

Paddy O'Rafferty	VIII, 5	Song of sorrow, The	IV, 3
Paddy snap	IX, 4	*Song of the woods, The	IX, 2
*Paddy's resource	III, 5b	Staca an mharaga	VIII, 10
Paddy whack	VI, 5	Summer is coming, The	I, 10
Pease upon a trencher	VI, 6		
Peggy bawn	X, 7	*Thady, you gander	III, 8
Planxty Irwine	VIII, 9	Thamama hulla	III, 1
Planxty Kelly	I, 7	Thy fair bosom	III, 7
Planxty O'Reilly	X, 4	Twisting of the rope, The	II, 2
Planxty Sudley	VIII, 12	Unknown [The bard's legacy]	II, 4
Plough tune	VIII, 6	Unknown [The Dandy O!]	II, 7
Pretty girl milking her cow, The	V, 7	Unknown [Dermot's welcome as the may]	VII, 12
Pretty girl of Derby, O!, The	II, 7	*Unknown [? Round the world for sport]	IX, 5
Priest in his boots, The	X, 9	*Unknown [probably from Croker]	IX, 8
		*Unknown ['Old Irish Melody' from Smith's <i>Select Melodies</i>]	X, 2
Red fox, The	II, 8		
Renardine	Sup., 3	We brought the summer with us	II, 10
Rose tree, The	V, 12	*Were I a clerk	V, 11
[Round the world for sport]	IX, 5	Winnowing sheet, The	VII, 8
		Wren, The	VIII, 8
St. Patrick's Day	IV, 2		
Savournah deelish	VI, 9	Yellow horse, The	IV, 10
*Sheelah na Guira	V, 8	Yellow Wat and the fox	V, 10
*Shule aroon	X, 5	Young man's dream, The	I, 11
Sios agus sios liom	VI, 7a		
Sixpence, The	III, 11		
*Sly Patrick	VI, 2		

JAMES COTTER, A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY AGENT OF THE CROWN

By Brian Ó Cuív

[Read 6th November, 1956]

SOMETIME towards the end of his life Dáiví Ó Bruadair, that great Munster poet of the seventeenth century who had lived through the Cromwellian wars and the Restoration and had hailed with joy the crowning of James II in 1685, addressed to a fellow-countryman of his from East Cork a poem of welcome on his return safe from England. This is how he began:

Fáilte i Cheallaigh ria Sir Séamus,
sochraidh sinn re teacht an tréin
dá thoigh tar linn slán a Sacsaih,
mál nach slim do chasnaimh chéim.¹

'May O'Kelly's welcome greet Sir James, enriched are we since the brave man has come safe across the sea from England to his house, a chief who is not weak in maintaining positions.'

In seventeen more stanzas he spoke with glowing phrases about the subject of his poem, whom he identified as Séamus Mac Coitir, and about his wife, whom he described as a Plunkett from Louth.

Like many of Ó Bruadair's poems this one contains allusions which are meaningless to us unless we have a knowledge of contemporary events. For instance, having spoken vaguely of Cotter's service to the Crown, Ó Bruadair goes on:

É go misneach d'fhiort an Athar neámhdha
d'éignigh fiucha ar fud a dheargnámhad
i ngléas gur scuch don mbióth a dtarbh tána
's dá éis sin tric do sciub go baile an báire.²

Fr. MacErlean, who has edited Ó Bruadair's poems, has translated that:

'He with courage that was aided by the Heavenly Father's might
Forced into a state of fury all his bitter enemies,

And adroitly from the world removed the bull that led their herd,
After which he whisked the ball home nimbly and so won the game.'

This allusion to removing 'the bull that led their herd' is pretty vague, but Ó Bruadair did not think it necessary to be more specific. He did, however, say that Cotter received a reward for his services:

An ruire do réidh ó chéadchoin chúire na geleas
tug ridireacht scéithe is déisceart inge don fhear
ionnus nach tréata méith ná míochaireacht breab
tug tideal don té acht géire a choilg i ngal.³

¹Ó Bruad, iii, p. 186.

²*ibid.*, p. 188.

³*ibid.*

Again, for convenience, I quote Fr. MacErlean's translation:

'The sovereign whom he rescued from the chief Cú Chulainn of the gang

Gave him an escutcheoned knighthood and land obtained by right of sword,

It was neither fattened flocks nor the cajolery of bribes

Gave this man his title, but the keenness of his blade in war.'

In spite of the seeming vagueness of this part of the poem, I have no doubt that contemporary society in Cork would have understood perfectly to what the poet was alluding, whereas a couple of centuries later Cotter is forgotten, and readers of Ó Bruadair have to work their way through seventeenth-century history if they wish to get the true meaning of the poet's words. Although in the account of Cotter which follows I have dealt in greatest detail with the exploit referred to by Ó Bruadair, I have attempted within the limits of the time available to me to sketch his family background and to outline his subsequent career.⁴

There is no need for me to enumerate my sources here. They include contemporary and near-contemporary books and pamphlets, as well as contemporary records among the British State Papers and in other collections, including some from Switzerland and France. However, I must mention specifically two important sources. The first is, in fact, what led me in the first instance to become interested in Cotter. It is an account of the career of James Cotter which is given in the preface to an Irish text named *Párlíament na mBan*⁵ or 'The Parliament of Women' which was dedicated by its author to Cotter's eldest son and was composed in 1697. This paper might be said to be a demonstration of the trustworthiness of this source.

The second is an extremely valuable non-contemporary source which in part might be put on a par with the contemporary material. It is a manuscript preserved now in the National Library of Ireland where it is numbered 711. It was compiled about the middle of the last century by Rev. George E. Cotter, a direct descendant of the subject of this paper, and it contains copies of many seventeenth-century documents preserved

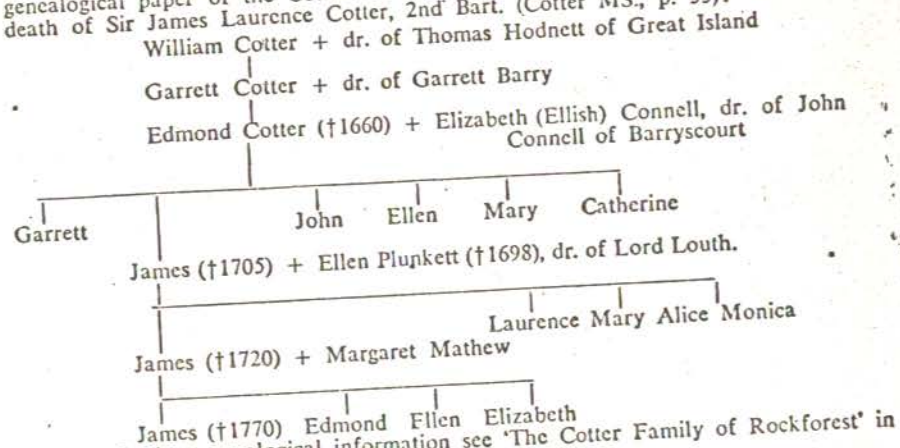
⁴This paper was prepared as a lecture for the Society and was delivered on November 6, 1956. In preparing it for publication I have added references, and have revised it to some extent. The account of the later period of Cotter's life (subsequent to his second marriage in 1688) could easily be expanded with the aid of extant documents. A few matters, such as the date of Cotter's knighthood and the nature of his connection or acquaintance with the Duke of York (later James II) remain undetermined.

⁵Published by Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1952. Much of the material used in this paper was assembled by me while, as a member of the staff of the Institute, I was engaged in editing this text. I am indebted to the authorities of the National Library of Ireland and of the Royal Irish Academy for facilities given me while working at this material, and to M. P. E. Shazmann of the Schweizerische Landesbibliothek in Bern, M. le Prof. L. Seylaz of Lausanne, M. Jacques Meurgey de Tupigny of the Archives Nationales de France, Mr. Tymings of the British Public Record Office and Miss Poyser of the Record Office of the British Houses of Parliament.

at that time in the Cotter family seat at Rockforest, Co. Cork. It also contains traditional accounts of James Cotter recorded by Mr. Cotter from old inhabitants of the Cotter district in East Cork. As we shall see, these accounts are exceedingly interesting and reinforce the view that folk-memory is not to be ignored in the study of history.

The Cotters, who are of Scandinavian origin, deriving their name *Mac Coitir* from an ancestor Oitir, can be traced back five or six hundred years in Co. Cork, especially in East Cork.⁶ We need only go back to Edmond Cotter, father of our James, who held lands in the Barony of Barrymore. In 1627 he married Elish Connell,⁷ and as James was their second son we can place his birth sometime about 1630. Edmond Cotter, who in contemporary records is described as 'gentleman', seems to have been a man of substance, for in 1638 David, 1st Earl Barrymore, mortgaged the castle, farms and lands of Ballinsperrig and Lacken to him for the sum of £300.⁸ In 1652 the 2nd Earl Barrymore leased the Ballinsperrig lands to him for seventy-two years at £5 a year⁹ and in the Census of Ireland of 1659 Cotter was named as holder of them.¹⁰ In the meantime he had also acquired in 1656 all or part of the Great Island of Cove.¹¹ Following the death of his first wife Edmond Cotter married again,¹² and in his will dated August 15, 1660, he left the lease of Ballin-

⁶I have been able to construct the following genealogical table for James Cotter and his immediate descendants from information found in the Cotter MS. Some of this information was, according to Rev. Mr. Cotter, originally contained in a genealogical paper of the Cotter family which was found at Rockforest after the death of Sir James Laurence Cotter, 2nd Bart. (Cotter MS., p. 33):—



For further genealogical information see 'The Cotter Family of Rockforest' in *JCHAS* xliii, pp. 21-31.

