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**Picturing Ireland in England in the Great Famine Era**

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July 1998**

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment  
of the requirement of the degree of Master of Arts ©.**



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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the pictorial record of the Great Famine Era circa 1842 - 1854: the engravings, sketches, and paintings found in the English public domain. As part of the historical record, these contemporary visual images document attitudes of prejudice and indifference held about Ireland and the Irish during the calamitous years of the Great Irish Famine. The study probes the broad contextual background, narrative structure, and didactic intent of these works in an effort to assess the prejudicial impact of the visual record as a whole.

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Great nations write their autobiographies in three manuscripts: the book of their deeds, the book of their words, and the book of their art. Not one of these books can be understood unless we read the two others; but of the three the only quite trustworthy one is the last. <sup>1</sup>

John Ruskin

## Introduction

The last great subsistence crisis in European history occurred in Ireland between 1845 and 1852. From a population recorded by census in 1841 of over eight and a half million people, more than one million died from hunger and famine related diseases, and over a million emigrated. <sup>2</sup> The devastation was caused by a mysterious blight called *Phytophthora infestans*, previously unknown and untreatable until 1882. It struck only one crop, the potato, but its intermittent failure over a seven-year period unfolded in all its horror in Ireland. The utter dependence of over three million people on this one food and the wholly inadequate response of the British government to meet the emergency, not only decimated the population but scarred the national memory forever.

The following study broadly examines the pictorial record during this disastrous period in Irish history with its main focus on British portrayals of Ireland and their possible impact on Famine policy. If the leading question raised by the written literature on the Great Irish Famine is that of responsibility, from the visual record alone, other questions arise. How were the Irish portrayed visually in engravings and paintings in Britain? Did the pictorial record influence and alienate British public opinion against the Irish people? Was the British government's response to Irish suffering tainted and diminished by a prejudicial attitude inherent in the pictures? Who were the individuals responsible for the publication of these materials? Who were the artists involved and what was their purpose? Did British and Irish artists portray Ireland and the Irish differently? Moreover, to what extent did style, composition, and purpose affect the message intended by the artist? In work to date, scholars have adopted either a narrow or

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Haskell, *History and Its Images. Art and the Interpretation of the Past* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press), 309.

<sup>2</sup> The Great Irish Famine has the dubious distinction of having had the worst death toll in relation to the total population of any known famine. This fact was noted by Professor Seamus Deane in his lecture on famine politics, given at the Center for Continuing Studies at Notre Dame University on Monday, December 2, 1996, as part of the Irish Government's Famine Lecture tour of North America and Canada.

longitudinal focus, directed toward a single source or medium. My aim is not to dispute these studies, but to add greater depth to this area of inquiry by widening the framework of analysis and by narrowing the period of primary interest to that of the Famine years, albeit with a cursory glance at a few important images created before and after the Famine period.

We cannot know to what extent the power of the image in graphic or fine art was understood a century and a half ago. Nonetheless, nineteenth-century images still affected those viewing them. Whether exhibited in galleries, published in the press, or printed in books, intentionally or unintentionally, pictures were another form of propaganda, a source of information, influence, and social control over the political and social consciousness of the time. However, in the attempt to interpret images of the past, we must bear in mind that art is not created without broad contextual and cultural associations. Moreover, an artist's choice of theme is bound by questions of saleability, patronage, audience, and aesthetics including the influences of his background and associations, his perceptions, his abilities and limitations.

With these considerations in mind, I will argue that the mass accumulation of unflattering images of Ireland and the Irish, engraved, sketched, or painted between 1842 and 1852, contributed substantially to a prejudicial attitude toward the Irish people. While it is true that art can reflect as well as shape public opinion, it is impossible to determine to what extent this might be so. Regardless of this difficult dialectic, the prejudicial attitude inherent in the pictures probably had an indirect but distinct effect upon the willingness of the public and the politicians of England to meet the needs of the Irish people during the period of the Great Famine. Clearly, it is not possible to prove such connections between pictures and policy. However, I believe an investigation of these images presented in the English public domain will elucidate more precisely how the press, the public, and the government in England perceived the plight of the Irish and will, moreover, provide a better understanding of government policy during this catastrophic period.

This project fills a significant lacuna in a literature that is already considered

relatively thin given the historical significance of the Famine.<sup>3</sup> The Great Famine of mid-nineteenth century Ireland is considered a political “watershed” in Irish history, central to the creation of modern Ireland. Thus, it is hardly surprising that the 150th anniversary of the Famine has generated a number of new publications and reprints, some revision, and some reassessment.<sup>4</sup> More recently, writings on the Famine have grown considerably. Important studies such as J. Moky’s *Why Ireland Starved* (1985), Mary Daly’s *The Famine in Ireland* (1986), Cormac O’Grada’s *The Great Irish Famine* (1989), and Christine Kinealy’s *This Great Calamity* (1994) have added substantially to the literature. While there is now much relevant literature in a variety of multidisciplinary areas on the Great Irish Famine, the fact that relatively few complete scholarly studies have been written on this subject is extraordinary. The neglect is particularly notable in Ireland itself, and has not gone unnoticed by the general public there.<sup>5</sup>

From the beginning of this century and even from the onset of the Great Famine, Irish nationalists have used the horrors of the catastrophe both as a symbol and evidence of colonial cruelty and injustice. But as revisionism gained acceptance in Ireland through the 1960’s, the old nationalist view eroded. In 1968, after the Northern Ireland troubles broke out, revisionist historians rethought Britain’s management of the crisis during in the Famine years. Revisionist theory defused nationalist anger by playing down both the suffering and the humiliation endured by Famine victims and by maintaining that the disaster was the inevitable result of ecological and market forces. At most, some revisionists argued, only negligence, not malevolence, could be attributed to Britain.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, until recently, “revisionist” historians have held the accepted view.

<sup>3</sup> The first comprehensive study on the Irish Famine, written by Canon John O’Rourke in 1874, was entitled *The History of the Great Irish Famine of 1847*. The next major work, a collection of essays edited by R. D. Edwards and T. D. Williams, entitled *The Great Famine*, did not appear until 1956 nearly eighty years later. Subsequently in 1962, after nine years of research, Cecil Woodham-Smith, an American non-specialist, wrote *The Great Hunger*. Much criticized by Irish historians as uneven and emotive, Woodham-Smith’s book is still considered the best narrative introduction to the subject by some historians. For almost three decades, these were the chief works on the topic.

<sup>4</sup> Helen Linton, *The Irish Famine, An Illustrated History* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, Ltd., 1994); David Hollett, *Passage to the New World: Packet Ships and Irish Famine Emigrants, 1845-1851* (Abergavenny, Gwent: P. M. Heaton Publishing, 1995); Christine Kinealy, *This Great Calamity: The Irish Famine 1845-1852* (Boulder, Colorado: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1995); Noel Kissane, *The Irish Famine, A Documentary History* (Dublin: The National Library of Ireland, 1995); Campbell, Stephen J., *The Great Irish Famine*. Strokestown Park, Famine Museum, 1994; Peter Gray, *The Irish Famine* (New York: N. Harry Abrams, Inc., 1995).

<sup>5</sup> Cormac O’Grada, *The Great Irish Famine* (London: Macmillan, Ltd., 1989) 10; Christine Kinealy, *This Great Calamity: The Irish Famine, 1845-1852* (Ireland: Gill & Macmillan, 1994) xviii; Raymond Gillespie and Brian Kennedy, eds., *Ireland, Art Into History* (Dublin: Town House, 1994) 75; Edward Pilkington, *The Guardian* (Dublin: June 5, 1995) Dick Walsh, *Irish Times* (Dublin: August 12, 1995) 12; Jonathan Freeland, *The Guardian* (Dublin: June 7, 1995); Padraic Harvey, *Letter to The Irish Times* (Dublin: July 14, 1995).

