

**THE DIARY OF WILLIAM KING, D.D.:
DEAN OF ST. PATRICK'S, AFTERWARDS
ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN, KEPT
DURING HIS IMPRISONMENT IN
DUBLIN CASTLE, 1689**

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OF
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DEAN OF ST. PATRICK'S, AFTERWARDS ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN

KEPT DURING HIS IMPRISONMENT IN DUBLIN
CASTLE, 1689

EDITED

FROM THE AUTOGRAPH NOW IN THE POSSESSION OF
CAPTAIN J. A. GORDON KING, SCOTS GUARDS,
OF TERTOWIE

BY

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INTRODUCTION.

THE story of the life of Archbishop King has been so fully told by the late Professor G. T. Stokes,¹ that it is unnecessary here to do more than chronicle a few leading dates, so far as the earlier years of his career are concerned.

William King was born in the North of Ireland in the year 1650, and at the age of seventeen entered Trinity College, Dublin. His course there seems to have been distinguished; and in 1672 he competed, but unsuccessfully, for Fellowship. His answering at the Fellowship examination was sufficiently good to attract the notice of John Parker, Archbishop of Tuam, and for his diocese he was ordained deacon by the Bishop of Derry in 1673. In April, 1674, he was advanced to the priesthood. Parker gave him the Prebend of Kilmainmore, and subsequently the Provostship in Tuam Cathedral. A few years later the Archbishop was translated to Dublin; and in 1679 he presented King to the living of St. Werburgh's, and the office of Chancellor in St. Patrick's Cathedral. John Worth was at the time Dean. Nine years afterwards illness obliged him to relinquish the rule of his cathedral, and he nominated the Chancellor Sub-Dean. On his death in April, 1688, the Chapter, by a unanimous vote, elected King as their President. A contest with the Government caused a long delay in the appointment of Worth's successor, but at length the Chapter met 26th January, 1688-9, and William King was elected Dean of St. Patrick's.

We have now reached the year of King's imprisonment, and it becomes necessary, for the elucidation of the Diary which is here for the first time printed, to follow the history of the time, and of King himself, somewhat more minutely.

It is well known that, in the early months of the eventful year 1689, there was a considerable exodus of Protestants from Ireland. Amongst those who left was Francis Marsh, Archbishop of Dublin. Marsh had summoned his clergy to a Visitation, to be held on the 8th April, and it was necessary to appoint commissaries to act for him at it, and to watch over the diocese during his absence in England. For this purpose he

¹ *Worthies*, Lectures vii.-xv.

selected two of the more prominent clergy, William King and Samuel Foley. A copy of the deed of their appointment as commissaries is preserved in the Diocesan Register. It is dated 5th February, 1688-9. Ten days before, as we have seen, King had been elected Dean of St. Patrick's, and without loss of time Foley had been appointed to succeed him as Chancellor of St. Patrick's¹ and Incumbent of St. Werburgh's, Dublin, and St. Canice's, Finglas. Thus the Archbishop had made all needful preparation for his departure. He seems to have left Ireland a few days later, for, on 28th February, John Fitzgerald resigned the Archdeaconry of Dublin, and his resignation was accepted the same day by King and Foley, acting as commissaries for the Archbishop. This fact, which is attested by the Diocesan Register, indicates that Francis Marsh was already absent from Dublin. He was apparently followed shortly afterwards by Samuel Foley;² and thus it came that King, from about Easter onwards, was the real ruler of the diocese. "I took upon me," he writes,³ "the jurisdiction of the entire diocese, and, with the consent of the clergy, ordered all things, as though invested with full authority so to do." And the statement is confirmed by a very interesting letter addressed to him by the Rev. Jeremiah Dawson, 28th May, 1689, and preserved in the valuable collection of Mrs. Lyons. King had written to him complaining of his neglect of his parishes of Rathdrum, Dunganstown and Derrylossary, in the county of Wicklow. Dawson defends himself against the charge, but admits the right of Dean King to inquire into his management of his cure, since "my Lord Archbishop had . . . left the care of the diocese upon him in his absence."

