

SURRENDER OF CORK

Colonel Richard Deane (1610–1653)

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

Milford Haven, 8 November 1649

Having this day received certain intelligence from my Lord Lieutenant of Ireland¹ and Colonel Blake² of Cork declaring for the Parliament of England, and turning out Major-General Sterling³ and the Irish (of which I believe my partner, Colonel Blake, has given the council of state an account), and now having had a clear narrative of it by one that was an actor in the whole business, I thought myself obliged to give you this account of it.

16 October, at night, Colonel Townsend, Colonel Warden, and Colonel Gifford⁴ (being there prisoners for the business of Youghal) were ordered to be disposed into three several castles. Next day, some of the officers in the town came to these gentlemen that night and told them they were undone unless they would stand by them, for they would else be slaves to the Irish. Upon which the three colonels replied that if they would fetch for each of them a sword and pistols, they would live and die with them; which was done.

And the guards, perceiving them coming down stairs armed, cried “We are for you too.” And from thence they marched to the main guard, and they immediately declared with them upon this general consent, crying out with all the Irish; in which all the townsmen that were English and the soldiers unanimously agreed, and put it presently in execution.

They put out the next morning their Major-General Sterling and those few that dissented. And since that, Youghal has done the same, as this gentleman informs me who came from Cork but two days since. And those of Youghal had writ to Colonel Gifford (the present governor of Cork) to send Colonel Warden with a hundred horse to their assistance, for they had seized on Sir Percy Smith, their Governor, and Johnson, which betrayed them formerly, and some others, and had secured them in the castle.

Thus it has pleased God of His infinite goodness to help when men were most weak. For truly, after the taking of Ross and the besieging of Duncannon (a place of great strength and concernment), what with sickness and garrisons and that siege, my Lord Lieutenant was very unable to attempt anything further upon the enemies; and still is, except you hasten over the recruits of horse and foot, with those provision of clothes and necessaries, so long promised and so earnestly expected.

Truly, sir, methinks every English heart should act more than an ordinary peace when we see such a series of divine providences going along with us, and miraculously assisting beyond a human apprehension; which I hope all honest hearts will be sensible of, lest having such an opportunity given them and they, neglecting it, wander in the wilderness many years.

Ormonde⁵ and O’Neil⁶ are joined, and lie within fourteen miles of Ross. They give themselves out to be 22.000; but it is credibly reported (from a very sure hand) to be 7.000 foot and 3.000 horse, at least. Which how much it exceeds the number you are able to make to encounter them, I will not say; but this I am sure, that expedition in all supplies is the life of your business.

¹ Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658), Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1649–1657)

² Robert Blake (1599–1657), commander of Parliamentary naval forces in Ireland

³ Lieutenant-General Sir Robert Sterling, Royalist Governor of Cork

⁴ The Royalists arrested Colonels Richard Townsend (1618–1692), William Warden, and John Gifford as they prepared the town of Youghal to surrender to Cromwell’s arrival.

⁵ James Butler (1610–1688), Duke of Ormonde, Royalist commander-in-chief in Ireland (1641–1647, 1649–1650)

⁶ Owen Roe O’Neil (Eoghan Rua Ó Néill) (1590–1649), Irish Catholic commander who frequently fought with other Royalists in Ireland. He died on 6 November 1649 on his way to join forces with the Duke of Ormonde

Rupert,⁷ three days after Cork declaring for the Parliament, in great haste sailed from Kinsale with seven sail of ships. Which way he is gone we know not, but it concerns you to hasten out as many of the winter guard as are come in to be victualled and fitted. I think it would be a service to the Commonwealth if you could persuade Mr. Prideaux to settle the stages of the posts so in Wales, that our letters might pass more certainly and speedily, it being the only way for my Lord Lieutenant to hold correspondence with the Parliament during his abode in those parts of Ireland he now is, and also a thing he much desires.

I have, ever since my coming out of Ireland, been troubled with the distemper of that country disease that brought me into a fever; and after I had, with keeping my bed, pretty well recovered myself, I went abroad somewhat too soon, and relapsed into a violent fit of burning, which has made me a prisoner to my bed ever since; and I am afraid I shall make you the like to this paper. But lest you should be as weary of this letter as I am of my bed, give leave to subscribe myself, Sir, your honor's humble servant.

Sir, be pleased to take this as a private letter to yourself.

Henry Cary, *Memorials of the Great Civil War in England* (London: Henry Colburn, 1842), II:185–188.

⁷ Rupert (1619–1682), Count Palatine of the Rhine and Duke of Bavaria, nephew of Charles I and the leading Royalist commander.