

Ormonde's hand, "Colonell Preston's, dated the 26th of March, 1643." The letter was as follows:—

"RIGHT HONNO^{rs}—I conceive by yo^r Lōp's Lre yo^w take in ill parte the hanging of one Lilly w^{ch} heeretofore served in yo^r Army, but when yo^r Lōpp vnderstand the cause, I beleeve yo^w wilbe better satisfied, the said Lilly havinge served in o^r Army and runn away to yo^{rs}, and wee havinge taken him afterwards, wee caused the millitarie Lawes to bee putt in execution, accordinge to the Custome of the Countrie wherein I served, who gives noe quarter to such men as beinge vncapable thereof, as I hope yo^r Lōpp will conceiue to be soe fittinge, and could wish y^t yo^r Lōp would vse all such as run away from yo^r Army that yo^w finde againe in the same nature, giveinge yo^r Lōp thanks for sendinge my sonns page backe; I remaine
Yo^r Lōps most humble servant

T. PRESTON.

"Kilkenny 26 Martij
1643."

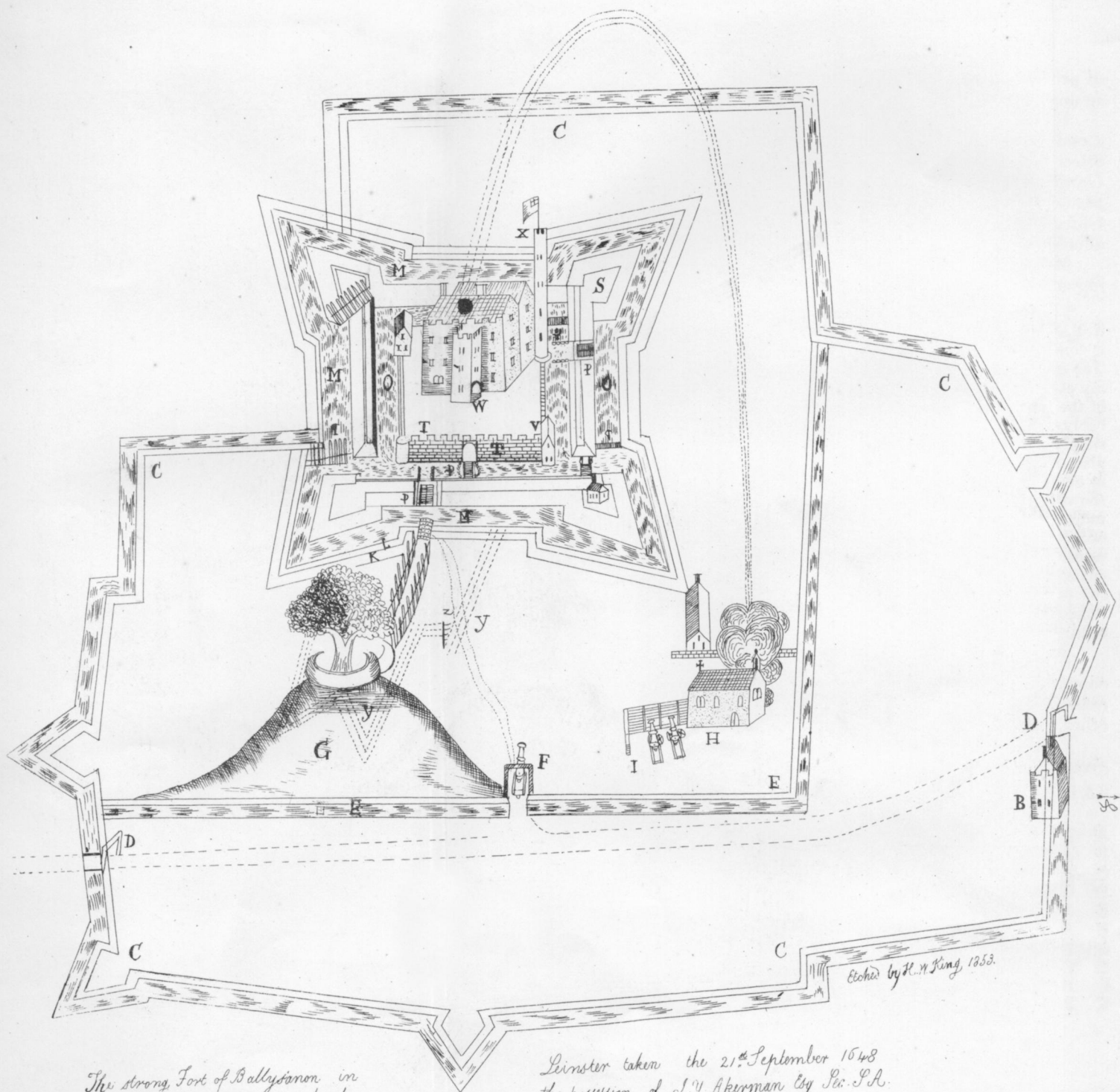
Colonel Thomas Preston, a brother of Lord Gormanstown, had served many years in the Low Countries, in the service of Spain, where he had particularly distinguished himself by his gallant defence of Genep in 1641. He came to Ireland in September, 1642, and in the October following was appointed Provincial General for Leinster, by the General Assembly of the Confederate Catholics.—Carte's "Ormond," vol. i. pp. 367 and 369.