Meanwhile, under the strong hand of Tyrconnell, things had rapidly advanced in Dublin and throughout Ireland. The Protestants had been deprived of their arms in February; King James, after landing at Kinsale on the 12th March, had entered Dublin on Palm Sunday, 24th March. Then followed his short and unfortunate visit to the besiegers of Derry, and his famous Parliament in Dublin, at which the Act of Settlement was repealed and the great Act of Attainder passed. The first act of the sad drama ended with the prorogation of Parliament, 20th July, 1689. By the end of July the fortunes of King James were at a low ebb; disaster followed disaster. At the battle of Killiecrankie on the 27th, the death of Claverhouse had deprived him of his chief supporter in Scotland; on the 30th, Kirk had entered Derry, and two days later the siege was raised; on the 30th, too, Justin Mac Carthy, Viscount Mountcashel, had been defeated by the Enniskilleners at Newtown Butler

¹ He was installed 31 January (Chapter Minutes).

² In the Act of Attainder "Samuel Folio, Chancellor of St. Patrick's," is named among those who "have absented themselves from this kingdom, and have gone into England, or some other places beyond the seas, since the fifth day of November last, or in some short time before, and did not return" (S. P. I., pp. 276, 8).

³ E. H. R., p. 318.

and taken prisoner; and, above all, the redoubtable Schomberg had arrived at Chester on the 20th, and was waiting his opportunity to cross over to Ireland.

It was probably the approach of Schomberg which was the immediate cause of the imprisonment of a considerable number of Protestants in the city of Dublin, which took place towards the end of the month. Among the rest twelve men of good position were sent to Newgate, some of whom were transferred to the Castle, and some to Trinity College.¹ Others, of whom the Dean of St. Patrick's was one, were sent direct to the Castle. Others, doubtless, were imprisoned elsewhere.

About King's imprisonment there is a considerable amount of obscurity. In the first place, it is impossible to speak with confidence as to the reason assigned for it. We may surmise, indeed, that its real motive was the desire to have a strong man, suspected to be in more or less close sympathy with the Williamite party, and undoubtedly ready on all occasions to resist attempts to harass the Church, out of the way. And King certainly implies that no charge of any kind was brought against him. "Almost all the Protestant Gentlemen," he writes²—and he was among the number—"without Reason or pretence of Reason, without so much as a Warrant, or Form of Law, were put in Goals (*sic*) under the custody of mean and barbarous Guards." But Leslie challenges the statement. "Was not he accused for holding Correspondence, and giving Intelligence to the *Rebels* (as they were then called) both in *England* and the North of *Ireland*? And was it not true? Did he not give frequent Intelligence to *Schomberg* by one *Sherman*, and keep constant Correspondence with Mr. *Tollet* and others in *London*? He knows this would have been called *Treason* in those days, and a bloody-minded *Tyrant* would have found another Remedy for it than a short Imprisonment."³ King will not admit the truth of these insinuations, but his denials are not altogether satisfactory. In his manuscript notes for a rejoinder to Leslie⁴ he writes against the passage just quoted, "Most false y^t he was accused of correspond[ence]; knows no such man as Sherman." And in a more formal reply, in a letter addressed ten years afterwards to Dean Trench, he has these words: "As for their finding any of my letters, it's most horribly false, they never had nor cou'd have any such, nor did my Lord Chiefe Justice, Herbert, ever tax me with any such thing."⁵ But the real question is not what accusation his friend Herbert may or may not have brought against him: we want to know whether he was, rightly or wrongly, suspected by Nugent, or others in authority, of sending

¹ See below, 11 August, and note 2 there.

² S. P. I., chap. III., § 7, p. 92.

³ Leslie, p. 106.

⁴ Lyons Collection (see Historical Manuscripts Commission, Appendix to Second Report, p. 236).

⁵ Mason, p. 211.

information to the enemy. Again, it may be quite true that he did not know Sherman; but he makes no such affirmation with respect to George Tollet of London; and in fact he was in correspondence with that ardent Williamite—clearly no new acquaintance—in February, 1688–9.¹ And, finally, whoever will read his own account in the following Diary of his interview with Judge Nugent on 15th August, will have no doubt that at least Nugent professed to believe that he had been guilty of treasonable correspondence. The riddle appears to us to be in part solved, without the necessity of accusing King of any want of good faith, by the following passage, which we translate as well as we can, from his Autobiography:—

“We (sc. Anthony Dopping, Bishop of Meath, and himself) were regarded as oracles, and whatever news they (the Protestants) heard they used to bring to us; they used to tell us about any ill-usage they had suffered or feared; so that almost the whole history of what was done became known to us—private letters addressed to themselves, others of a public nature, public instruments, proclamations, ordinances, even copies of documents which were kept in the presses of the secretaries, were communicated to me. About these things we used often to speak in conversation with our friends, who sent notes of things which we had said with regard to their affairs to friends in England and the North of Ireland, and very imprudently blazoned them about as mine. And when these things were reported by spies to the faction of King James, I myself was regarded as the author of them all, and suffered very severely in consequence.”² No charge may have been alleged at the moment of King’s arrest; but these quotations leave little doubt as to the nature of the accusation which was subsequently made; and they tend to justify James and his Privy Council in regarding the Dean of St. Patrick’s as “a dangerous man.”