⁷Cork Marriage License Bonds, *JCHAS* Suppl., p. 32.

⁸Cotter MS., p. 42.

⁹*ibid.*

¹⁰*Census of Ireland, 1659*, p. 238.

¹¹Cotter MS., p. 42.

¹²*ibid.*, p. 39, according to which his second wife was named Ellen Sarsfield. On p. 37 it is stated that Ellen Connell, his first wife's sister, was married to 'Dominick Sarsfield, second son of Thomas Sarsfield, Lord Killmallock, a peer of 1688'. There is no record of this marriage in the Index to the Cork or Cloyne Marriage License Bonds.

sperrig to his second wife and her children.¹³ His other children were well provided for. To his eldest sons Garrett and James he left in equal shares the lease of Ballyvilloone and Lissaniskey in the Great Island, and to each of them separately he left the lease of an additional property. James was also left his father's brewing furnace.¹⁴

These facts are mentioned in order to give an idea of James Cotter's background. In spite of the upheavals caused by the Cromwellian and other wars the Cotters appear at the Restoration as holders of extensive lands in East Cork.¹⁵ It is possible that some members of the family were Protestants at this time, but I have no direct evidence of this.¹⁶

Apart from mention of James Cotter in a deed of 1644¹⁷ and in his father's will of 1660¹⁸ I have no account of him in the early part of his life, but it is certain that for some reason he left home and he may have joined the Royalist forces in England or on the Continent. According to an unconfirmed source he was 'a private trooper in the Guards',¹⁹ which seems possible. At any rate we may deduce that at the time of the Restoration he was a loyal follower of Charles II and was anxious to serve him should the occasion arise—as it did before long.

At this stage we must go back twelve years to the trial and execution of Charles I. Among those involved in that affair were John Lisle, who drew up the form of sentence, and General Edmund Ludlow, who signed the execution warrant. At the Restoration they fled abroad, fearing that their lives would be forfeit, and eventually they settled in Vevay in Switzerland under the protection of the government of the canton of Berne. Lisle is reputed to have plotted in Switzerland in order to revive what was called 'the Fanatick party' and to dethrone King Charles, whereupon the King issued a proclamation offering a reward to 'whosoever would bring back, or otherwise suppress the said *Lile*'.²⁰ This is where Cotter enters the picture, and it is at this point that his career as outlined in *Párlament na mBan* begins. Here is what its author says:

'féach créad é an mhuinighin do bhí ag Rígh Cormac ina lúth, ina mheisneach, agus ina chomhall, an tan do thug sé ceannas agus ordughadh dhó gluaiseacht mar aon le beagán buidhne ag tóraigheacht an traotúra Laidhil agus dá threasgairt, gníomh noch do-rinne Séamus go háthasach i n-éiric agus i ndíoghaltas bháis Rígh Séarlais' (ll. 52-7)

¹³Edmond Cotter died in 1660 and was buried in Carrigtwohill Abbey where a monument to his memory was erected by his son James in 1686.

¹⁴Cotter MS., p. 41.

¹⁵According to an oral tradition recorded in the Cotter MS. (p. 11) the Cotters of Ballinsperrig had formerly held lands at Copingerstown and Scarth Mac Cotter, but had been turned out of both places in the time of Cromwell.

¹⁶The account cited on p. 145 might be taken to imply that James Cotter was not a Catholic about 1665.

¹⁷Cotter MS., p. 42.

¹⁸*ibid.*, p. 41.

¹⁹*ibid.*, p. 120.

²⁰See *infra*, p. 141.

'see what trust King Charles had in his strength, his courage and his performance, when he gave him authority and an order to go along with a small force in pursuit of the traitor Lisle to destroy him, a deed which James willingly did in requital of and in vengeance for the death of King Charles'.²¹

Lisle, then, is the 'bull that led their herd' of whom Ó Bruadair spoke in the poem which I mentioned at the outset. I have succeeded in confirming to a large extent the above account, although there are still some details about which I am in doubt. I can at least claim to have done better than the British Dictionary of National Biography which says that Lisle 'was shot dead . . . by an Irishman named Thomas Macdonnell';²² in the Volume of Errata published in 1904 corrects 'named Thomas Macdonnell' to 'known as Thomas Macdonnell';²³ and elsewhere states that Sir James Cotter was the 'true name of the slayer' and that 'Thomas MacDonnell, the name given in the English accounts, was a pseudonym circulated to avoid discovery'.²⁴ This latter statement is without foundation as we shall see. There seems to have been no secret about Cotter's connection with the killing of Lisle. One thing of which there can be no question is that there is plenty of material on the affair. Let us begin with the English State Papers.

In the Domestic State Papers for 1663-4 there are accounts of the movements of Ludlow, Lisle and other regicides. One of these, dated December 29, 1663, is a statement from a 'Monsieur Riordon' which says that Ludlow and Lisle are living in Vevay. It suggests means for taking them, either with the co-operation of the Berne authorities or by force, and requests a letter from His Majesty to the Duke of Savoy who is disposed to serve His Majesty in this affair.²⁵ A further report from Riordan to Sir Henry Bennet, Principal Secretary of State to the Privy Council, is dated August 8, 1664 from Pontarly near Neufchatel. It tells of the terror in which the fugitives live, and mentions that some of them have removed to Lausanne. The writer hopes for success in his mission.²⁶

Three days later, on Thursday, August 11, 1664, Lisle was shot dead while on his way to the Church of St. Francis in Lausanne. It appears from the Council Books of Lausanne that he had assumed the name of Field, but of course his identity was well known and the Council ordered that he should be interred in the Church of St. Francis. Here is the official record, dated August 11, 1664: '*Ordonné, que le corps de Mr. Fild, Anglais, qui a été tué ce matin en allant au presche à St-François par un coup de carabine qui lui a été lâché par un cavalier étranger,*

²¹The author of PB distinguishes the two Charles by using the name *Séarlais* to refer to Charles I and *Cormac* for Charles II. This method of differentiation was not uncommon.

²²*DNB* xxxiii, p. 342.

²³*DNB Errata*, p. 182.

²⁴*DNB* xxxiv, p. 434.

²⁵*SP Dom.*, Charles II, Vol. 86, Nos. 16, 17 = *Cal. SP Dom.*, 1663-4, p. 380.

²⁶*SP Dom.*, Charles II, Vol. 101, no. 22 = *Cal. SP Dom.*, 1663-4, p. 662.

sera enseveli au temple de St-François en considération de ses qualités.²⁷ Naturally the affair caused a stir, and the Berne authorities ordered an investigation. Following the receipt from the bailiff of Lausanne of a detailed report on the shooting²⁸ they expressed themselves of the opinion that greater protection might have been afforded to Lisle and that greater zeal might have been shown in endeavouring to arrest the culprits, all of whom had escaped.

A detailed account of the plots against the fugitives is given by General Ludlow himself in his *Memoirs* published in 1699. According to him there were several persons involved at different times, some French, some Savoyards, some Irish. Sometime after September 1663 the English fugitives then living in Vevay got word of a design against their lives formed by 'an Irish Man going under the name of Riardo, and belonging, as he said, to the Dutchess of Orleans'.²⁹ In November an attempt to seize or kill the fugitives was directed by 'Riardo', but was unsuccessful.³⁰ Ludlow states that 'Riardo', after the failure of the first attempt 'was not only well received by the King, but was dispatched with new Orders to carry on the same Design; and that in his passage through France he had been with the Dutchess of Orleans, who was the principal Instrument used by his Gracious Majesty for encouraging and carrying on this Manly Attempt'.³¹

Ludlow describes how Lisle, either really alarmed by the attempts on their lives or pretending to be so, had retired to Lausanne, thinking that it was Ludlow alone who was marked out for destruction.³² His move was unfortunate for he laid himself more open to assassination. Ludlow gives what is practically an eye-witness account of the killing which, according to him, was carried out by two men, one of whom followed Lisle into the churchyard and shot him in the back while the other waited on horseback with a led horse for his accomplice. These two men had stayed for a week in Vevay and another week in Lausanne before the fateful day.³³ Later in his *Memoirs* Ludlow discloses the identity of these men who, as he says, 'were employ'd by the Court of England and others to take away our Lives'. His source of information was 'an English Gentleman who was well acquainted with their Affairs'. 'He assured me that the Villain who murder'd Mr. Lisle by shooting him into the Back, is an Irish-man and named O Crolli; that the Name of his Companion, who waited with a fresh Horse to carry him off, is Cotter, and that he is a Native of the same Country; That the Assassin who goes

²⁷From 'Manuaux du Petit Conseil de Lausanne', communicated to me by M. Shazmann. Further Swiss documents will be found in A. Stern, *Briefe Englischer Flüchtlinge in der Schweiz*.