<sup>6</sup> Conor Cruise O’Brien in “Passions Running High in Debate on Hunger,” by Edward Pilkington, *The Guardian* (Dublin: June 5, 1995).

As a group, Irish historians have held a unique and difficult position in writing the history of the Great Famine. With close cultural and geographic ties to Northern Ireland, England, and the IRA, it is not surprising that historical writing in Ireland on hot-button issues would promote the need for delicacy and tact. However, with the appearance of a recent academic study, *This Great Calamity* by Christine Kinealy, the revisionist stance has been seriously challenged. If influences such as Irish revisionism, Irish politics, and the enduring presence of the IRA, have clouded the truth about human suffering, mortality, and culpability in Irish Famine historiography, further research is clearly necessary to resolve the debate.

Although most Irish Famine specialists have researched areas other than the pictorial record, many of the recent publications on the Famine have included a wide assortment of pre-famine, contemporary, and post-famine images. But, for the most part, the inclusion of these images has been strictly illustrative in nature. Images are documented, often with the underlying historical facts explained, though they are neither analyzed nor interpreted.<sup>7</sup> This is not unusual since historical texts are often devoid of much in the way of illustration, and when publishers do include visual images, it is generally done to make the text more visually attractive and marketable.

When the director and assistant director of the National Gallery of Ireland convened a joint conference of Irish historians and Irish art historians in December of 1990 on images and history, their concern about the dearth of images used as historical evidence was obvious. As Raymond Gillespie and Brian Kennedy explained in *Ireland, Art into History*, a volume of essays generated by the conference, "In Ireland, historians still regard visual images as sideshows to the main task of interpreting written documents from the past."<sup>8</sup> It was hoped that this publication would stimulate the use of the visual material of Ireland's past, material that the conference believed to be "at least as important as oral or written evidence."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Helen Litten, *The Irish Famine, An Illustrated History* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, Ltd., 1994); David Hollett, *Passage to the New World, Packet Ships and Irish Famine Emigrants, 1845-1851* (Abergavenny, Gwent: P. M. Heaton Publishing, 1995); Christine Kinealy, *This Great Calamity: The Irish Famine 1845-1852* (Boulder, Colorado: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1995); Noel Kissane, *The Irish Famine, A Documentary History* (Dublin: The National Library of Ireland, 1995); Campbell, Stephen J. *The Great Irish Famine*, Strokestown Park, Famine Museum, 1994; Peter Gray, *The Irish Famine* (New York: N. Harry Abrams, Inc., 1995).

<sup>8</sup> Raymond Gillespie and Brian Kennedy, eds., *Ireland, Art into History* (Dublin: Town House, 1994), 7.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

Despite this growing concern, the study of visual images of Ireland is a relatively new field of inquiry. Several studies, however, are of particular importance for the current thesis. To date, L. Perry Curtis's *Apes and Angels, The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* is still the most comprehensive study completed on Irish prejudice in Victorian art. Published originally in 1971 and revised in 1997, *Apes and Angels* explores the connections between Victorian images of the Irish, the lore of physiognomy and phrenology, and Victorian ethnology and caricature. Since *Punch* figured prominently in the establishment of the classic bestial Irish stereotype, the book's prime focus centers on this weekly journal which was founded in 1841. Curtis follows the transformation of Paddy, the stereotypical Irish Celt of the mid-nineteenth century from a drunken but harmless peasant to a vicious and prognathous simianized rabble-rouser. He discusses Victorian caricaturists and their drawings as evidence to document the creation of the Irish stereotype and the simianizing of Paddy. He also investigates the possibility of a genetic strain of prognathous facial features in the Irish heritage and concludes that though there may have been some mid-facial prognathism and chin prominence, regular facial features were by far more common. This was a finding not at all the same as simianism despite the prominence of it in Victorian caricature.<sup>10</sup>

According to Curtis, the process of simianizing Paddy's features took place gradually between 1840 and 1890, reinforced by the work of ethnologists and others interested in the pseudo-science of physiognomy. He argues that the alteration of the stereotype and the conviction in England and Scotland that the Irish were innately inferior and uniformly inept was not clear until the 1860's. While I would agree that the stereotype matured and hardened between 1840 and 1890, it is critical to this study to recognize that a simianized image of Paddy was well established in *Punch* by 1846, at the beginning of the Famine, when most cartoons depicted the Irish with ape-like or prognathous features. Published on August 22, 1846 *Young Ireland in Business For Himself* (Figure 1) clearly supports a much earlier alteration. Moreover, as the Famine progressed, between 1845 and 1852, the bestial stereotype worsened substantially.

Curtis concludes that the inferior racial status that the English and Scots assigned to the Irish was based on "Hibernophobia," a religious and economic discrimination

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<sup>10</sup> L. Perry Curtis, Jr., *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (Washington, D. C. : Smithsonian Institution

against the Irish. However, the Irish were so desperate that long held English and Scottish religious intolerance failed to deter thousands of diseased Irish Catholics from immigrating into Britain and threatening British labor before, during, and after the Great Famine. Willing to accept any wage, these famine victims bloated the number of Irish settled and equally desperate for work, deepening anti-Irish prejudice. A simianized or prognathous Paddy was a convenient way to channel and divert responsibility and blame onto an easy target, the ever-troublesome Irishman.

"Paddy and Mr. Punch,"<sup>11</sup> written originally by Roy Foster in 1991 for the *Journal of Newspaper and Periodical History*, further explores the ideas presented in Curtis's *Apes and Angels*. Although Foster concedes that much is convincing in Curtis's argument of simple racism, he questions this view and emphasizes the importance of British political and property issues as well as religious and class bias.<sup>12</sup> Foster makes several important points not addressed by Curtis. In addition to the prejudice disseminated by *Punch* and the obvious difficulties incurred by large-scale Irish immigration, Foster notes that antagonism towards Ireland was heightened by several major events: first, the rise of Young Ireland and its endorsement of violent tactics; second, the unending requests for famine relief; and third, the Irish rebellion of 1848. All of these events contributed to the perception of Irish ingratitude in England and to the reality of English antipathy toward Ireland.

Although Foster and Curtis agree that the relationship of jaw and mouth to the upper part of the skull was a nineteenth-century criterion for measuring the development of primitivism to civilization, Foster rejects Curtis's statement that true simianizing of the Irish did not occur until the 1860's. He also observes the typology of *Punch's* classic portrayal of the "dangerous Irishman"<sup>13</sup> in *Young Ireland in Business For Himself* (1846) more than a decade before Darwin's *Origin of the Species*. Yet Foster suggests *Punch's* portrayal of the Irish was by and large bestial from the 1850's onward, while I would hold to an earlier date on this point. For my part, Curtis's view has much to recommend

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Press, 1971), 89.

<sup>11</sup> In 1993, the article reappeared as Chapter 9 in *Paddy and Mr. Punch, Connections in Irish and English History*.

<sup>12</sup> In the 1860's, the simianizing of Paddy intensified, and as Curtis suggests, may well have emerged from a deep and unsettling uncertainty about man, property, and privilege brought on by Darwinism, democracy, republicanism, socialism, and Fenianism.