The following papers were then submitted to the Meeting.

THE SURRENDER, IN MARCH, 1649-50, OF BALLYSONAN, IN
THE COUNTY OF KILDARE, TO THE PARLIAMENTARY
FORCES.

BY THE REV. JAMES GRAVES, A.B.

THE despatches forwarded by Cromwell and his officers to the Parliament of England, descriptive of their victorious career in Ireland, are all of more or less interest, full of quaint description, and valuable as the words of eye-witnesses and actors in the closing scene of the bloody drama of the Great Rebellion. Carlyle, in his Letters and Speeches of Cromwell, has collected the Irish despatches of the general-in-chief, and thrown the light of his genius around the vigorous, but uncouth, and often obscure, productions of that great man. But the communications forwarded by the subordinate officers of the expedition have never been collectively reprinted, and are only to be discovered in the libraries



The strong Fort of Ballystanon in
 Fac simile of the original plan. in.

Leinster taken the 21st September 1648
 the possession of J. Y. Akerman by Sir. P. R.

of private collectors of rare pamphlets, or, after laborious search, in one or other of our great public libraries.

Happening to possess a few of these despatches, published in London, under the "*imprimatur*" of the Long Parliament, I have selected that which relates to the siege and surrender of the "Strong Garrison and Fort of Ballysonan," the rather because the Society has been favoured, by H. W. King, Esq., a member of the Etching Club, with the use of a plate, engraved by that gentleman, which affords a contemporary illustration of Colonel Hewson's despatch.

Mr. King has favoured me with a letter, which gives the following account of the original of his etching :—

"The MS. from which my etching was made is in the possession of J. Y. Akerman, Esq., F.S.A., Secretary to the Society of Antiquaries. It is comprised in a single sheet of paper, rather larger than modern foolscap. The enclosed verbatim copy of a list of references to the plan, together with my etching, are the whole contents of the paper, which is unquestionably of the date it bears (1648); and I should say that the plan was, most probably, executed by some officer engaged in the attack. I etched the plate simply for the purpose of preserving what is presumed to be an unique plan of the fortification. With respect to the etching, however, I ought to observe, that the point (A) in the description is about an inch beyond the verge of the plate in the direction in which the arrow points, and was indicated in the MS. by a field-piece. This I was compelled to omit, in order to bring the plate within the size of a quarto volume. In all other respects the etching is a fac-simile of the original, and wherever any lines cut a building or other point, apparently by accident, the errors occur in the original drawing. The omission of the dashes, indicating water in some parts of the fosse, also occurs in the plan. I adhered rigidly to the original, altering nothing."

The date given in Colonel Hewson's despatch does not exactly coincide with that on the plan; but there can be no doubt that both refer to the same military operation, as they mutually illustrate each other.

The following are the original references to the plate herewith given :—

"A Description of the Strong Fort of Ballisanon, in Leinster, taken in the 21th of September, 1648.

