (1610–1688), Duke of Ormonde, Royalist commander-in-chief in Ireland (1641–1647, 1649–1650)

In all this must the Lord's hand alone be acknowledged, Who, to the praise of the glory of His power, has done for us so wonderfully, and that but by an handful of men, and not the third part of our foot coming into the principal part of the work; yet by so few the Lord defeated an enemy by themselves now acknowledged 19.000, and they having a fresh reserve of horse little short of our numbers.

I humbly beg an acknowledgment to Sir George Ayscue,⁴ our admiral, unto whom this place and this service is exceedingly obliged. From him, on all occasions, have we whatsoever was in his power to contribute to our well-being. Whose good affections to the public have been such as I must make it my request (and it is my first), that he be continued unto us in this command; which I desire not for any respects whatsoever, but that I find it so much conducing to the service.

Henry Cary, *Memorials of the Great Civil War in England* (London: Henry Colburn, 1842), II:159–162.

² Murrough O'Brien (1614–1674), Baron Inchiquin. His arrival at the battle saved the remnants of Ormonde's army.

³ Ulick Burke (1604–1657), Marquess of Clanricarde

⁴ Sir George Ayscue (c. 1616–1671)