<sup>13</sup> R. F. Foster, *Paddy & Mr. Punch, Connections in Irish and English History* (London: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1993), 174, 192.

it, whereas Foster's revisionist argument falters most when he defends *Punch's* politics and asserts that *Punch* was neither "obsessively anti-Irish," "nor very different in physiognomy from the representations of English plebeians," and "more ambivalent than it might seem."<sup>14</sup> Foster concludes that class and religion were more crucial in forming an adverse Irish image than Curtis will admit, although he believes that the essence of the problem related more to the Irish attack on property and Union, the colonialist view of the mid-nineteenth century. I would agree with Foster that class and religion were key issues, though not secondary to the Irish attack on property and Union, especially in light of the predominating influence of evangelical thought. Providentialism, the antipathy aroused by Tractarianism, and the fury unleashed over the "Papal Aggression."

Another article, Peter Gray's, "*Punch* and the Great Famine," provides a slightly different focus. This third study was published in *History Ireland* in the summer of 1993. It is the first to discuss the historical importance of *Punch* as a medium for the transference of Irish prejudice. Gray argues that *Punch* along with the *Times* and the *Illustrated London News* wielded considerable influence over metropolitan opinion-formers, individuals who set British middle-class attitudes. As these publications relentlessly cited political and moral factors as the true causes of Irish distress, tolerance for Irish problems dwindled. Gray argues effectively that as Irish ingratitude and English moralistic outrage became the dominant theme of *Punch* and British public opinion, the options open to Russell's weak and deeply divided government became more limited.

But Curtis, Foster and Gray overlook several points. First, they do not mention the effects of the growing circulation and attendant financial success of the magazine upon the men of *Punch* itself. Nor do they note the significance of the increasing age and wealth of the *Punch* men, which, in part, may account for the changing political outlook of the magazine, from radical to conservative, and at times, to reactionary. Also, the expanding popularity and prestige of the magazine gave its writers and artists a unique celebrity status, which afforded them the opportunity to socialize with the powerful and the elite of England. During the Victorian period, social connections of this sort were highly prized and persuasive reasons for supporting the government and the elitist position. Even so, *Punch* flourished in its satirical niche, as hapless Englishmen became

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<sup>14</sup> R. F. Foster, *Paddy & Mr. Punch*, 174, 192, 194.

objects of parody and caricature. However, unlike the Irish, English targets were only lampooned, never simianized.

In 1994, Margaret Crawford analyzed a number of images published during the Great Famine in the popular nineteenth-century publication, the *Illustrated London News*. Crawford's article, "The Great Irish Famine 1845-1849: Image Versus Reality," was published as part of the National Gallery of Ireland's endeavor to stimulate the use of images by Irish historians. The article explores the extent to which the famine pictures published in the *Illustrated London News* between 1846 and 1849 reflected the language of the written documentation.

Crawford suggests that the majority of the pictures, which depicted subjects concerning misery and mortality, conveyed their point, although in many cases the accompanying text was necessary to convince a reader of the seriousness of the situation. For instance, it was not uncommon to see starving individuals drawn with an anatomical sturdiness antithetical to the process of starvation. She notes that the engravings that depicted scenic beauty or distant or deserted village scenes were especially unsuccessful as images that communicated suffering. Regardless of the contradictions between text, image, and reality, Crawford believes there was no concerted policy to deceive or shelter the British readership from the realities of what was happening in Ireland. Although this premise may be true, the fact that the illustrated coverage of articles on Irish poverty was scanty and often separated by a year or so is important to consider. Even though Professor Crawford suggests a variety of sound explanations for the distortions such as classical training, artistic license, experience, or purpose, she does not specify which reasons apply here. While the article presents an excellent general introduction to the task at hand, it does not mention either the significance of the changing points of view accompanying many of the pictures or the importance of the preferences of the Victorian art world on the impact of the pictures.

Since Crawford's aim was to assess the agreement of the pictures and the text, she does so admirably, concluding correctly that the pictures and the text frequently did not agree. The effectiveness of the engravings, she notes, often depended upon the way in which the image related to the text as well as to political and social context of the period. Crawford maintains that the value of the illustrations as an accurate contemporary record

of the Famine crisis varies considerably. Certainly this is true, but I would submit that the effectiveness of the images as a contemporary record was far less useful then than it is today for reasons which will be discussed in Chapter IV.

The most recent article on the art of the Famine "Painting Irish History, the Famine" was published in *History Ireland* in the autumn of 1996. The author, Catherine Marshall, is currently Curator of the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin. In contrast to the numerous graphic depictions of the Great Famine printed in the *Illustrated London News* and other periodicals of the time, Marshall points out the corresponding and conspicuous lack of famine images painted or sculpted during the second half of the nineteenth century when both history painting and social realism were in vogue. Like Crawford, Marshall notes the obvious discrepancies between the descriptions of the starving Irish and the visual images in the graphic illustrations of the Famine. She agrees that this problem can probably be attributed to art education and its emphasis on idealism and the ennoblement of the human figure and notes that delicacy or national pride may have prevented most artists from painting the humiliation and indignity of death from famine. Most importantly, Marshall maintains that in fine art artists primarily failed to confront the Irish Famine not because of a scarcity of artistic talent as critical scholarship has long suggested, but because of the overriding belief that paintings of poverty in a colonized country were naturally politicized and would simply not be acceptable to the establishment. This is patently true. Marshall also argues that the closing of the Ordnance Memoir, a subsection of Larcom's Ordnance Survey of Ireland undertaken in 1840 to codify the country's ancient monuments, buildings, and sculptures, communicated to Irish artists that paintings of Irish historical subjects would be unwelcome with the establishment. An appeal to the government in England by the Royal Irish Academy to reinstate the Memoir in 1843 was rejected for reasons of expense, although the Irish press agreed the reasons were political, not financial.

Marshall's article makes a number of excellent points. However, despite the fact that Irish historical paintings were not particularly welcome even though history painting was currently held in high esteem, at that time the demand for history paintings in England on any subject was relatively slight. I would also submit that the advent of social realism about 1870 did allow for greater realism in the depiction of Irish poverty in

the illustrated press<sup>15</sup> (*Irish Sketches-Turf Carriers*) (Figure 2) and (*Irish Sketches-How Not to Pay the Rent*) (Figure 3), although clearly, as Marshall has noted, paintings on politically sensitive subjects like the Irish Famine were rare even well after the turn of the century. However, playing into all of this were the realities of the mid-nineteenth century art world. At this time, the achievement of recognition and financial security in the arts was a career path filled with pitfalls. Patronage and commissions depended not only on talent and conformity to the public taste, but also on the social skills and connections of an artist. English artists would rarely challenge the establishment; and as outsiders, Irish artists who painted controversial subjects took on an even greater career risk.

Of the five historians that have investigated the visual images of Ireland and the Irish, L. Perry Curtis, Roy Foster, Peter Gray, Margaret Crawford, and Catherine Marshall, only Gray, Crawford, and Marshall specifically examine the years of the Great Famine but do not do so in any depth. None analyzes the pictorial record as a whole during this period. In what follows, I will look at Victorian theories of race and physiognomy and ideas of civilization and property, two interacting strands of thought, which significantly affected the visual portrayals of Ireland. A discussion of British art trends will precede a review of various depictions of Ireland in paintings, watercolors, and book illustration. In addition, I have included a section on Charles Dickens and the Irish in view of his immensely popular publications and his strong social ties with illustrators, artists, and elites. We shall see how he used his bully pulpit to spread his bias and influence art. Finally, I will review the contributions of the illustrated press in their coverage on the Great Famine and on Irish affairs.