²⁸This report, referred to in the 'Manual de Berne', is now missing.

²⁹Ludlow, *Memoirs* iii, p. 137.

³⁰*ibid.*, pp. 140-3.

³¹*ibid.*, p. 146.

³²*ibid.*, p. 149.

³³*ibid.*, pp. 153-8.

under the Name of Riardo is also an Irish-man, and his true Name *Mac Carty*.³⁴

Another contemporary writer, Anthony Wood, likewise attributed the action to Irishmen, though he did not name them. According to his version Lisle was shot dead by one Irishman after which 'two more Irish men rode into the press, and trampling on the body of Lisle with their horses feet, fled through the guards and escaped with little hurt'.³⁵

Yet another account of the affair from a source closer to those who carried out the killing is found in *A New Journey to France*, a little travel-book published in London in 1715.³⁶ The author describes a visit which he paid to the house of Sir Florence O Donoughue near St. Cloud, a country seat which had been left to O Donoughue by his uncle Sir Miles Crowley. O Donoughue gave the following account of his uncle:

'After his Majesty King Charles the Second's Restoration, a Proclamation was issued out, warning all those that were excepted in the King's general Pardon, to come in within Forty Days, and that they shou'd have a fair Tryal according to the Laws of their Country, otherwise that they shou'd be Outlaw'd, and a Reward offer'd for bringing them dead or alive. Among those that stood out after the Death of Colonel Lambert, and others, was Colonel Lile, (stil'd by the disaffected Party Lord Lile) one of Cromwel's great Favourites; a grand Villain, and a most zealous Stickler for the old Cause. This Man made his escape out of England, went into Holland, several parts of Germany, Switzerland, and at last to Geneva, where he was making his Preperations of Men and Money, in order to revive the Fanatick Party, and dethrone King Charles, not doubting but he shou'd find many Friends to join him when he shou'd return into England; whereupon the King issued out his Proclamation, with a Reward for whosoever wou'd bring back, or otherwise suppress the said Lile. James Cotter, a Lieutenant of Foot, offer'd to venture his Life in indeavouring to satisfy his Majesty therein; and pitch'd upon Miles Crowley, with John Rierdan, to be his Associates, both Irish Gentlemen; but in so low a Condition at that Time (having spent all their Estates by following the King in his Exile) that after his Restoration they were forc'd to enlist themselves in the Foot Guards: These Cotter knew to be stout and resolute Men, who were ready to lay down their lives for their Prince's Service. They went to Geneva (having secur'd Posthorses at all Stages on the Road, from the Frontiers of France to that City) and cast Lots to see whose Fate it shou'd be to do the Fact; it being on Sunday³⁷ Morning, they concluded it the fittest opportunity to do it, as he went to Church; that Crowley (to whose Lot it fell) shou'd on Horseback (as if he was a Courier just come to Town) deliver him a Packet with a broad Seal on it

³⁴*ibid.* p. 235.

³⁵*Athenae Oxoniensis* iii, p. 666.

³⁶There is a copy in TCD Library, Cat. No. V FF 57, No. 7. For the Lisle affair see pp. 111-5.

³⁷It was in fact a Thursday.

as it were from the King with some favourable Proposals, and Shoot him at the same time as he shou'd be busie in opening it; that *Cotter* shou'd stand at the Church-yard gate in order to kill the first that shou'd Face about after him; and that *Rierdan* shou'd be ready at the first Turning to do the same to the most forward that shou'd pursue them. *Lisle* being kill'd in the midst of his astonish'd Guards, those that attempted to revenge his Death, fell by the Blunderbusses and Pistols of *Crowley's* resolute Companions, the foremost in the Flight always stopping by turns at every Corner, until the other two were past him; and thus maintaining a running Fight (wherein many were kill'd) they got clear out of the City Gates, came safe into the *French Territories*, (which were not above four or five Leagues distant) and thence into *England*.

This account differs from Ludlow's in certain details, although they agree in making O Crowley the actual-assassin. Ludlow does not mention that any guards accompanying *Lisle* were killed.

Two traditional accounts of the affair recorded in the *Cotter MS.* are worth mention here. The first is from a Mrs. Hickey of Ballysplaine who was aged 80 in 1841.³⁸ According to her 'Sir James went with his servant Moylan to Geneva in search of Mr. Lysle the Regicide, and shot him in his chair or carriage when going to Church and whilst he was handing to him a letter, the pistol having been so contrived as not to give a loud report.' Mrs. Hickey describes how *Cotter* escaped on his horse which had been held by his servant. 'They both set off on horseback. After a short time Sir James desired Moylan to look back and see if they were pursued. He answered "Yes, and a bay horse takes the lead." "That won't do," said Sir James, "such a horse will not overtake us." Soon afterwards he desired him to look back again, when he cried out "A chestnut horse takes the lead in hard pursuit of us." "That will not succeed either", said Sir James. Twice more being desired to look back, he declared that he saw black and grey horses taking the lead and in pursuit. Sir James answered as before. Having been asked the fifth time to look back, Moylan answered that a liver-coloured horse was approaching at great speed. "That horse", said Sir James, "will overtake us", and he then told his servant to stop at a corner of the road and to cut off the pursuer's head, which Moylan not wishing to do, he, unperceived, took his station there himself, and when the horse came up, he cut off its rider's head with his sword. The horse went on, and Sir James by its side on his. The body remained in the saddle for about half a mile, when Sir James removed it with his foot, and it fell to the ground. Sir James then got upon that horse and his own followed. He came to a draw-bridge which was up. He dashed onto the river and swam across, his own horse following. He came to a ferry. He crossed in the boat, and killed the boatman lest he should tell that he had crossed, and also to cut off this mode of pursuit. Moylan had previously passed over, and gave out that

³⁸*Cotter MS.*, pp. 12-3.

he had killed *Lisle* and that *Cotter* had fallen into the hands of his pursuers. Sir James soon after made his appearance and told the facts of the case. He was amply rewarded by King Charles the Second.'

All this looks like an echo of Sir Florence O Donoughue's story of the running fight, but highly-coloured under the influence of folk-tale motifs.³⁹

The second oral account is by a John Connell of Peasfield in the Parish of Templebodane. According to him 'Florence Crowley accompanied Sir James abroad to kill *Lisle* and Sir James shot him, Crowley holding a horse for his escape.'⁴⁰ Again we have the remarkable tenacity of folk-memory in retaining the name of *Cotter's* collaborator, Crowley. We may note that in both these versions *Cotter* is named as the one who fired the shot.

I think we are fully justified in concluding from all the foregoing accounts that *Cotter* was, indeed, the organiser of the action against Ludlow and *Lisle*, and that even if he did not actually shoot the latter, he was present as director of operations.

Before I turn to the question of his reward, I must say a word in justification of his action. Naturally Ludlow and his supporters condemned it as murder, and this view of it seems to have been common enough ever since, even among those who had no particular sympathy for the regicides. I can suggest two factors as being likely to have influenced public opinion thus. The first is the subsequent downfall of the House of Stuart and the ascendancy of the Protestant faction—heirs to some extent of the Republican Puritans. The second factor is that 'operation *Lisle*', as I might call it, was an Irish affair, carried out by men some or all of whom were Catholics. I feel sure that if it were the work of Protestant English supporters of Charles II, these would have been hailed as heroes and few questions would have been raised about the legality or morality of their action.

The author of 'A New Journey to France' discusses the morality of the killing. He says 'I made bold (tho' I must own it was not Civil) to make some Objections against the abovemention'd Fact, which (tho' very Brave) I did not think becoming so good a Prince to Command, nor a Christian Subject to Execute; that it seem'd to me no better than the Assassination of a Person in cold Blood, and that it was a dangerous Example for Princes to shew, least it shou'd happen to be retorted upon themselves in Time; to which he answer'd' pleasantly, That Princes ought to look to the legality themselves; That he must own, it would be an ill Precedent for Princes to set in regard to one another; That he was no Casuist, but as a Soldier, he cou'd never think it Base, for a faithful Subject to venture his Life in defence of the sacred Person of his King

³⁹Eg. pursued kills pursuer, and takes his horse—R. 233 in Stith Thomson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*; bridge demolished to prevent pursuit—R. 235.

