

Wars. But the severest defeat which the Confederates had was in the heart of Leinster, at the hamlet of Kilrush, within four miles of Athy. Lord Ormond, returning from a second reinforcement of Naas and other Kildare forts, at the head, by English account, of 4,000 men, found on the 18th of April the Catholics of the midland counties, under Lords Mountgarret, Ikerrin and Dunboyne, Sir Morgan Cavenagh, Rory O'Moore, and Hugh O'Byrne, drawn up, by his report, 8,000 strong, to dispute his passage. With Ormond were the Lord Dillon, Lord Brabazon, Sir Richard Grenville, Sir Charles Coote, and Sir T. Lucas. The combat was short but murderous. The Confederates left 700 men, including Sir Morgan Cavenagh, and some other officers, dead on the field; the remainder retreated in disorder, and Ormond, with an inconsiderable diminution of numbers, returned in triumph to Dublin. For this victory the Long Parliament, in a moment of enthusiasm, voted the Lieutenant-General a jewel worth £500. If any satisfaction could be derived from such an incident the violent death of their most ruthless enemy, Sir Charles Coote, might have afforded the Catholics some consolation. That merciless sabrer, after the combat at Kilrush, had been employed in reinforcing Birr, and relieving the Castle of Geashill, which the lady Letitia of Offally held against the neighboring tribe of O'Dempsey. On his return from this service he made a foray against a Catholic force, which had mustered in the neighborhood of Trim; here, on the night of the 7th of May, heading a sally of his troop he fell by a musket shot—not without suspicion of being fired from his own ranks. His son and namesake, who imitated him in all things, was ennobled at the restoration by the title of the Earl of Mountrath. In Munster the President St. Leger, though lately reinforced by 1,000 men from England, did not consider himself strong enough for other than occasional forays into the neighboring county, and little was effected in that Province.

Such was the condition of affairs at home and abroad when the National Synod assembled at Kilkenny. As the most popular tribunal invested with the highest moral power in the kingdom, it was their arduous task to establish order and