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<sup>15</sup> See "Irish Turf Carriers", *The Graphic*, March 26, 1869; and "How Not To Pay The Rent," *The Graphic*, June 4, 1870. Although the engravings accompanying both articles depict the Irish peasantry without caricature and with dignity, the accompanying text is not nearly so sympathetic. *Irish Sketches-Irish Turf Carriers* shows more empathy for the Irish plight than previously acknowledged, although the *Irish Sketches-How Not To Pay the Rent* is derogatory in thrust.



### YOUNG IRELAND IN BUSINESS FOR HIMSELF.

"\*." William Smith O'Brien and the "physical force" party in Ireland seceded from the Repeal Association.



IRISH SKETCHES—TWO CARRIERS



IRISH SKETCHES—HOW NOT TO PAY THE RENT

## Chapter I

### The Visual Repertoire: Physiognomy and Racial Prejudice in Pre-famine Visual Portrayals of the Irish

Race is everything: literature, science, art—in a word, civilization depends on it.<sup>16</sup>  
Robert Knox

All is race; there is no other truth.<sup>17</sup> Disraeli

Throughout the Victorian period, there was a growing tendency in England among a limited and influential group of individuals comprised of antiquarians, historians, doctors, lawyers, and clergymen to see Celts as a race.<sup>18</sup> This racial view of the Irish tended to fit in to universally accepted ideas of civilized behavior, to which the Irish were not measuring up. Researches into the origins of man suggested that character was determined not by environment and climate as Montesquieu and other enlightenment philosophers believed, but by race and genetic inheritance. During the 1830's and 1840's, emphasis on the German origins of English liberties reached its peak as Herder's concept of *volksgeist* (1784) and cultural nationalism blended with new methods of inquiry into the races of man in the fields of history, anthropology, philology, and psychology.<sup>19</sup> This blending spurred belief in ethnocentrism and Anglo-Saxonist mythologies and prejudices. According to Curtis, the Victorian Anglo-Saxonist found his explanation for the rise of the British Empire not in luck or Providence or in political economy but in the superiority of the distinct genetic mixture of the British people. The assumption was that England was comprised of a fairly homogeneous mixture of individuals with superior intellect and physical appearance whose ancestry could be traced back to the fifth century when the Jutes, Angles, and Saxons inhabited the forests of Germany. Their unique combination of qualities made them superior to all other cultures and races. Hence, the fundamental difference between English and Irish character and the explanation for Irish backwardness lay in the racial factor and not in English politics or history.

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<sup>16</sup> Robert Knox, *The Races of Men: A Philosophical Enquiry into the Influence of Race over the Destinies of Nations*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (London: Renshaw, 1862). Introduction.

<sup>17</sup> Young, *Colonial Desire*, 93.

<sup>18</sup> L. Perry Curtis, *Anglo-Saxons and Celts* (Connecticut: University of Bridgeport, 1968), 16.

<sup>19</sup> L. Perry Curtis, *Anglo-Saxons and Celts*, 11.

Of course, not all Englishmen held these ideas. Environmentalists believed that good laws made good men and spurned the idea that national character was constant, immutable, and hereditary. However, the rejection of the environmentalist theory denied egalitarianism and the improvement of man through his own efforts, while the defense of racial and social inequality meant biological inheritance determined destiny and worth.

Through the middle of the nineteenth century, biologists sought to classify man through racial types and through physical differences. And by mid-century, two theoretical trends divided racial theory. The first trend defined race through lineage. It espoused the idea that all humans descended from one ancestral pair which climate affected and thus changed, a theory known as monogenesis. John Hunter (d.1809), John Friedrich Blumenback (1724-1830), Sir William Lawrence (1783-1867), and James Cowles Prichard (1786-1848) favored this approach. Monogenesis gained precedence in the first half of the nineteenth century in part, because it so closely paralleled the biblical origins of man. Ethnologists under Prichard's influence continued their researches in the area of philology to prove the unity of man.

The second trend, polygenesis, defined race through type and was endorsed by a number of anthropologists. This theory also acknowledged that man descended from Adam, yet concluded that from some very early period of pre-history, unknown events caused the formation of separate races. Henry Home, Lord Kames (1692-1782), Dr. Charles White (1728-1813), and Edward Long argued this view. In his influential *History of Jamaica* (1774), Long noted that mulattos in Jamaica were infertile and used biological theories to show that blacks were like animals and diverse in species from Europeans.<sup>20</sup>

One of the most influential theorists on race at mid-century was the Scottish anatomist and popular lecturer, Robert Knox (1791-1862). Knox had gained notoriety for his dealings with the Irish "body-snatchers and murderers, Burke and Hare,"<sup>21</sup> and for his blunt anti-religious and polygenetic opinions preceding the publication of his collection of lectures, *The Races of Men*. Published in 1850, the book was his most complete statement of racial theory. Knox summarized his argument in the following manner:

The races of men differ from each other, and have done so from the earliest period as proved...by their external characters, which have never altered during the last

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<sup>20</sup> Douglas Lorimer, *Colour, Class and The Victorians* (Bristol: Leicester University Press, 1978), 132-3, 137.

<sup>21</sup> Lorimer, *Colour*, 137; Curtis, *Saxons and Celts*, 71.

six thousand years...by anatomical differences in structure...by infertility of the hybrid product, originating in the intermingling of two races...by historic evidence, which shows that no distinct hybrid race can ever be shown to exist anywhere.<sup>22</sup>

On progress he related: "...man, some maintain, is progressive, but history does not support this view."<sup>23</sup> Knox saw Saxons as intellectually superior and strong but very brutal:

The Saxon will not mingle with any dark race, nor will he allow him to hold one acre of land in the country occupied by him; this, at least, is the law of Anglo-Saxon America.<sup>24</sup>

He held that the combination of Saxons and Celts produced a people of "uncertain character" and that the Saxons and Celts were "mutually and inherently antagonistic."<sup>25</sup>

[...] even here within our own favoured isle, we have at least two races, without crossing St. George's Channel, on the western shores of which are the head quarters of one of these races. For twice 700 years have the two races been living under the same climate; for half that period they have been living ostensibly under the same laws; yet they have neither amalgamated nor approached each other physically or mentally. *Aliens in race*, they probably never will.<sup>26</sup>

The really momentous question for England, as a nation, is the presence of three sections of the Celtic race still on her soil [referring to the Scots, Welsh, and Irish]: the source of all evil lies in the race, the Celtic race of Ireland...the race must be forced from the soil; by fair means if possible, still they must leave. England's safety requires it. I speak not of the justice of the case, nations must ever act as Machievelli advised: look to yourself.<sup>27</sup>

Knox's illustration of *A Celtic Group; such as may be seen at any time in Marylebone, London* (Figure 1) published in *Races of Men* provides clear evidence of his view of Irish race and culture. The Celts are depicted as poor and over-fertile with negroid facial characteristics.

For some theorists, race was more than a genetic concept; race and culture were linked. It is in this regard that the Irish were particularly vulnerable. Universally accepted ideas of civilization and progress underlay judgments about primitive peoples and their

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<sup>22</sup> Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire, Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London & New York: Routledge, 1995), 72.

<sup>23</sup> Knox, *The Races of Men*, 533.

<sup>24</sup> Knox, *The Races of Men*, 229.

<sup>25</sup> Curtis, *Saxons and Celts*, 69-70.