⁴⁰*Cotter MS.*, p. 13.

and the Royal Family against a profligate Rebel, who was already a dead man by the Laws of his Country.⁴¹

Domhnall Ó Colmáin, the author of *Párliaimint na mBan* expressed himself very clearly on this point when he said:

'ní ceart d'éinneach a rádh ná a mheas gur murther ná míghníomh traotúir fógartha do mharbhadh le hórdughadh speisialta an ríogh, acht fós is inmheasta gur gníomh é comh oirdhearc ionnas, dar liomsa agus dar le heolchaibh eile, go madh chóra a leithéid do ghníomh do chur i gcroiniceibh i leitribh óir chum go gcluinfadh gach geinealach diaidh i ndiaidh fuil ríogh nó prionnsa do tharrang nach deachaidh saor d'éinneach riamh gan troimdhíoghaltas.' (Il. 58-65).

'it is not right for anyone to say or think that it is murder or a misdemeanour to kill a proclaimed traitor with a special order from the King; indeed, it may be considered to be so noble a deed that in my opinion and in that of other authorities it were more fitting that such a deed be chronicled in letters of gold, so that each succeeding generation might hear that the shedding of the blood of a king or of a prince never went without dire vengeance.'

This is obviously an answer to the opposite view which was probably gaining support in the reign of William III, and which is reflected in the contemptuous remark attributed somewhat later to Col. Southwell who said of Cotter's son 'This is the son of Sir James Cotter, Famous for nothing but killing the Great Lord Lysle!'⁴² Typical of the later English attitude to the affair is the comment of Lord Macaulay who, extolling the regicides and censuring those who sought to avenge the King's death, wrote 'But even in Switzerland the regicides were not safe. A large price was set on their heads, and a succession of Irish adventurers, inflamed by national and religious animosity, attempted to earn the bribe. Lisle fell by the hand of one of these assassins.'⁴³

Let us see how Cotter was rewarded. Ludlow deliberately put out the story that 'those who Murder'd Mr. Lisle', as he called them, were treated shabbily; 'that one of them died not long after he had committed that Villany; in extreme want, at a mean Lodging in *Westminster*; And the other, tho' advanced to be a Captain in *France*, complain'd of the Ingratitude of those who employ'd them, protesting they had never receiv'd any other reward than Three Hundred Pistoles from the Dutchess

⁴¹*op. cit.*, p. 115.

⁴²*A Long History of a certain session of a Certain Parliament in a Certain Kingdom* (publ. 1714), pp. 36-7. This pamphlet has been attributed by Halkett and Laing (Vol. III, p. 391) to Richard Helsham, M.D. and Dr. Patrick Delany. That the authors did not support Southwell's view is clear from their comment 'The Reader will please to Observe, that this Great Lord Lysle, was famous for nothing, but being a Rebel and a Regicide; and yet 'tis made an Aggravation of Cotter's suppos'd Crime, that he was the Son of him that slew the Traitor'.

⁴³*History of England* (1858 ed.), iii, p. 506. As both Lisle and Ludlow had been actively engaged in the Cromwellian wars and administration in Ireland, and especially in Munster, we can understand that Irishmen might be moved by animosity towards them.

of *Orleans*, of which Two Hundred had been spent in laying the Design, and waiting an occasion of putting it in Execution.'⁴⁴ But it is clear from the way in which Ludlow tells this that he did so not because he believed it to be true, but rather to deter others from attempting to assassinate himself. We must look to more reliable sources for the true version.

I have already quoted Ó Bruadair as saying that Cotter got a knight-hood and land. Ó Colmáin says:

Do bhí Rí Saxon comh buidheach sin don tseirbhís agus don tí noch do-rinne í, go dtug se dó mar phrímhleíd bheith 'na chaptaoin ina ghárda féin, agus pinse mór bliadhantamhail farais sin; agus ina dhiaidh sin tug dhó bheith 'na ghabhairneir ar na hoileánaibh; agus an uair ba mhithid le Séamus teacht tar ais dá dhúthaigh, do rinne collector geinearálta ar chiós an ríogh san taobh so do Chóige Mumhan de (Il. 66-73).

'The King of England was so satisfied with the service and with him who rendered it that he gave him the privilege of being a captain in his own guard and a large annual pension along with that and later appointed him to be governor of the islands; and when James thought it time for him to return to his own land he made him collector-general of the king's revenue in this part of the Province of Munster.'⁴⁵

The author of *A New Journey to France*⁴⁶ gives less particulars, but on the other hand he mentions the other conspirators as well as Cotter:

'Cotter, besides the promis'd Reward, had a Colonel's Commission, was afterwards Knighted, and serv'd the late King James in Ireland, being Brigadier General of the Province of Munster. . . . Crowley and Rierdan, being Roman Catholics, cou'd bear no employment in the Government but obtain'd recommendations to the King of France, who made them both Captains. The latter was kill'd in . . . *The Passage of the Rhine*; the other behav'd himself so well at the Bottles of *Montcassel* and *St. Omer*, under the late Duke of *Orleans* (whose Life he sav'd by his Bravery) that King Charles confer'd the Honour of Knighthood on him, and the King of France the Title of Count, making him at the same time, Commander of his Brigade of *Scotch Gens d'Armes*. He married the Lady *Ann Gordon*, Sister to the Duke of that Name.'

I have not followed up O Crowley's career,⁴⁷ but confirmation of the latter part of the above account is to be seen in French naturalisation papers dated 7 September, 1694 for 'Michel O Cruoly, chevalier, seigneur

⁴⁴Ludlow, *Memoirs* iii, p. 212.

⁴⁵Ó Colmáin is, I think, slightly inaccurate here. The appointment to which he refers was made not by Charles II but by James II. See p. 155.

⁴⁶*op. cit.*, pp. 114-5.

⁴⁷Though he is described as having been knighted by Charles II, his name is not given in Shaw, *The Knights of England*.

de Kilhalovig⁴⁸ et Sienovak, brigadier des armées du roi, natif d'Irlande, et Anne Victoire de Gourdon, sa femme, native d'Ecosse.⁴⁹

As to Riordan, there are two further items in the State Papers which may be connected with him. The first is a pass dated May 9, 1665 granted to Mr. Riordan to go to France 'with four horses, custom free'.⁵⁰ The second is a petition for employment made (possibly in September 1665) by a Lieut. Derby Riordan. It is calendared thus 'Served during the King's travels abroad; was enlisted into the Foot Guards as a reformed officer, but is now reduced to insupportable misery, by the loss of Lord Muskerry'.⁵¹ The first part of this, with the exception of the Christian name, tallies with the account given above (p. 141). The mention of Lord Muskerry is suggestive, for Charles MacCarthy, Viscount Muskerry, had been in exile with the King, and it is not unlikely that other Corkmen were in the same company. This might explain how Cotter came to be in the King's service in the first instance. This scrap of information may also be the key to another phase in Cotter's career which will be dealt with later (p. 154). Finally, if Derby Riordan was indeed the Riordan who took part in the Lisle affair, there would be a plausible explanation for Ludlow's statement that the true name of 'Riardo' was 'Mac Carty', for Ludlow might have misunderstood some intelligence conveyed to him about Riordan such as, for instance, that he was a Mac Carthy Riordan, meaning a follower or dependent of Lord Muskerry.⁵² One of the oral accounts in the Cotter MS.⁵³ has a tradition worth mentioning. According to it 'the Queen (Charles the First's widow) gave Cotter on his coming to England her husband's bed and bridle and saddle as a mark of her royal favour and thanks'. It says that Sir James later gave the bridle and saddle to Lord Barrymore. There is a slight possibility that this may not be completely unfounded. We have Ludlow's word for it that the Queen Mother was 'our particular Enemy, and had constantly favour'd the Designs that had been carry'd on against our Lives'.⁵⁴ In an inventory of furniture, etc., in Ballinsperrig at the time of Sir James Cotter's death is a record of a 'Velvet Bed and hangings with gold brocade'. The compiler of the Cotter MS.⁵⁵ suggests that as there was a tradition that King James slept at Ballinsperrig, this may have been the bed in which he lay.

⁴⁸It seems clear that O Crowley was a member of the Coill Shealbhaigh branch of the family, for whom see J. C. Collins's article 'The O'Crowleys of Coill tSealbhaigh' in *JCHAS* lvi-lviii.

⁴⁹Archives de France, P 2699, f^o 87v^o.

⁵⁰Cal. SP Dom., 1664-5, p. 357.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 579.

⁵²Prof. R. Dudley-Edwards has drawn my attention to a work entitled *Histoire des troubles de Grande Bretagne* by R. Menteth (de Salmonet), to the second edition of which, published in Paris in 1661, an appendix on the reasons for the Restoration was contributed by a D. O'Riordan of Muskerry. The appendix throws no light on the career of its author, but it is perhaps worth noting that both it and the Riordan reports in the State Papers are written in French.

⁵³p. 13.

⁵⁴Ludlow, *Memoirs* iii, p. 225.

⁵⁵p. 60.

But I think it much more attractive to think of it as a possible souvenir of Charles the First. Incidentally the bed was later lost in a fire at the Barrymore seat in Castlelyons.