In what part of the Castle was King imprisoned? The question is of little moment, and cannot be answered with assurance. It is sometimes asserted without misgiving that he and his companions were lodged in the Birmingham Tower,³ to which one writer adds, by way of explanation, that his prison was “at the very top of the Record Tower, now filled with

¹ A letter in Tollet’s hand, without address, year, or signature, but endorsed, in King’s writing, “Mr. Tollet, Feb. 22, 1688,” is preserved in a collection of letters which belonged to the late Bishop Reeves (T.C.D. MS. 1122, No. 5). It quite justifies Leslie’s significant question. An interview with Schomberg is mentioned, in the course of which Tollet spoke to him about “Dr. K. and ye Arch Bp. of D.” He begs King to inform him of “the quarters of all troops and companys, the number of Protestants in Dublin, w^t [compan]ies are made Garrisons, and whatever you conceive [. . .] inquisition of one that extremely longs to serve his friends in time of need.” One sentence is worth transcribing: “Upon the K^s election to y^e crown, several of our Irish-English here, writ extravagant letters into Ireland, nay to y^e Deputy himself, and I’m affraid you have or will find y^e effects of those undecent heats.”

² E. H. R., p. 318.

³ E. g. *Lough Erne*, p. 80.

ancient records.¹ That is to say, King was confined in the tower which is now known as the Birmingham Tower, but which he knew as the Wardrobe Tower.² That may be true. His way of speaking of that which he called the Birmingham Tower, at 17th September, makes it unlikely that he was in it. He was certainly (it is everywhere implied in the Diary) in a room pretty high up, with a considerable number of prisoners below and none above him—as it appears, in “a cold nasty garret.”³ It must have been difficult, in the semi-ruinous Castle of those days, to find such a place, except in one of the towers, and apparently almost all of these had fallen except the two that have been mentioned.⁴

The date of King's imprisonment is not wholly without importance, and here again we are in difficulty. His own testimony is, indeed, very precise. “On the 25th of July, 1689, I, and many others, were arrested and committed to prison.” And equally precise is his statement that on the 4th December, after an incarceration of nearly five months, he was released.⁵ But unfortunately King's recollection of dates is not to be trusted.⁶ In the present case he is inconsistent with himself. For from 25th July to 4th December is not “nearly five months.” In fact, it is certain that his arrest took place before 25th July; for on the 24th he wrote to Price asking him to act as Sub-Dean of St. Patrick's, and in his letter he distinctly states that he was “now under confinement.”⁷ It is, I suppose, on the authority of this letter that Mason states definitely that he was sent to the Castle on 24th July.⁸ But this is scarcely probable. It is true that a man of King's vigour and sense of duty would not be likely to let much time pass before he made such arrangements as were possible for the performance of his work at the Cathedral; but even he can scarcely be supposed to have sat down to write letters the moment the doors of his prison were closed behind him; and we must not assume that pens, ink, and paper were at once supplied to him. There is, indeed, evidence which points to his having been deprived of liberty two or three days before he wrote to Henry Price. It cannot be stated very shortly, but as the Church Historians tell us very little about it, and as it is of some interest for its own sake, we need not scruple to devote a few paragraphs to it.

¹ *Worthies*, p. 191.

² See below, note 187.

³ S. P. I., chap. III., § 16, p. 202.

⁴ One tower was taken down about 1670, another had previously fallen, and the rest were “very crazy” (Bayly's *Historical Description and Sketch of Dublin Castle*, p. 16). In 1684 the viceregal apartments, which had been destroyed by fire, were rebuilt (*Ib.*, p. 26. Cf. A. R., p. 311). At the end of July, 1689, “the Mid Rampter of the Black Tower” fell (*Great News from the Port of Kingsale in Ireland*, London, 1689).

⁵ E. H. R., pp. 318, 319.

⁶ He dates his ordination to the priesthood incorrectly (*Worthies*, p. 151). Possibly he is also in error as to the day of his entrance at Trinity College (*Ib.*, p. 149).

⁷ Appendix, No. 1.

⁸ P. 209. Harris gives the date as 29 July in his edition of Ware's *Bishops of Ireland*, p. 364.