<sup>26</sup> Robert Knox, Broadsheet, "Now Exhibiting, at the Egyptian Hall, Picadilly, The Bosjesmans, or Bush People, from the Interior of South Africa...", 3.

lack of domesticity. As in colonial South Africa, notions about domesticity and gender roles in the establishment and protection of homes provided cultural markers and justification for conquest.<sup>28</sup> In Elizabeth Elbourne's discussion of domesticity and dispossession in the early nineteenth-century Cape, she notes that the ideology of "home" and "the desire for comfort was held to be a precondition to the development of those artificial wants which had historically created commercial society and hence civilization."<sup>29</sup> A second and third subtext of the South Africa example that parallels the case of the Irish was the necessity for "industry" and the importance of "property" as civilization markers. British settlers and English labourers were industrious, but Africans and the Irish peasantry were not. Africans neither desired nor sought comfort, the domesticity of home, or property. And neither did the rude mud cabins of the Irish, their tiny patches of land, nor their scanty labours in potato husbandry, fit English contemporary notions of civilized life. Thus the Irish, like the Khoi and Xhosa, failed to meet the measure of a civilized society. Consensus then amounted to an assumption that the Irish were alien in race and inferior in culture, which effectively reduced political opposition to an unacknowledged conflict between two fundamentally incompatible races.

For many of the English governing elite, however, property was everything. The dovetailing of political ideas and personal interests is not unusual. Yet, the existence of vested interests held by Lord John Russell's cabinet and Parliament during the Irish Famine was a particularly flagrant example of conflict of interest. It is particularly ironic to review Russell's remarks on landlordism in Ireland. His biographer writes: "although Russell once said there were three bad classes in Ireland, the landlords, the tenants, and the labourers, it was the landlords that he was really after."<sup>30</sup> And "on a number of occasions Lord John's animus against the landlords made him lose sight of the famine."<sup>31</sup> The fact was that Russell's own Whig-liberal cabinet was composed of Irish landowners. The marquis of Landsdowne, the marquis of Clanricarde, Lord Palmerston, and Lord Monteagle all owned Irish estates, and Cottenham was a mortgagee on

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<sup>27</sup> Robert Knox, *The Races of Men: A Fragment* (London: Renshaw, 1850), 378-9.

<sup>28</sup> Elizabeth Elbourne, "Domesticity and dispossession in the early nineteenth-century Cape: The ideology of 'home' and British justification for conquest."

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>30</sup> John Prest, *Lord John Russell*. London: MacMillan, 1972, 236.

encumbered Irish estates.<sup>32</sup> Thus all legislation on famine relief was examined, ratified, or rejected by English and Scots landowners in the cabinet, of whom five were Irish absentee landlords. The Irish landlords could not be seen to reject every controversial proposal, but did their best to change the wording of all acts from compulsory to voluntary.<sup>33</sup> In the House of Lords, one in four peers owned property in Ireland.<sup>34</sup> Plainly, the vested interests of government officials and members of parliament conflicted with legislation designed to solve the Irish land question or provide famine relief.

Nonetheless, Lord John's vision of "a golden age for Ireland" was probably sincere, even though Russell himself was in a position of compromise. Shortly after the formation of the cabinet, Russell's brother, the Duke of Bedford, altered his will leaving Lord John a much-needed windfall, an Irish estate at Ardsalla. The estate had come from the third Earl Ludlow and was worth five thousand pounds per annum to be inherited upon the Duke's death. In the event of Lord John's death, it would fall to young Johnny. The Duke's intention was to keep Lord John financially compromised so he could control him through his prospects.<sup>35</sup> Thus the civilizing forces of property compromised Lord John's governing style, his desire for practical government solutions, and his vision for Ireland making his efforts on behalf of the starving peasantry in Ireland mostly ineffective.

The quest for racial origins was also pursued through the science of physiognomy. Victorian physiognomy dates back to ancient Greece when physiognomy was once a branch of the science of physiology. Early Grecian physiognomy held that physical features and temperament were part of the same physiological system, a theory used initially to diagnose physical and mental diseases. One of the most enduring theories was the Hippocratic concept of the four humors,<sup>36</sup> which divided men into sanguine, phlegmatic, melancholic, and choleric types. Hippocratic humoralism and the Aristotelian

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 237.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. Extracted from *PD 3ser. xc* 1260, 12 Mar 1847; *PD xciv* 81, 23 Nov. 1847.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Kinealy, *This Great Calamity*, 22.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 238.

<sup>36</sup> Blood, phlegm, black, and yellow bile.

theory that “the soul and body sympathize with each other” underlay all later theories of physiognomy.<sup>37</sup>

Victorian ethnology and physiognomy were markedly influenced by the work of two eighteenth century physiognomists, Johann Kaspar Lavater (1741-1801) and Pieter Camper (1722-1789). Lavater scrutinized the heads and faces of animals and humans in order to define the character of each and spent nearly thirty years researching this subject. Camper developed Lavater’s ideas further by devising a facial angle or line that defined the differences between the skulls and thus the intelligence of monkeys, orangutans, Negroes, Kalmucks,<sup>38</sup> and Europeans (Figure 2). Camper’s facial angle was formed by the intersection of two lines, one running diagonally from the forehead, and the other drawn from the opening of the ear to the nostrils.<sup>39</sup> The elevation of the angle defined the place of the animal or human on the evolutionary scale from primitivism to civilization. Camper measured the facial angle of the monkey’s skull at 42 degrees, the orangutan’s at 58, the Negro’s at 70, and the Kalmuck’s at 70. The normal or desirable European facial angle fell between 70 and 80 degrees. The angles of Grecian or Roman busts measured an ideal 90 or 95 degrees respectively. Lesser angles were an indication of a more primitive life. An engraving, from the *Illustrated London News*, entitled *The Railway – First, Second and Third Class* (Figure 3) published on May 22, 1847 illustrates the artist’s use of the facial angle in class distinctions. Camper’s work bolstered the theory that the alignment of the lower jaw and mouth in relation to the upper part of the face and skull was the definitive measure of development from primitivism to civilization.

Although other researchers disputed Camper’s ideas, physiognomy spilled over into many other fields like anthropology, ethnology, craniology, phrenology, zoology, and medicine. Phrenology, the science of mental ability revealed by an examination of the skull, found cult-like acceptance in Europe and America after 1815 mostly due to the work and success of the leading phrenologists, F. J. Gall, J. K. Spurzheim, and G. Combe. Between 1824 and 1847, the *Phrenological Journal* published and spread the ideas of Gall, Spurzheim, and Combe and printed “phrenoscopes” or analyses of famous

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<sup>37</sup> I. Perry Curtis, Jr., *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1971), 6.

<sup>38</sup> Members of a group of Mongol peoples living chiefly in the Kalmuck Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and northern Sinkiang.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 7.

heads. Other scientists observed physical differences. Anders Adolf Retzius (1780-1860) a Swedish ethnologist and craniologist endeavored to classify the races of man on the basis of skull types. His work emphasized prognathism and orthognathism, which seemed to substantiate the belief that a protruding jaw and receding forehead implied a mental and physical correspondence of man to apes and resulted in a proliferation of racial categories.

In 1852, a work by James Redfield on comparative physiognomy investigated the similarities of humans to animals. The book was well respected, perhaps because it validated currently held prejudices. For example, the Irishman was compared to "the scrounging, yapping, terrier dog" (Figure 4), and "Frenchmen to frogs."<sup>40</sup>

Further explorations of these ideas continued throughout the nineteenth century as a small group of influential individuals from different disciplines--antiquarians, historians, doctors, barristers, and clergymen--conducted a search for the racial origins of the British Isles. None could be termed impartial investigators and most relied on physiognomy and language to substantiate their theories. In spite of many valid scientific advances in other fields, physiognomy spawned a variety of fanciful theories and treatises that contained no scientific or medical accuracy but still influenced well-educated scientists and laymen.