- A The first place of our battery of the Blacke castle.
- B The black castle.
- C The workes of the towne.
- D Gates of the outworkes.
- E An other outworke.
- F A gate where one of our pieces stood.
- G The high mount fortified which wee stormed.
- H The Church. On the other side stood our morttter piece.
- I The batery & pieces.
- K The counter Scarpe.

- L Couert way 12 foot broad, his breast work 9 foot broad at top.
 M The graft 25 foot in five places and 12 foot deep.
 N The Rampire, and parapett 30 foot thicke and in some places 25 foot high.
 O The inner Moate in some places 40 foot broad.
 P The draw bridges in number 5.
 Q Bares or dames to keep in water.
 R a house and bulworke bated.
 S a bulworke bated.
 T The walls about the castle.
 V Houses that flankers the walls.
 W The Castle.
 X The Tower whereon there coller [i. e. standard] stood.
 Y an new worke.
 Z a tourne pike.”

I now proceed to give the pamphlet *verbatim*,—the letters of the Attorney-General of the Commonwealth being included, as it bears, in part, on the same transaction as Colonel Hewson’s despatch. The punctuation of the original has been corrected in one or two places, and a few notes added:—

“Several Letters from IRELAND of the late good success of the Parliament forces there. ONE from Col. *Hewson* Governour of *Dublin*, sent to the *Honourable* William Lenthall Esq; *Speaker of the PARLIAMENT*. Wherein were inclosed the Summons, and other passages between him and the Governour of the strong Garrison and Fort of *Ballisannon*. Together vvith the Propositions tendred by them, and refused. As also the Articles upon which the same was surrendered. Dated the *First day of March* 1649. TWO other Letters from *William Basil* Esquire, Atturney General for the State in *Ireland*.

“March 18. 1649. *These Letters and Papers are appointed to be Printed and published. Imprimatur, Henry Scobel, Cler. Parliamenti;*

“London Printed for Robert Ibbitson in Smithfield near the Queenshead Tavern, 1649.

p. 1. “*To the Honourable William Lenthall Esquire, Speaker of the Parliament of England.*

“SIR,—When his Excellency marched from *Dublin* towards *Munster*, he left me intrusted with that Garrison, my selfe, and those left with me at that time being sicke: The first party that recovered were sent after the Army; to wit, about 800 Foot, and 200 Horse, which fought and beat the Enemy upon their march. Some more of those sicke men that were left recovering, and some recruits comming over; after I had surprised the strong Fort upon the Bog of *Allin*,¹ and taken *Castle-Martin*² in the County of *Kildare*, and placed a Garrison therein; about the end of December, marched with a party of 1000 Horse and Foot into the Island of *Allin*,³ and

¹ I have not been able to identify this fort.

² In the barony of Kilcullen.

³ In the barony of Great Connell; it gives name to the bog so called.

summoned *Kilmaog*¹ therein, but finding it not feazable to storne without Guns, I marched to *Rabride*² and *Ponsers Grange*,³ and tooke them, and placed two strong Garrisons there, which did give me good footing in the County of *Kildare*, then sent a party and took *Kildare*, *Hertwell*,⁴ and *Cotlingstowne*,⁵ three usefull Garrisons in the said County; and provisions being spent returned back to *Dublin*, there endeavouring to get Guns, Mortar peeces, and other necessaries ready to draw forth againe with all possible speed; in the interim I received Propositions from the Governour and Officers in the strong Garrison and Fort of *Ballisonan*, the originall whereof, I here inclosed present you with all under their owne hands.