We must return to the more serious matter of Cotter's career after his successful mission. Among the Domestic State Papers for the years 1664 and 1665 I have found three petitions from James Cotter. In one of them he is petitioning jointly with a Thomas MacDonnell and they say:

'in consideration of acceptable service done by your petitioners, your Majesty was graciously pleased to declare that your Majesty would take care of your petitioners and conferr some employment upon them for their support and livelyhood, whereupon your petitioners have hitherto dayly wayted upon your Majesty's gracious promise. Now forasmuch as your petitioners fortunes wholly depend upon your Majesty's princely bounty and favour, they humbly pray your sacred Majesty to be graciously pleased to extend your royal goodness towards them and to conferr something upon your petitioners as well for their future subsistence as present maintenance as to your Majesty shall seem meet, that soe they may be rendered capable of further serving and manifesting their loyalty to your Majesty.'⁵⁶

So much for the account in the D.N.B. which would have us believe that Cotter and MacDonnell were one and the same person.

In the next petition Cotter calls himself 'Captain James Cotter', and he says that he has been put in hopes of the first company that should be vacant, but that he has so far failed to get preferment, and as he is no longer able to subsist unless his Majesty be pleased to order something for his present maintenance, he asks for some allowance by the month until he be granted an employment.⁵⁷ The third petition⁵⁸ is phrased somewhat similarly.

There are also two separate petitions on behalf of Thomas MacDonnell.⁵⁹ The first is particularly interesting, for it speaks of 'some acceptable service done by your petitioner and others in relation to that bloody Regicide and Traitor Lisle'. MacDonnell's petitions were at last heeded and he was appointed a Lieutenant in the Regiment of Guards in May, 1665.⁶⁰

Cotter's patience was likewise rewarded in due course,⁶¹ for on July 5, 1666, he was given a commission in the company of foot of the Holland Regiment under Colonel Sydney.⁶² However, he was incorporated in a

⁵⁶SP Dom., Char. II, vol. 142, no. 51 = *Cal. SP Dom.*, 1665-6, p. 143.

⁵⁷SP Dom., Char. II, vol. 142, no. 52 = *Cal. SP Dom.*, 1665-6, p. 143.

⁵⁸SP Dom., Char. II, vol. 142, no. 53 = *Cal. SP Dom.*, 1665-6, p. 143.

⁵⁹SP Dom., Char. II, vol. 89, no. 43 = *Cal. SP Dom.*, 1663-4, p. 419, and SP Dom., Char. II, vol. 120, no. 62 = *Cal. SP Dom.*, 1664-5, p. 349.

⁶⁰*Cal. SP Dom.*, 1664-5, p. 349, Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers 1661-1714*, i, p. 52.

⁶¹For a suggestion as to how Cotter may have been occupied in the meantime see *infra* p. 154.

⁶²*Cal. SP Dom.*, 1665-6, p. 499.

new-raised regiment sent to the West Indies, and in the following year he was in command of 700 men in an attack on St. Christopher's where he was captured and imprisoned for eight months by the French. He was not the only Irish officer in the West Indies, for there is an account by an Englishman, a Major Scott, who complained of a dispute between the English and Irish officers in the St. Christopher engagement, and said that the Irish officers 'after some slight wounds' were taken by the French, while the Irish soldiers surrendered.⁶³ Scott later complained of 'Captain Cotter's great familiarity with the French Governor', but Cotter countered this by complaining of Scott's ill deportment in the engagement.⁶⁴ Again Scott came forward with 'a very strange account of Lieut.-Col. Stapleton and Capt. Cottar and 70 Irish'.⁶⁵ His story seems to have done neither Stapleton nor Cotter any harm, for the former became Governor of the Leeward Islands and was knighted, and Cotter, as we shall see, kept on bettering himself. The connection between the two Irishmen became a relationship twelve years later when Cotter married Stapleton's daughter Mary.

In May of 1668 Cotter returned to England as bearer of a letter from Sir Tobias Bridge of Barbadoes to Sec. Lord Arlington,⁶⁶ and he attended as an emissary to King Charles II on behalf of Bridge and his regiment.⁶⁷ In August of that year he was mentioned in an 'Order of the King in Council' as reporting on clothes for Sir Tobias Bridge's regiment in Barbadoes,⁶⁸ and in September a pay-warrant was issued out for £30 each for James Cotter and three other officers 'to be deducted out of the moneys next assigned for their pay as officers in Sir Tobias Bridge's regiment in Barbadoes'.⁶⁹ Cotter seems to have found financial matters a problem, for he appears again in the Domestic State Papers for 1669 and 1670 petitioning for speedy relief, and asking for payment of his arrears for two and a half years, saying that he has received nothing since his appointment to the Holland Regiment, and that he is worse off than if he had stayed at home and lost his employment.⁷⁰ Two further petitions for relief were made by him about the same time.⁷¹ Although Cotter was still in England in October 1671 when Sir Tobias Bridge returned from Barbadoes,⁷² his name appears in Barbadoes regimental lists dated September 1671 and March 1672.⁷³ In the latter he is first in a list of nine captains in the Barbadoes Regiment of Dragoons which had Prince Rupert as its Colonel. By November 1673 he

⁶³Cal. SP Col., *America and West Indies*, 1661-8, p. 480.

⁶⁴ibid., p. 482.

⁶⁵ibid., p. 483.

⁶⁶ibid., p. 572.

⁶⁷ibid., p. 573.

⁶⁸ibid., p. 604.

⁶⁹ibid., p. 612.

⁷⁰Cal. SP Dom., 1670, p. 736.

⁷¹ibid., p. 615.

⁷²Cal. SP Col., *America and West Indies*, 1669-74, p. 264.

⁷³ibid., pp. 259, 344; Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers 1661-1714* i, pp. 115, 119.

had given up his position as captain in the regiment and a commission was given to Sir John Ernle to replace him.⁷⁴

In the meantime Cotter had petitioned the King 'in consideration of his long service and late losses in his Majesty's service' for a patent for twenty-one years of the places of Secretary and Marshall of Nevis, St. Christopher, Montserrat and Antigua.⁷⁵ The petition was eventually considered favourably, but for some reason the patent was first granted to another member of the Cotter family. In February, 1676 the offices requested were granted to 'Garrett Cotter⁷⁶ of St. Martin's in the Fields, for the lives of Capt. James Cotter, James Cotter, his nephew, and George Burgesse of the Inner Temple, and the life of the survivor of them'.⁷⁷ We see from a number of State Papers⁷⁸ that Garrett Cotter executed the office for some time, but that James Cotter was the principal beneficiary is clear from a subsequent report made to the Lords of Trade and Plantations in 1680 by Sir William Stapleton who, referring to the offices of Secretary and Marshall in the Leeward Islands, says 'both of which are granted to [sic] the King for three lives to Captain James Cotter, and are by him let out at annual rent to two persons in each Island'.⁷⁹ These offices must have been of considerable financial worth to Cotter.

Cotter must have been free from ordinary army service by 1676, and he was able to interest himself once more in espionage. In August of that year a pass was issued to him under Charles II's hand to permit him with his servants, goods and so on, to pass beyond the seas and return, and expressing the wish that he should be given any help he might require.⁸⁰ About the same time he wrote to Sir Joseph Williamson, Secretary of State about some mission which he had on hands. He says:

'I know not but I may light of som bodie in Paris fit for my purpose to carrie along with me. When I am at Lyons I must imploy som people. Those I must trust and reward well or else I may loose my bussnesse and myselfe to boote. If I can not effectually compasse my bussnesse this way I shall be forced to buy good horses and goe up into Savoy and com backe thorough that country. All this consider'd I thinke the least that can be given me at present is £100 here and a bill for two more at Lions. If I should want there it would be the loss of what I goe about and of money

⁷⁴Cal. SP Dom., 1673-5, p. 17.

⁷⁵Cal. SP Col., *America and West Indies*, 1669-74, p. 457.

⁷⁶According to the Cotter MS. (p. 49) Garrett Cotter (who was James's elder brother) held the appointment in trust for James 'which trust was declared the 25th of March following'.

⁷⁷Cal. SP Dom., 1675-6, p. 572.

⁷⁸Cal. SP Col., *America and West Indies*, 1677-80, pp. 170, 200-1. According to these the King had by letters patent of 9th March 1677 appointed Garrett Cotter Secretary and Marshall of the islands mentioned already 'with all fees, salaries and profits thereto belonging'.

⁷⁹ibid., p. 559.