Perhaps the most prejudicial and racially troublesome theory was that of Dr. John Beddoe (1826-1911), a Victorian ethnologist who had investigated ethnic and racial types in Great Britain, Ireland, and Western Europe. Beddoe believed that hair and eye color in man contained the key to ethnic or sub-racial origins. His formula for an "Index of Nigrescence" measured the amount of residual melanin in the skin, in the iris of the eyes, and in the follicles of the hair. In western Wales and western Ireland, Beddoe located and categorized Africanoid Celts whose more melanous skin, "jutting jaw, and long slitty nostrils" led him to infer their African origin. Another type described by Beddoe was thought to be of Mongoloid origin. Although this group occasionally overlapped the Africanoid type,<sup>41</sup> individuals of this sort were classified by the presence of broad cheekbones, a concave or flat nose, a prominent mouth, and a receding forehead.

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<sup>40</sup> Mary Cowling, *The Artist As Anthropologist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 35.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 20, 125.

Another investigator, Daniel Mackintosh, presented his work of long standing to the Anthropological Society of London in 1865. Mackintosh was a geologist, topographer, and ethnologist who traveled throughout the British Isles and Ireland to study head shapes and faces to determine differences in ethnicity. Much like his colleagues at the Anthropological Society, Mackintosh believed that "substantial differences divided Saxons from Celts and Gaels and that those differences reached back to prehistoric times as a result of the laws of hereditary transmission of characteristics from one generation to the next within any given racial unit."<sup>42</sup> His findings led him to describe the Gaelic type, which could be found in the remoter parts of Wales and Cornwall and in Ireland:

Bulging forward of lower part of face--most extreme in upper jaw. Chin more or less retreating... (in Ireland the chin is often absent). Retreating forehead. Large mouth and thick lips. Great distance between nose and mouth. Nose short, upturned, frequently concave, with yawning nostrils.<sup>43</sup>

Mackintosh then described the psychological traits associated with the Gaelic type:

Quick in perception, but deficient in depth of reasoning power, headstrong and excitable; tendency to oppose; strong in love and hate; at one time lively, soon after sad; vivid in imagination; extremely social, with a propensity for crowding together; forward and self-confident; deficient in application to deep study, but possessed of great concentration in monotonous or purely mechanical occupations, such as hop-picking, reaping, weaving, etc.; want of prudence and foresight; antipathy to seafaring pursuits... veneration for authority.<sup>44</sup>

The device of portraying character and personality traits by detailed descriptions of facial features and stature was not limited to ethnologists, physiognomists, or phrenologists. Throughout history sculptors, artists, and caricaturists have always defined character and personality by their representation of the human face and form. This practise was also a long established literary convention used by a variety of Victorian novelists, among them Sir Walter Scott, Charles Kingsley, Dickens, Trollope, Disraeli, and Kipling. But as a background to Victorian caricature and racial prejudice, physiognomy had no equal.

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<sup>42</sup> Curtis, *Irishman in Victorian Caricature*, 18.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 18. Mackintosh, "The Comparative Anthropology of England and Wales," *Anthropological Review and Journal*, Vol.

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

Henry Mayhew's 1851 landmark study on the condition of the London poor graphically demonstrates the relationship between physiognomy and racial prejudice and presents an exemplar of this trend. Much of Mayhew's research on the *London Labor and the London Poor* focused on a small subgroup of the poor, the street-sellers, prostitutes, beggars, and thieves. And by massive statistical evidence, Mayhew characterized the street-folk as a race apart, uncivilized and unsocialized. When Mayhew divided humanity into two distinct and broadly marked races, the wanderers and the settlers—the vagabond and the citizen—the nomadic and the civilized tribes, he was subscribing to the ideology of the phrenologist.

Each race or tribe had its eccentric and distinctive physical and moral characteristics. "To each of these tribes a different form of head is peculiar, the wandering races being remarkable for the development of the bones of the face, as the jaws, cheekbones, &c., and the civilized for the development of those of the head." <sup>45</sup> According to Mayhew, the nomadic races of England were the paupers, beggars, and outcasts, distinguished physically by protruding jaws and high cheekbones. Morally, the differences were unmistakable and showed remarkable resemblance to the Irish stereotype.

The nomad then is distinguished from the civilized man by his greater development of the animal than of the intellectual or moral nature—by his use of a slang language—by his repugnance to regular and continuous labour-- by his want of providence in laying up a store for the future—by his inability to perceive consequences ever so slightly removed from immediate apprehension-- by his passion for stupefying herbs and roots, and, when possible, for intoxicating fermented liquors-- by his extraordinary powers of enduring privation -- by his comparative insensibility to pain—by an immoderate love of gaming, frequently risking his own personal liberty upon a single cast—by his love of libidinous dances—by the pleasure he experiences in witnessing the suffering of sentient creatures—by his delight in warfare and all perilous sports—by his desire for vengeance—by the absence of chastity among his women, and his disregard of female honour—and lastly, by his vague sense of religion—his rude idea of a Creator, and utter absence of all appreciation of the mercy of the Divine Spirit. <sup>46</sup>

Mayhew singled out the largest group among the street-folk—the costermongers as a "foul disgrace...utterly creedless, mindless, and principleless... a vast dunghheap of

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<sup>45</sup> Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, London: Office, 16, Upper Wellington Street, Strand, 1851, Vol. I.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. 2, 3.

ignorance and vice... a social pestilence in the very heart of the land...one and all ready, upon the least disturbance, to seize and disable their policeman.”<sup>47</sup> For instance, Mayhew includes an engraving taken from a daguerreotype by Beard of an Irish costermonger whose physiognomy exemplifies her low station in life. The Irish orange-seller (Figure 5) is depicted with a low forehead, large nose, squinty eyes, heavy jaw, and pipe.

“Costermongers appear to be a distinct race,” Mayhew wrote, “perhaps originally of Irish extraction—seldom associating with any other of the street-folk and all being known to each other.”<sup>48</sup> Although Mayhew acknowledged some good among the Irish – not all were dirty and degenerate and some helped each other; he did not fail to observe and comment negatively upon their physiognomies—their “low foreheads and long bulging upper lips.”<sup>49</sup> Even among the few pretty faces that Mayhew saw, “the short petticoats” and “large feet”<sup>50</sup> assured him that the girls belonged to the same low class.

Like English labourers, English costermongers disliked their Irish counterparts, considering them intruders and competitors. Rarely would Irish costers mingle or visit with English costers. They lived apart in courts or “nests of Irish,” as they were often called, a reference unpleasantly akin to “nests of spiders” or “nests of vermin.” The Irish street-seller, Mayhew noted, could live at half the cost of his English counterpart and still manage to save money because the Irish were known for their sparseness of living as well as their “frequently importunate and mendacious begging.”<sup>51</sup> Mayhew believed this prejudice was “modern” and had “originated from the great influx of Irishmen and women over the last five years.”<sup>52</sup> He attributed the burgeoning Irish population to the famine in Ireland, evictions, and the urge to survive.

