

## Extracts from Letters to Mary Watson respecting the Irish Rebellion, 1798.<sup>1</sup>

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### I.

Richard Jacob, Waterford, to Mary Watson, in London, 5 of 6 Mo: 1798.

The Reports of the troubled state of the Co. of Wexford has much engaged peoples minds & the numbers of Army passing here.

Enniscorthy was burned & Wexford taken & I suppose still in possession of the Country people. Many has come here & many going to England from this & other places, particularly women. This day the scence is more distressing by very many flying here from Ross w<sup>ch</sup> it's said is partly burned, & a very great slaughter this day. I cannot say much about it, as the reports are various. Nor can I get any tidings of our dear S E<sup>2</sup> & his. If I do before I close this, I intend annexing it. People here seem in trouble, & as to Outward prospects there seems little before us but trouble & distress. How it may please the Divine Hand to dispose of us we must leave. The last acc<sup>t</sup> from Eliz: Ussher's son John was that he was well. His situation was out of the Town. . . . Her papers & boxes are so far safe. Thy house remains shut up, but all outward things are now uncertain. How uncertain & not now valued in Comparison of life — We don't know how soon this town may be in distress, but it's our duty to endeavour resignation to the divine will. . . .

[Postscript] 6th. I understand thls morning from Ross that our friends there & their property are so far preserved which is a favour. I particularly heard of S.E.s, J.C., J.W., & R.R.s if the acc<sup>t</sup> is true w<sup>ch</sup> I believe

<sup>1</sup> Copied from the originals recently presented to D. by John Dymond Crosfield.

For previous notices of the Irish Rebellion, see THE JOURNAL, II. 16-20, 54-58.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Elly.

it is. Little H. Ridgway is there. They say it is in possession of the King's Army. This town quiet last night, and this morning. We have been so far mercifully favoured, as not to have any life lost or any punishments.

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II.

R. Jacob, Waterford, to Mary Watson, 16 of 6 Mo: 1798.

This city has not yet experienced any publick disturbance. A letter from S. E. dated yesterday in Ross, they remained quiet, but greatly crouded with Army, the places of publick worship being filled, except friends Mg house, which they enjoyed & were favoured to hold their Mgs regularly . . . Thy house has not yet been disturbed.

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III.

Samuel Haughton, Carlow, to Mary Watson, in London, 6 mo. 17. 1798.

The forces of the Rebels seems now to be pretty much centred in Co. Wicklow & Wexford & s<sup>d</sup> to am<sup>t</sup> to 40,000. The Army have been marching from most parts of the Nation last week to surround them, & a most bloody engagement is expected every day. Many other places have manifested dispositions of Rebellion & have actually risen in some, viz., Antrim & Down—the Capital and the West seems pretty quiet owing (under Providence) to the uncommon exertions of the Military, but when & where this dreadful business will end is concealed from us. . . . From all the accounts we have yet received our friends have been wonderfully preserved. I have heard but of one young man being killd, viz., a grand son of Isaac Jacksons, T. Gatchell,—several others have shared in the general Calamity, some we have heard of, & others daily expected. All communication has been

stoped between this Co. & Co. Wexford for near ten days . . .

Great part of Enniscorthy has been burned by the Rebels & many other houses & villiages & that quarter & Co. Wicklow & Killdare—a very bloody engagement took place at Ross abt 10 days ago it is said the Rebels were routed leaving near 2,000 dead bodys behind. I saw a letter from Sam<sup>l</sup> Elly since that time in w<sup>ch</sup> he mentions having daily abt 100 Soldiers to maintain. . .

The present alarming crisis has made me omit in due place our wonderful & miraculous deliverance in this place the 25<sup>th</sup> ult. The Military had information of a rising being intended that morning—& were prepared. The insurgents had concerted their plan, to enter the town in great force at one time, & at four different quarters. Those from Tullow side made their appearance abt 3 oclock A.M., & were fallen upon so violently by the Army as to intimidate the others from entering the town—and of this unhappy number 400 to 600 were shot, burned & hanged up—they took refuge in the houses upper end of Tullow street about 100 of w<sup>ch</sup> were burned & a number of these poor wretches in them—such as attempted to come out of the flames were shot, & scores of them found the next day in chimneys, &c. ; the interment lasted for part of two days, the mangled bodys were carried on Carrs & Carts & thrown abt 100 in a pit together & quick lime thrown over 'em. The whole scene the most shocking & terrifick.

The Rebels at the same time had possession of Ballitore & treated our friends there much better than could be expected. The Millitary on 1<sup>st</sup> day morning, 27<sup>th</sup> ult. met at Ballitore [?] abt 3 o'clock in the morning the Rebels fled in all directions, so that but very few of them fell into their hands. Frank Johnson of the Number whom they shot facing Mary Leadbeater's door, the Army Enraged at the disappointment set great part of the town & neighbourhood on fire, plundered the Shops, &c. ; poor Co. Hannah Haughton, the principal sufferer of our frds from whom they took abt £100 worth of shop goods, before their officers coud stop them ; our other frds suffered very little.

Some of our neighbours look on us w<sup>th</sup> a jealous Eye for not joining w<sup>th</sup> them in Military array. Many of the Clergy have appeared in this way.

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 IV.

Richard Jacob, Waterford, to Mary Watson, at Norwich, 27 of 6 Mo: 1798.

This City has been so far favoured with quiet, diff<sup>t</sup>, dismal & dreadful plots have been discovered, so that the Inhabitants have cause of Humble thankfulness & many of them seem in degree sensible of the kind hand of Providence being stretched out in the hour of danger for the preservation of the people. . . .

My brother, Jn<sup>o</sup> Hancock, had been about a month in the Co. Wexford visiting families, and had been three times taken prisoner by the C<sup>oy</sup> people up to Vinegar Hill Camp, but was civilly treated & allowed to return . . . most or every family of friends had been preserved from any personal injury, tho' many of them pretty heavy sufferers in property. . . . Thy house stands where thou left it, & does not appear to be disturbed. . . . I am told that the Co. Wexford is now pretty quiet. Enniscorthy & Wexford retaken—the loss of lives & destruction of property very great.

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 NOTE.

Mary Watson (1750-1834) was the daughter of Joseph and Hannah Fothergill, of Warrington, and niece of Samuel Fothergill, the noted Minister, by whom she was brought up. In 1771 she married Robert Watson, of Waterford (d. 1783), and resided in that place the remainder of her life. She travelled as a Minister in England and Ireland. There are many letters in **D.** written either by, or addressed to Mary Watson.

*To be continued.*

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Its not a secte nor opinion but y<sup>e</sup> good of all.—MS. *Journal of George Fox* (**D.**, Spence MSS. ii. 352).