⁸⁰Cal. SP Dom., 1676-7, p. 287.

too. I'll assure you I will serve his Majestie in it with as little charges and as effectually as possible I can.⁸¹

We can guess what his business was—no less than to get a report on the great General Ludlow himself, perhaps even to kill him. The following February (1677) he submitted a report in which he said:

'Ludlow call'd the General lives constantly at Vevay in one Jean Heunt or Heurt Binet's howse, a marchant. What letters comes to him are enclosed to the said Binet. There are two more that lodges and boards with him in the same howse, one goes by the name of le Capitaine Anglois, th'other le petit Anglois. About three or fowre years agoe another that was in great esteeme with them died in Germanie either goeing to or cominge from England. Ludlow was the same time or somewhat before absent about halfe or three quarters of a yeare, but I could not learne where, but I am sure ever since neither he nor any of the other two has not been further than Bearne, Geneva or Lyons. What supplies they have out of England comes altogether to Ludlow, and as they say upon his wife's account who not long agoe had been in England. The canton of Bearn for certain allows them pensions, and it is to be supposed those of Geneva does no less.'⁸²

We can understand Charles II's anxiety to know what Ludlow was up to, for the latter was constantly hoping for an opportunity to return to England and overthrow the Stuart rule. I have no more evidence to connect Cotter with him further, and Ludlow lived on till the accession of William III when he returned to England believing that he would be unmolested. He was not long there when he heard that his arrest was imminent and he fled again to Vevay where he died in 1692. By a peculiar twist of fate James Cotter's grandson married in 1746 General Ludlow's great-grand-niece.⁸³

I do not know exactly how Cotter was occupied in the four years after 1677, except that he married Sir William Stapleton's daughter about 1679⁸⁴ and lived for some time in Middlesex, England.⁸⁵ He certainly returned to the Leeward Islands and he was Deputy-Governor of Montserrat and Judge of the Sessions in July 1680 when he had attained the rank of Colonel.⁸⁶ He is referred to as Governor of Montserrat in a document dated April, 1681.⁸⁷ The following September, having ten

⁸¹*ibid.*, p. 286.

⁸²*ibid.*, p. 577.

⁸³Cotter MS., pp. 205, 210. His wife was Arabella Rogerson, dr. of the late Sir John Rogerson and of Elizabeth, dr. of Stephen Ludlow who was a nephew of General Ludlow.

⁸⁴Cotter MS., p. 43.

⁸⁵*ibid.*, pp. 49, 52.

⁸⁶*Cal. SP Col., America and West Indies, 1677-80*, p. 562. Another document of this period (*op. cit.*, pp. 574-5) is signed by J. Cotter among others. It is from the Council of Montserrat to the Lords of Trade and Plantations and describes the development of the island. In it is the statement 'Our ecclesiastical affairs are to the best of our endeavour agreeable to the canons and constitutions of the Church of England'.

⁸⁷*Cal. SP Col., America and West Indies, 1681-5*, p. 30.

months furlough, he returned to England bringing a number of official papers from Sir William Stapleton to the Lords of Trade and Plantations.⁸⁸ These included the 'Acts' of the four islands. I do not think that he ever returned to Montserrat, but it is clear from later documents⁸⁹ that he continued to enjoy the benefits of his office until the accession of William III as King of England.⁹⁰

On his return to England Cotter once more successfully petitioned the King as we see from a document dated November 17, 1681 at Whitehall, in which King Charles, being graciously inclined to gratify the petitioner in his request, referred to the Right Hon. the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury the petition of Colonel James Cotter in which the latter prayed 'his Majesty to settle upon him a pension of £200 per annum given him for his services, upon the Revenue of Ireland.'⁹¹ There was some delay in granting this request, and Cotter renewed his petition. On August 12, 1682, at Windsor the King referred to the Lord Lieutenant Cotter's petition which asked that 'having a pension of £200 per annum payable in England, his Majesty would grant it him out of the revenue of Ireland during his life and order it to be inserted in the present and future establishments.'⁹² Here is confirmation of the *Párliaimant na mBan* statement that Cotter had got a large annual pension from the King.

I cannot say when Cotter first returned to Ireland. The Cotter MS. says that in May 1675 he purchased from his stepmother and her children the interest which they possessed in Ballinsperrig,⁹³ and that in the following year Edmond Cotter, his brother, conveyed to him by deed his interest in the Ballinsperrig holding.⁹⁴ We may suppose that at that time James was living in England. In May of 1680 Lord Barrymore let to him the mansion, offices, gardens, etc., of Ballinsperrig.⁹⁵ It is likely that by 1682 Cotter was back in Cork, settling down to enjoy the fruits of his adventurous career on his final return from the West Indies.

From the Cotter MS. we get the interesting information that on September 24, 1683 James Cotter was admitted and sworn as a freeman of the City of Cork.⁹⁶ Earlier in that year he had purchased for £2,782

⁸⁸*ibid.*, pp. 95-6, 117. See also C. S. S. Higham, *The Development of the Leeward Islands under the Restoration, 1660-1688*.

⁸⁹*Cal. SP Col., America and West Indies, 1685-8*, pp. 470, 485. It is worth noting that in both these documents (dated 1687) Cotter is referred to as Sir James. Apparently as late as 1688 Cotter had the right to appoint officers to the posts of secretary and marshal (*op. cit.*, p. 485).

⁹⁰A petition by a Roger Williams for the execution of the naval office in Antigua, Nevis, Montserrat and St. Christopher, dated January 1, 1690 says that the office was last executed by 'Sir James Cotter, a papist now in arms against the King (*Cal. SP Dom., 1689-90*, p. 389.). We may suppose that under King William III Cotter was deprived of this privilege which he had held for so many years.

⁹¹*SP Dom., Entry Books (SP 44), Vol. 55, p. 148 = Cal. SP Dom., 1680-1*, p. 568.

⁹²*Cal. SP Dom., 1682*, p. 334.

⁹³Cotter MS., p. 53.

⁹⁴*ibid.*, p. 54.

⁹⁵*ibid.*, p. 53.

⁹⁶Cotter MS., p. 50.

Ballymagooly and other lands in North Cork and he had been let a property at Rahan in the same area.⁹⁷ It was in Rahan that Rockforest, the family seat of later generations of Cotters was. Cotter was clearly determined that his title to these several lands would be good, for in December 1683 he was once more petitioning the King 'praying his Majesty Letters Patents to him of the Castle and Lands of Ballymaguly, Knockbrack, Kilrahan, Minoe, Ballinigroe, Rahan and Gortneskehy in Ireland under such Crowne Rents as his Majesty shall think fit.'⁹⁸ Once more his Majesty was graciously disposed to gratify the petitioner in his humble request, and by a Commission of Grace dated January 1684 Cotter was adjudged and decreed certain lands including Ballinsperrig and Cotterborough alias Ballymagooly.⁹⁹

Being an extensive landowner Colonel Cotter might be considered a suitable person to be a J.P., and sure enough among the State Papers for 1684 we find reference to a statement being sworn in his presence on March 3. The occasion is interesting, for it had to do with a suspected plot against the King. As ever Cotter is solicitous for the Royal welfare, although he comments: 'the persons named to manage this great villainy are half a dozen men of the barony of Carbery, which to me seems to make the whole but a malicious sham. However, none knows how far the Devil may push on disaffected persons.'¹⁰⁰

Possibly the last act of benevolence on the part of a grateful monarch towards a loyal and devoted subject was the granting by Charles II in the last year of his reign of a market and two fairs together with a Court of Piepowder for the manor of Cotterborough.¹⁰¹ That was in 1685 and in the same year, according to the Cotter MS.,¹⁰² James Cotter bought from Lord Barrymore the Barrymore Castlelyons estate of 272 ploughlands for the sum of £2,400.

It might be thought that with the death of Charles II, Cotter's power and influence would gradually become less, but the opposite is the case. Again we may turn to *Párliaimint na mBan* which says:

'mar is gnáthach leis an tí ar a mbí an sonas ar maidin go mbia sé um thráth nóna air, féachamaois ar an gcion do bhí ag Rí Séamas air tar éis bheith farais féin i seacht gcathaibh i gcogadh na fairrge, agus tar éis bheith i mbualadh Diúic Monmouth farais, mar ar iomchair Séamas é féin comh galánta sin go ndearna an Rí féin riodaire dhe. Is é an ní céadna thug dhó bheith 'na ghabhairnéir ar Chathair Chorcaighe, agus ina dhiaidh sin tug dhó bheith 'na bhrigidier agus 'na chommander arna gairisiúnaibh foirmleacha go huile.' (ll. 73-82).

⁹⁷*ibid.*, p. 56.

⁹⁸SP Dom., Entry Books (SP 44), Vol. 55, p. 302 = *Cal. SP Dom.*, Oct., 1683-April, 1684, p. 133.

⁹⁹*Comm. Grace (Ireland), Charles II*, p. 18; also Cotter MS., p. 53.

¹⁰⁰*Cal. SP Dom.*, Oct., 1683-April, 1684, pp. 306-7.

¹⁰¹Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland*, ii, p. 480.

¹⁰²p. 54.

'as it is usual for him who is fortunate in the morning to be so also at eventide, let us consider the regard which King James had for him after he had been along with him in seven battles in the naval campaign, and after he had been with him in the defeat of the Duke of Monmouth, where James bore himself so gallantly that the King himself knighted him. And it was the same fact which caused him to be made Governor of the City of Cork and later to be Brigadier and Commander of all the outlying garrisons.'