The *Economist*, the *Athenaeum* and the *Edinburgh Review* suspected that Mayhew’s *Morning Chronicle* articles were exaggerated for effect and questioned their accuracy,<sup>53</sup> although the massive detail and statistical evidence cited in Mayhew

<sup>47</sup> Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, (London: Office, 16, Upper Wellington Street, Strand, 1851), Vol. I, 101.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 114.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 106.

<sup>53</sup> Gertrude Himmelfarb, “The Culture of Poverty,” in *The Victorian City: Images and Realities*, eds. H. J. Dyos and Michael Wolff. 2 Volumes. London and Boston: 1973, 716, 728. Mayhew’s formidable statistics divided the classes further and reinforced the prevailing image of the pauper class by transferring the stigma of a small subgroup of street-folk to the entire population of the laboring poor. According to Mayhew, the population of street-folk was in excess of 50,000 individuals or one-fortieth of the citizenry of London, and of approximately 30,000 street-sellers, roughly 35 percent were Irish. Mayhew, *London Labour*, Vol. I, 106.

convinced the general public of the accuracy of Mayhew's research. Gertrude Himmelfarb suggests that there is "something in the times" and "in the subject, which permits the confusion of street-folk with the laboring poor," and notes that what is more striking and significant than the confusion on the part of the historians "is the similar and not uncommon confusion on the part of contemporaries."<sup>54</sup> Stedman Jones quotes Alfred Marshall on the ways in which the "dangerous classes" were misunderstood. Marshall characterized the "residuum" as "those who have a poor physique and a weak character...those who are limp in body and mind,"<sup>55</sup> indicating he thought the "evil" of the London poor was primarily moral, not structural. The problem was not poverty, but pauperism with its associated vices: vices stereotypically aligned with the Irish such as drunkenness, improvidence, mendicancy, bad language, filthy habits, gambling, low amusement, and ignorance.<sup>56</sup>

Of course, the severe destitution of the Irish was well known. Travelers to Ireland such as J. S. Mill, de Tocqueville, the Duke of Wellington, (an Irish peer), Young, Kohl, Twiss, Lithgow, Luckombe, and Inglis wrote extensively on the Irish poor. And when William Thackeray visited Ireland in 1843, he commented:

The traveler is haunted by the face of popular starvation. It is not the exception, it is the condition of the people. In this fairest and richest of countries, men are suffering and starving by the millions...The epicurean, and traveler for pleasure, had better travel anywhere than here; where there are miseries that one does not dare to think of; where one is always feeling how helpless pity is, and how helpless relief, and is perpetually ashamed of being happy.<sup>57</sup>

According to *Punch*, poor Irish Catholics were considered to be by their very natures the most indolent and filthy people in all of Europe, if not the world...

[they] were the sons and daughters of generations of beggars. You can trace the descent in their blighted, stunted forms...[their hovels] were monuments to national idleness...[they] were the missing link between the gorilla and the Negro.<sup>58</sup>

But the comparison of Irish poverty to British industry tended to reinforce British scorn, a situation that was heightened by a disparate variety of early negative images. An

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<sup>54</sup> Himmelfarb, "The Culture of Poverty," 712.

<sup>55</sup> Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 11.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> William Makepeace Thackeray, *The Irish Sketchbook* (New York: J. Winchester, 1844), 37. Published under the pseudonym M.A. Titmarsh.

example of this kind of image (Figure 6) was published by James Connery in the 1830's. This woodblock engraving depicts the interior of a traditional Irish one room windowless stone cottage, a common scene in which a family of eight sleeps in one bed, against which a sow and seven piglets rest. A cow, a cat, and a few sticks of furniture complete the picture. While the allusion to Irish fecundity is a common one, the stone fireplace pictured here is unusual, since fireplaces and chimneys were rarely found in Irish cottages.

An etching by George Cruikshank, "Pat Answers, or Points of Irish Humour," (Figure 7) dated 1826, explains why Pat lets a pig into his house. The gentleman asks, "But my honest man, why let Even the pig come in?" And Pat answers, "Why then, why not your honor! Is't not there every convenience for a Pig?" The exchange is funny, but the depiction of the family's physiognomy, their clothing, their poverty, and the wretchedness of their cabin ridicules and debases the couple's existence and the poverty that they experience. *Going to School and eating a potato for his breakfast* (Figure 8) portrays a young Irishman's progression: school, the stage, and the military.

Another cartoon entitled *Ireland*, (Figure 9) published by *McLean's Monthly Sheet of Caricatures*, depicts the frustration of peasants suffering from starvation due to a famine in Galway and Mayo in 1831. Here, the starving Irish are depicted as witches and scarecrows, in effect destroying the strength of the message.

The natural resilience of the Irish peasantry to retain a level of happiness under such marginal living conditions prompted much ridicule and met with little understanding. "It will be difficult for most of our readers to feel akin with a class which at best wallows in pigsties and hugs the most brutish degradation,"<sup>59</sup> noted the *Times*. The Irish customs of early marriage and land division that helped balloon the population defied English comprehension. Out of desperation and necessity, poor Irish families pooled their resources and their labour. They practised a communal style of farming known as rundale and developed a system of clustered settlements or clachans, residential groupings of some ten to twenty houses originally occupied by members of the same extended family. As a result of these practises, many families were successful in reclaiming marginal bogs and mountain areas for cultivation and were thus able to survive.

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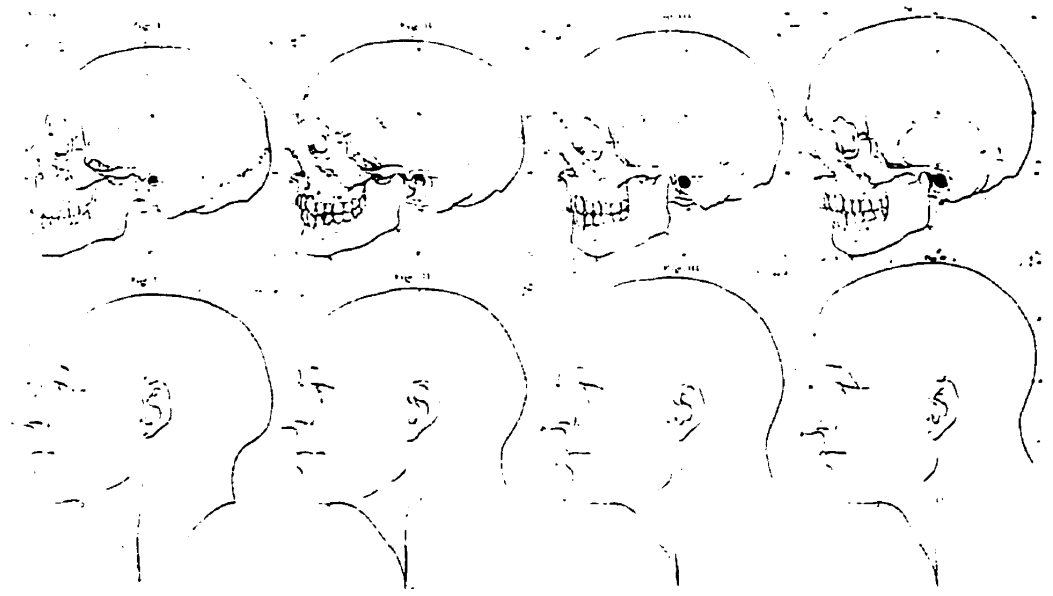
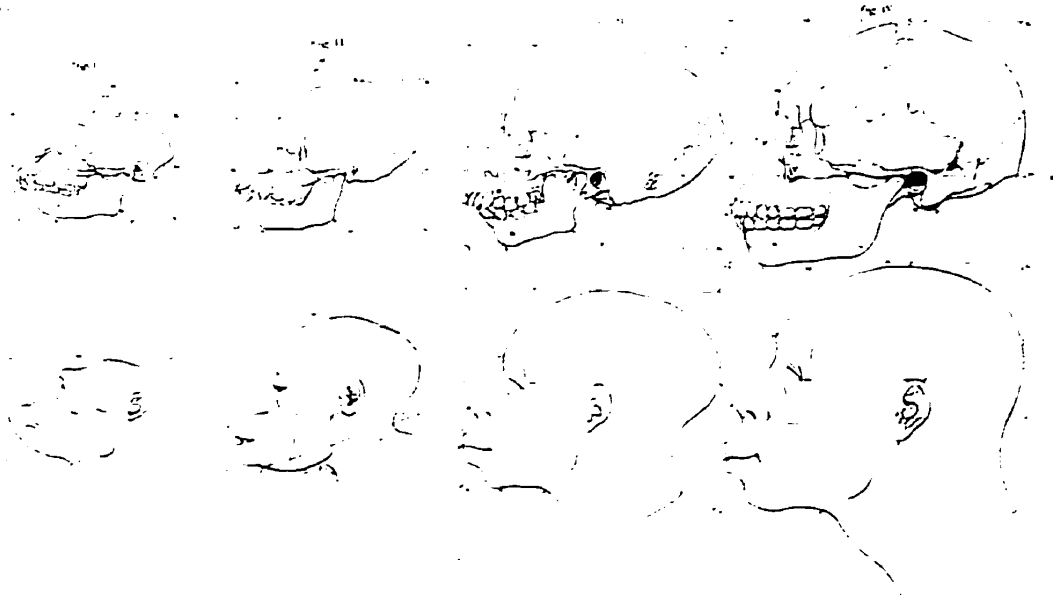
<sup>58</sup> *Punch*, XVI (1849) 54, XX (1851) 26, 231.