“Which being by me utterly rejected, I marched upon Tuesday the 26 of Feb. with a party of 2000 Foot, and 1000 Horse, towards the County of *Kildare*, and took with me one Culverin, and one Demiculverin, and one Mortar-piece, the Enemy fired their Garrisons of Fort of *Lease*,⁶ *Blackreath*,⁷ & the forementioned Castle of *Kilmaog* in the Island of *Allin*; but I shall easily make it tenable againe, it being very usefull for your service, they also did blow up the Castle of *Athy*, where they had a strong Garrison, and broke up the Bridge. Upon the 28 Feb. I marched from the *Naas*, and about four a clock with the Van of the party, I came to *Bellisonan* a strong Garrison, double Works, and double moted, full of water one within another, and a mount with a Fort upon it, most of the Officers with me esteeming the taking of it to be unfeazable, it being late, and I unwilling to lose time, did send in a Summons, a copy whereof is here inclosed, & the inclosed answer under the Governours hand was presently returned, & the Town which was without his Works by him burned that night, I caused a Battery to be made and planted the Artillery, and made a Fort for the security thereof, having intelligence that the Lord of *Castlehaven*, with 4000 Horse and Foot would come to raise me within two dayes, in which Fort I could secure the Guns and batter their Works, whilst I drew off to fight the Enemy if need were, we played our Guns and Morter-peece at the Fort upon the Mount, intending before night to storne it, having Ladders, and all necessaries ready, but before any breach was made, the Governour did send me a paper which is here inclosed, whereunto the inclosed answer was returned, and he treated with me about the surrender, which was concluded accordingly. The Articles signed with both our hands herewith, is represented unto you.

“And now Sir, you have without the losse of one man this strong place, and thereby most of the County of *Kildare*; those Garrisons in this County yet remaining, as *Castle Dormount*,⁸ and *Kilkenny*, with others, I hope you shall have a good account thereof speedily from,

“*Bellisonan*, March 3,

“1649.

“Your humble servant,

“*Ioh. Hewson*.

“SIR,—I am now marching the Army to reduce that place you possesse unto the obedience of the Parliament of *England*, and it being

¹ Now *Kilmeague*, in the barony of Great *Connell*.

² *Rathbride*, in the barony of *Ophaly*.

³ Probably that now called *Grange Clear*, in the island of *Allen*.

⁴ Not identified.

⁵ Now called *Cotlandstown*, in the barony of *Naas*.

⁶ *Maryborough*, in the Queen's County, where are some remains of the fort.

⁷ Not identified.

⁸ *Castledermot*.

apparent to the world that God is making inquisition in *Ireland* for innocent blood, how farre you and those with you may be concerned therein, I shall observe by your Answer hereunto.

“These are to require you to deliver that place you now possesse, unto me for the end aforesaid : whatsoever your return hereunto may be, and the effect thereof, my Summons will justify the future proceedings of

“ *Your Servant,*

“ 28 Feb. 1649.

“ *J. Hewson.*

“ *For the Governour of Bellisonan.*

“SIR,—I am now in possession in this place by authority from my King, how you may demand it by authority from the Parliament of *England*, I know not: *England* denying their King, therefore your power I disobey: And for *God*, my *King*, and *Country*, will defend this place to the uttermost of my power,

“ *Sir, your Servant,*

“ 28 Febr. 1649.

“ *Donno Kelly.*

“ *For Col. Hewson Commander in chiefe
of the Parliament party now in the
Field of [. . . .].*

p. 3.

“ Propositions made by the Garrison, which were rejected.

“ *VVE doe hereby employ Governour Donno O Kelly, for the delivery of the hereunder Propositions to the Commissioners Generall of the Parliaments Forces of Ireland.*

“ *Imprimis, That the party commanding this Garison and Fort of Ballisonan, and all other that will adhere to them, are really and willingly to joyne to the Parliament Forces, upon such termes as are hereunder written.*

“ 2. *That a Collonel, Lieutenant Collonel, and a Major besides Captaines, and under Officers, be employed of the said party, constantly in the standing Army, of the Parliaments Forces of this Kingdome; That in case any such Officers come in,*

“ 3. *That they may have free liberty of their Religion, and two Priests admitted and employed for to serve the said Regiment now intended.*

“ 4. *That neither Taaffe, nor Dillon shall be accepted of in the Parliaments party.*

“ 5. *That their estates wrongfully detained and enjoyed by the said Dillon, Bourne, and Taaffes, may be allowed unto them by the state of Parliament.*

“ 6. *That their Arrears since May last, may be allowed them, this and the aforesaid Propositions may be granted by the Generall, Lieutenant Generall, Major Generall, and Commissioners generall of the Parliament Forces of this Kingdome, that what those Counties assigned to them for their pay, are in Arreare since their comming to Ballisonan, may be forthwith caused to be paid.*

“ 7. *That this granted they shall obey any, deriving power from the State of Parliament.*

“ *J. Gordon.*

“ *Connor Belly.*

“ *Ch. Belly.¹*

“ *M. Donnogh.*

¹ “Belly” should, most likely, be printed “Kelly.” The disunion between the Anglo-Irish and the natives, and the tendency of

the latter to join the Commonwealth party, which showed itself elsewhere at this time, is apparent in these “Propositions.”