I have not succeeded in getting any direct confirmation of the statement that Cotter served under James II when Duke of York or that he was present on the occasion of the defeat of Monmouth which took place in July, 1685. Yet considering how trustworthy this particular source can be proved otherwise to be, I am inclined to accept it as fairly accurate here. It must be remembered that the author, Ó Colmáin, probably heard all the details of his career from Cotter himself, and that he incorporated them in this contemporary document.

Certainly there is some evidence which seems to link Cotter with the Duke of York as early as 1672. It is connected with the 'Bill for preventing dangers which may happen from Popish recusants' which was taken before the House of Lords on March 18, 1672. The Duke of York proposed that certain persons be exempted from the provisions of the bill. The contemporary record states 'His Royal Highness, the Duke of Yorke, offers a proviso for some particular persons Mervin Tutchett and others which is read and the Duke shoves what service every one of them hath done.' In two annexes to the bill 'Captaine Cotter' is named in a list of persons 'who have either eminently testified their respective loyalties to his Majesty before and since his restoration or to our late sovereigne King Charles the first of Glorious memory, during the late tymes of rebellion and usurpation'.¹⁰³ Unfortunately there no longer exists any record in the House of Lords archives of what service Cotter did to merit his inclusion in this proviso. However it is almost certainly our James Cotter who is in question, and it seems likely that it was primarily his part in the Lisle affair which was being recalled. It is possible that the record of his service would have shown how the Duke of York came to be sponsoring him on this occasion.

Again I must adduce a piece of oral tradition from the Cotter MS. It was recorded from a David Howard who was born in 1746, and whose father and grandfather had both been in the service of Sir James Cotter. The grandfather, who was 96 when he died, was house and land steward to Sir James and was much in his favour and confidence and used often to sit at his bedside when he was an old man, until Cotter had fallen asleep. According to Howard Sir James had been with King James at sea and even in the same ship. The King was so familiar with him as to

¹⁰³*Hist. MSS. Comm., Appendix to Ninth Report*, pp. 29-30.

call him 'Shaymus Bwee'.¹⁰⁴ It is clear that this tradition is in agreement with the *Párliaimint na mBan* account.

If we relate the known dates in Cotter's career to the dates of the Duke of York's service at sea, we will reasonably conclude that the most likely period at which Cotter could have served with the Duke was in the relatively short time between his return to England after the successful Lisle 'operation' of August, 1664, and his commission in the Holland Regiment in July, 1666. Both *Párliaimint na mBan* and the traditional accounts in the Cotter MS. refer to Cotter's being with King James in a naval war. This can only refer to the war with Holland which began in March 1665 and in which the Duke of York was very active in the naval campaign.

We have already seen a possible connection between O'Riordan of the Lisle affair and Viscount Muskerry¹⁰⁵ who had served the King in exile. After the Restoration Muskerry served in the navy, took part in the warfare of 1665 in company with the Duke of York, and was killed in action before Texel in June of that year.¹⁰⁶ Information about the action was sent by the Duke of York himself to Lord Arlington. It appears that the Duke was so near those killed 'that his clothes were smeared with their blood'.¹⁰⁷ In view of the details already given it seems not improbable that Cotter, while waiting for some recognition and favour from King Charles, had joined his fellow-Irishmen in the navy and thus came into the company of the Duke of York.¹⁰⁸

Cotter's presence at the Battle of Sedgemoor is another matter. It might be thought that having settled down in Cork he would be unlikely to be called to active service in England. Yet in June 1685 a Lieut. Col. James Cotter was appointed a captain in Sir William Clifton's Regiment of Foot.¹⁰⁹ Charles Dalton, who has edited the army lists of that period, has commented 'Not identified with the officer of same name whose comms. frequently occur in Vol. I'. But it seems quite likely that this officer, who is recorded as being out of the regiment again in November 1686, is indeed our James Cotter. However, in one detail, at least, the author of *Párliaimint na mBan* is incorrect if we are to take *farais* in 'tar éis bheith i mbuadh Diúic Monmouth farais' to mean literally 'along with him', for King James was not present at the battle.

The statement about the knighting of Cotter after Sedgemoor is interesting for there is no direct evidence on the event. Cotter is not given in Shaw's 'The Knights of England', yet he is constantly referred to later

¹⁰⁴Cotter MS., p. 7.

¹⁰⁵See p. 146.

¹⁰⁶*Cal. SP Dom.*, 1664-5, p. 407.

¹⁰⁷*ibid.*, p. 408.

¹⁰⁸David Howard, already mentioned on p. 153, had a tradition that on one occasion the ship in which were both the Duke of York and James Cotter was set on fire by a bombshell which fell aboard and that they had to get into another vessel.

¹⁰⁹Dalton, *English Army Lists and Commission Registers 1661-1714*, ii, p. 36.

on as 'Sir James' and is so addressed in official documents. In some notes on the Cotter family published in 1908 there is a statement that he was knighted immediately after the Battle of Worcester: 'After knighting him Charles II took a ring off his own finger, containing a miniature of his father, King Charles I, set in diamonds, which he presented to Sir James Cotter. This ring came afterwards by descent to his great-grandson, Colonel George Sackville Cotter'.¹¹⁰ I have found no corroboration of this story and it may well be that the battles of Worcester and Sedgemoor were confused at some stage in the handing down of the tradition. Actually the earliest reference I have found to Cotter as 'Sir James' is in a document preserved in the Bodleian Library in Oxford in which Sir James Cotter is named as sheriff for 'Countie Corke for the ensuing year'.¹¹¹ This document is dated October 6, 1686.

If Sir James thought that he could settle down to an easy life of retirement at this stage he was sadly mistaken, for even before the outbreak of the 'Glorious Revolution' in November 1688 he was active and in command of troops. In March 1688 he received an order from Lord Mountcashel to search for and seize arms and other goods.¹¹² In May he was in command of five companies quartered at Youghal.¹¹³ Shortly after this, in August 1688, he is described as first sovereign of Middleton on its incorporation.¹¹⁴ In November he was appointed Lieut. Col. of the Regiment of Donough, Earl of Clancarty.¹¹⁵ Early in 1689 he was appointed Collector of Customs for the Port of Cork, in which post his brother John assisted him as Deputy-Collector.¹¹⁶ On February 26 he was appointed commander of the Royal forces in the City, Fort and Liberties of Cork.¹¹⁷

On March 12th King James landed at Kinsale, and proceeded on the 14th to Cork where he stayed six days. There is a tradition that he visited Ballinsperrig, the home of Sir James Cotter, and when we examine the route which he is supposed to have taken to Dublin we find that such a visit was quite possible, for he travelled by Lismore and Clonmel, and the most direct route from Cork to Lismore is by Carrigtwohill and Middleton and thence north to Dungourney, Tallow and Lismore.

Cotter continued to be busily engaged in the following months. In May he was returned to the Irish Parliament as member for Cork City.¹¹⁸ On June 25 he received an order from James II to proceed to Wexford

¹¹⁰*JCHAS* xiv, p. 3.

¹¹¹*Analecta Hib.* I, p. 38.

¹¹²Cotter MS., p. 73. This and other documents in the Cotter MS. were copied from original papers at Rockforest.

¹¹³*Calendar of Orrery Papers*, p. 338.

¹¹⁴Harris, *Life of William III*, p. xiv.

¹¹⁵Cotter MS., p. 73.

¹¹⁶*ibid.*, p. 50; see also King, *The State of the Protestants in Ireland under the Late King James's Government*, p. 329.

¹¹⁷Cotter MS., p. 74.

¹¹⁸*ibid.*, p. 50.

to redress disorders there.¹¹⁹ He is addressed as 'our Trusty and well-beloved Sir James Cotter'. In June and July large grants of land in the Baronies of Barrymore, Imokilly and Kerricurrihy in Cork were made for his Majesty's use for one year to Sir James.¹²⁰ In July he was appointed Head Ranger of Shannon Park in County Cork.¹²¹ His duty was to ensure proper care of the deer, breeding mares etc. in the parkland. At the end of this month he was involved in the defeat of a Jacobite army at Lisnaskea, Co. Fermanagh. He was in command of 'Clare's Dragoons', which were considered to be the flower of King James's army, and he was sent into Ulster to form part of a force under the command of Lord Mountcashel with the object of reducing Enniskillen. Instead he was ambushed and routed at Lisnaskea on July 27.¹²²

Again we find corroboration of some of the details given in *Párliaimnt na mBan*, for on February 11, 1690, the appointment was made under the King's own hand at Dublin Castle of 'Sir James Cotter, Kt., for his loyalty, good conduct, care, etc. to be Governor of the City of Cork and of the Great Island near it.'¹²³ On April 10 Cotter was appointed by King James to collect tax in Co. Cork¹²⁴ and in May he was in command of ten troops of dragoons numbering 500 men.¹²⁵

The defeat of the Jacobite army at the Boyne in July sent the King hurrying south, and on July 4th an order was given under his hand at Court in Kinsale directing Sir James Cotter, Governor of Cork, to send the magazine left at Cork by Count Loisien to Kinsale for its defence.¹²⁶ From now on Cotter was supporting a lost cause.

In the Cotter MS. there are copies of many documents¹²⁷ dealing with Sir James's part in the campaign of 1691, when he was particularly involved as Brigadier in command of all the Jacobite forces in Kerry, Cork and the frontiers of Limerick, this being later extended to include Tipperary. He was originally appointed on April 9th, 1691 to replace the Earl of Abercorne,¹²⁸ and the appointment was extended in the following month.¹²⁹ Doubtless this is the command referred to by Ó Colmáin in the phrase '*na chommander ar na gairisiúnaibh foirmleacha go huile*'. Ó Colmáin also refers to battles at Kanturk and Glanworth in which hundreds of enemy infantry and horse were killed as a result of Cotter's

¹¹⁹*ibid.*, p. 74.

¹²⁰*ibid.*, p. 75.

¹²¹*ibid.*, p. 51.

¹²²D'Alton, *Illustrations of King James's Irish Army List*, i, pp. 358-9; Ryan, *The Life of William the Third*, p. 179.

¹²³Cotter MS., pp. 50, 73.

¹²⁴D'Alton, *op. cit.*, p. 35 (from Harris's MSS., vol. 10, pp. 166, etc.).

¹²⁵Somers, *Historical Tracts*, xi, p. 398, original in Thorpe, *Pamphlets* (N.Lib. Ireland), xii, n. 15.

¹²⁶Cotter MS., p. 76.

¹²⁷Two further documents relevant to Cotter's activities at this time are cited in *Hist. MSS. Comm. Thirteenth Report*, p. 333. They occur in a collection of letters intercepted by Williamite supporters.

¹²⁸Cotter MS., p. 77.

¹²⁹*ibid.*, p. 78.

prowess. On the other hand Smith and others give accounts of a defeat suffered by Cotter at Bottle Hill near Mallow on April 29th, 1691.¹³⁰

An interesting exchange of letters took place between the Williamite Sir Richard Cox and Sir James in July 1691. Cox wrote to Cotter:

Sir,

Upon the score of our former acquaintance and the civility which you have used to our friends whilst you were governor here and since, I think myself obliged to let you know that I have both station and inclination to serve you. If it should happen that you throw yourself upon me without capitulation (for your party is certainly ruined and will every minute decay), you shall undoubtedly be used as a man of honor. But if you are of this opinion, bring off as many as you can and their arms, because your terms will be so much the better. This will seem odd if you dont apprehend the case desperate, but because I am sure 'tis so, therefore you have this friendly advertisement.

Cotter replied:

Sir,

Notwithstanding our former acquaintance it seems you do not know me. Whatever I might have done with sitting still, when laid aside for my civilities which for justice sake I distributed without distinction, I am now concerned, and will, I doubt not, be in a condition to return your kindness, for without railery your case is so desperate that you will soon have occasion for it, and be confident in anything that is just.¹³¹

Of course Cox was right. On September 25th Cotter received an order from de Tesse, the French Commander in Limerick, to hold a cessation of arms.¹³² The negotiations for the Treaty of Limerick were on.

As Cotter was entitled under the capitulation to his real and personal estate, he made suit to Lieut.-Gen. Ginckell, and on October 9th Ginckell issued him a 'protection' for himself, his family, servants, property and so on.¹³³ In spite of this several attempts were made by enemies to deprive him of his property for, as *Párliaimnt na mBan* says,¹³⁴ they were sure that if they could destroy him they would have a clear run against all others throughout Ireland who came under the Limerick Articles. Ó Colmáin speaks of eighteen legal suits against Cotter but I have no details of these.

That Cotter's case was regarded as of prime importance is clear from mention of him in a series of proposals concerning the forfeitures brought

¹³⁰Smith, *The Ancient and Present State of the County and City of Cork*, ii, 212.

¹³¹Cotter MS., p. 80.

¹³²*ibid.*, p. 96.

¹³³*ibid.*

¹³⁴*ibid.* 90-105.

before the English House of Commons in January, 1694.¹³⁵ These refer to persons who have claimed benefit under the Limerick Articles and have been 'adjudged by the Lords Justices and Council to have the Benefit of the said Articles . . . an instance whereof is plain in the Case of Sir James Cotter, who Claiming the Benefit of the Limerick Articles, was opposed by Mr. Serjeant *Osborn* on Their Majesties behalf, on this Suggestion, That supposing him within the Benefit of the Articles, he had Forfeited his Right thereto; and insisted upon having this Matter heard at the Council-board both on account of the President, which might be of ill Consequence in other Cases, and likewise for that a very Considerable Estate depended hereon. But in this he was over-ruled, the Examination referred to Sir *Richard Cox*, and Mr. *Carleton*, on whose Report Sir James Cotter, was adjudged within the Limerick Articles, and restored to his Estate.'

Cotter succeeded in defeating his enemies' ends, partly, no doubt, through the influence of Cox and some more enlightened Cork Protestants. This was due, perhaps more than anything else, to his own fair and conciliatory behaviour when power lay in his hands. Testimony to this effect was given in December 1691 by many prominent Cork Protestants who declared that during his period as Governor of the City and County 'the Protestants thereof, as much as in him lay, did receive all manner of countenance and favor from him'.¹³⁶

Having laid aside his arms, it remained for Cotter to renew his family life interrupted three years before. In 1688 he had married Ellen Plunkett, daughter of Lord Louth,¹³⁷ and in 1689 their eldest son, James, had been born.¹³⁸ During the campaign of 1690 he had sent his wife to France where his second son was born.¹³⁹ On the same day as he was granted his 'protection' after Limerick, he was given by Ginckell a pass for his servant William Cotter to go to France 'to bring back out of the said kingdom of France the Lady Ellen Cotter . . . with all her plate, jewels, gold, silver and all other goods whatsoever, without paying any custome or other duty for the same.'¹⁴⁰ In January 1692 Lady Cotter, who had been residing in Poitiers, was granted a passport under the hand of Louis XIV to return to Ireland with her family.¹⁴¹

Thus husband and wife were reunited and they settled down in Ballinsperrig to a quiet life together which was interrupted by the death

¹³⁵*Commons Jrn.* xi, p. 56; previously published in *Proposals for Raising a Million of Money out of the Forfeited Estates in Ireland* (London, 1694).

¹³⁶Cotter MS., p. 97, where there are copies of this and other testimonies to Cotter.

¹³⁷*ibid.*, p. 43.

¹³⁸*ibid.*, p. 127.

¹³⁹*ibid.*, p. 43.

¹⁴⁰Cotter MS., p. 96.

¹⁴¹*ibid.*, p. 98.

of Lady Cotter in 1698.¹⁴² Sir James lived on until 1705.¹⁴³ Of their seven children four died young.¹⁴⁴ The eldest, James or Séamus Óg, to whom Ó Colmáin dedicated the preface to *Párliaimint na mBan*, was hanged in Cork in 1720 having been found guilty of the rape of a Quaker. The circumstances connected with this affair and with young Cotter's trial are very strange, and it is highly likely that the real reason for his execution was political.

When he settled down after his adventurous career Sir James Cotter characteristically showed his independence of spirit under William III by affording protection to Catholic priests, and for more than three years Dr. John Baptist Sleyne, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, was sheltered by him, during which time Dr. Sleyne was one of the few bishops in the country. Again we owe this information to the author of *Párliaimint na mBan*¹⁴⁵ according to whom churchmen from Munster and from the other provinces daily visited Dr. Sleyne and chapters and general assemblies were frequently held in Ballinsperrig.

At a time when others were unable or unwilling to keep up the old practice of patronising learning, Cotter welcomed to his house artists, musicians and Irish poets. It is little wonder that Ó Bruadair was loud in his praise, and it is not surprising that a *duanaire* or poem-book was compiled in his honor. Although this book, to which Ó Colmáin refers,¹⁴⁶ has since been lost, there is still extant a considerable body of verse in praise of Sir James Cotter and his son James composed by several of the foremost poets of Munster who clearly held them both in high esteem. These poems are not without interest, but they add little to our knowledge of Sir James Cotter's career. Among the Irish material Ó Colmáin's account is unique.

¹⁴²According to the Cotter MS. (p. 48) Lady Cotter died on April 11, 1698, at Downstown and was buried at Louth Hall.

¹⁴³In his will dated Feb. 15, 1703, Cotter directed that he should be buried 'at Kilcurfin with my three children that are already buried there, not doubting that my son and heir, when permitted to finish the burying place I began in the Church of Carrigtwohill, and of which I was hindered, will remove mine and my said childrens bodies thither, which I desire and appoint may be done with all convenient speed after finishing the said burying place'. (Cotter MS., p. 59).

¹⁴⁴Cotter MS., pp. 43-4.

¹⁴⁵ll. 110-28.

¹⁴⁶ll. 132-8.

¹⁴⁷I have noted nearly a score of poems on the Cotters by Dáiví Ó Bruadair, Uilliam Mac Cairteáin, Uilliam Rua h Mac Coitir, Seán Clárach Mac Domhnaill, Éamonn do Vál and others.