“ *Col. Hewsons last Summons.*

“ SIR,—Blood I doe not thirst after, yet so far a Souldier, as not to neglect present opportunity, I shall for the end in your Letter mentioned, send Captaine *Hewson* according to your desire, provided you send one or two fully Authorised to treat and conclude, and all to be concluded within halfe an houre, provided also you doe not worke at all to repaire what my Guns, and Morter peece have demolished ; and to that end that Cap. p. 4. *Hewson* may remaine in the Mount during that halfe houre. Sir, I shall be glad if your wisdome prevent what otherwise unavoidably will fall out, though not desired by

“ Your Servant,

“ 1 *March*, 1649.

“ *I. Hewson.*

“ SIR:—To avoyd the confusion of Christian blood we sent out a Drum to demand a Parley, my desire for the reasons aforesaid is, that you send in a Captaine of yours to treat with us, and we will send forth a Captaine of ours, who shall demand no more but what is honourable and just, and so Sir, I conclude ;

“ *Your Servant :*

“ *March* 1, 1649.

“ *Donno Kelly.*

“ Articles agreed upon : between the Honourable Col: *John Hewson* of the one part, and Captain *Donnogh Kelly* Governour of *Bellisonan* in the County of *Kildare* of the other part. 1 *March* 1649.

“ *Imprimis, That the said Garrison and Fort of Bellisonan, shall bee immediately delivered with all the Ammunition, and Provisions therein, except as in the insuing Article is agreed upon.*

“ 2. *That the said Governour Officers and Souldiers, shall continue in the Castle untill to morrow morning at ten of the clocke if they please, and then they are to march out of the said Castle and Fort with a Trumpeter for Convoy Tenne miles if they desire it, or to any of the next Irish Garrisons within ten miles as aforesaid, the Trumpeter returning without any prejudice. And the said Officers are to march with their Horses and Pistolls, and with their Colours flying, and Drums beating, and the Souldiers with their Armes, and Matches lighted, and each Musketeer one pound of powder with Bullet and Match proportionable.*

“ 3. *Whatsoever Oates and Pease shall appear to be in the Castle belonging to Mis. Fitz Gerald shall be restored to her.*

“ *And lastly, for the due performance of the aforesaid Articles, we doe hereunto set our Hands the day and yeare first above written,*

“ *John Hewson.*

“ *Donno Kelly.*

“ *For the Right Honourable William Lenthall, Esquire, Speaker in the Parliament of England.* p. 5.

“ *Right Honourable ;*—Upon the sixth instant, (information being given that five Companies of the Enemies Foot were come to Poores Court about eight miles from hence, on Wickloe side,) a Party was sent from this place under the command of Sir *Theophilus Jones* to beat them out, or fight

them, but before our Party got thither they demolisht all the buildings, they pull'd down the very walls, and fled away into the woods; we cannot keep any Garrison there, because there is no manner of shelter for our men there.

“The tenth instant, Letters from Sir *Charles Coote* (then at Belfast) brought the newes of reducing Castle Dooe.

“There was lately a generall Counsell of the Clergy at *Kilkenny*, who treated upon Propositions presented amongst themselves for carrying on of the War.

“The Plague continues in Galway, where there hath neare twenty thousand dyed since the first of *August* last; most of their Gentry there have perisht by it, among the rest *Ieffery Browne*, heretofore a Practiser at Law in England, Sir *Richard Blague*,¹ both prime actors, and chiefe in the supreme Counsell, with many others of their most eminent contrivers of the Rebellion are dead.

“*Ormond* was lately at Portumny with the Earle of *Clanrickard* in Conaught.

“On Wednesday last Captaine *Molineux* arrived here from Wexford, who brings the newes of our taking the Fort of Bally-hacke, over against Passage upon the River of Waterford, so that all trading by Sea to Waterford is wholly stopped up; besides, there is a very great feare and jealousy between the Townes-men of Waterford, and the Souldiers there who are of the Northerne Irish.

“We have certaine news from Munster, that my Lord Lievtenant hath been in the Field this good while, and hath taken Cashell and Callan (the latter being within six miles of Kilkenny) with severall other considerable Garrisons of the Rebbels about those parts, and now about if not in Clonmell.

“The Plague is very hot in Kilkenny.

“The Toryes have behaved themselves so barbarously towards those of their owne Party, that the Fryers and Priests have excommunicated them.

“The Governour on Tuesday last marcht into the County of Kildare, and we hourelly expect an accompt of the reducing of severall considerable Garrisons thereabout; great Guns are this day sent from hence unto him, the extreame wants of accommodations of all kinds for our men will I feare
p. 6. weaken our Army, and impede the present carrying on of the service in the neglect of this opportunity, now the enemy is disperst and distracted, and a small matter will now effect that which a farre greater will not hereafter; I have not else to trouble your Honour, but humbly crave leave to rest, Sir;

“*Your Honours most humble Servant:*

“*Dublin, 16 Feb. 1649.*

“*William Basil.*

“*For the Honourable William Lenthall, Esquire, Speaker in the Parliament of England.*

“*Right Honourable,*—It hath pleased God exceedingly to blesse our Forces in this place, in their late march into the County of *Kildare*, where they have taken in the Fort and Castle of *Bellesonan* by surrender, sur-

¹ Sir Richard Blake.

prized *Athy*, being a Passe upon the Barrow, and a place of very great concernment, both for the enlarging of our Quarters, investing the enemy, and securing a passe to joyne with my Lord if occasion require. In all which the Governour hath placed Garrisons; as also in *Kilmaocke* being the Castle of the bogge of *Allen*, which the enemy had burnt and indeavoured to have sleighted, upon the rumour of his advance from hence; but the workes are now repaired and made tenable by ours.

“ Upon Saturday last he returned againe hither to *Dublin*, having left his Forces in the outquarters about the *Naas*, but intends another speedy march if accommodations may be by any meanes provided.

“ Our Forces about *Wexford* have recovered the Castle of *Iniscorfy*¹ which was yeilded unto them, And have taken *Browns-wood* by storme, all within the latter were put to the sword.

“ Col: *Treavour* hath by expresse sent his resolution to desert the Irish, and hath leave from the Governour to come into our Quarters, and there to stay untill my Lords pleasure be further known.

“ I have not else to trouble your Honour but humbly remaine,

“ *Your Honours most humble Servant,*

“ *Dublin 2 March, 1649.*

“ *William Basil.*

“ *Imprimatur.*

“ *Hen: Scobell Cler: Parliamenti.*

“ *FINIS.*”

The taking of Ballysonan had an important effect on the campaign. The following are Carte's observations on the subject:—“ In *Leinster* there was scarce a castle, and strong house, which the husband or wife were not for giving up, and receiving conditions from the enemy. Thus *Ballysonan* and other castles were delivered up to *Hewson*, who was thereby enabled to march with a party from *Dublin*, into the County of *Kilkenny*; where *Cromwell* joined him at *Gowran*, which . . . was traitorously given up by the soldiers of the garrison. . . . These successes encouraged him to lay siege to *Kilkenny*.”—“ *Life of James Duke of Ormond*,” vol. ii. p. 113. *Kilkenny* fell, after a four-days' siege, on March 27th, 1649–50.

Ballysonan was a castle of the Earls of *Kildare*, situated four miles south-west of *Kilcullen Bridge*. It was anciently called *Ath Seanaithe*, *Bally* being, in this instance, a corruption of *Bel-atha*, i. e. *os vadi*, or mouth of the ford.—“ *Four Masters*,” vol. i. p. 332, *note*. I have been unable to obtain a description of the present state of the castle, and trust that the circulation of this paper may induce some Member of the Society, having a knowledge of the locality, to supply this very important deficiency. The pamphlet is printed in small 4to, and comprises six pages and the title; I have added the original pagination in the margin. The dates, it need hardly be observed, are in the old style—1650 being the historical year all through.

¹ *Enniscorthy*.