<sup>59</sup> *The Times*, January 3, 1848.

An early anonymous and undated English interpretation of the Irish “swinish multitude” entitled, *Irish Bogtrotters*, was published in London by Thomas Tegg. The peasants in this particular caricature are depicted with countenances that border on the grotesque (Figure 10). The placement of seemingly contented bogtrotters against a background of fox and hound hunters emphasizes the differences in class and points up the degradation of their way of life. Note the brutishness conveyed by the depiction of the peasants’ huge muscled limbs, torso, hands, and feet. And although the physiognomies are not simianized, the artist has evoked an atavistic scene as the peasants progress through the bog, holding onto each other like elephants, presumably to avoid being sucked into the muck. Caricatures such as these could only negatively influence all who saw them, setting rude examples for others to follow.

The effects of various racial theories, which Mayhew’s reports reflected, and those of Victorian physiognomy and ethnology combined with a variety of other factors to weaken the environmentalist view that Englishmen and Irishmen were basically similar and equally intelligent. At the same time, it strengthened English ethnocentrism and the idea that the Irish were a sub-race or an inferior people with basic behavioral traits at odds with English standards of thought and conduct. Irish economic backwardness and the intermittent but unrelenting political, religious, and social agitation intensified notions of Irish racial differences and hardened the Victorian stereotype of the “wild, melancholic, violent, and feckless” Irish Celt. Nonetheless, even the environmental view contained negative stereotypes. Of course, these trends interacted in ambiguous and complicated ways.







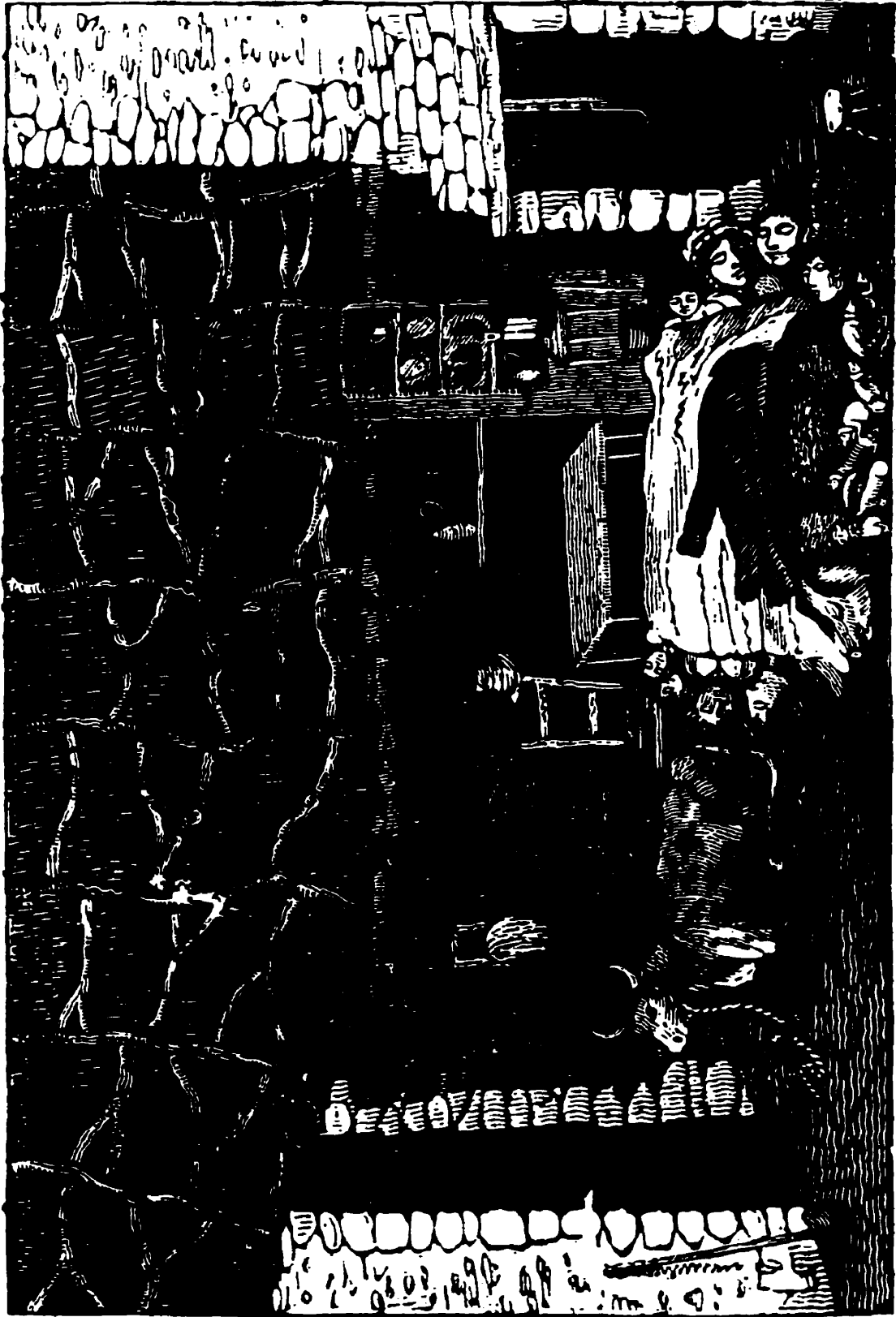




THE IRISH STREET-SELLER.

"Sweet Chany! Two a piny Or-r ranges—two a piny!"

[From a Daguerreotype by BLAND.]



Pat Answers, or Points of Irish Humour,



29 Dec! — Richard by Sea Creek stands ~

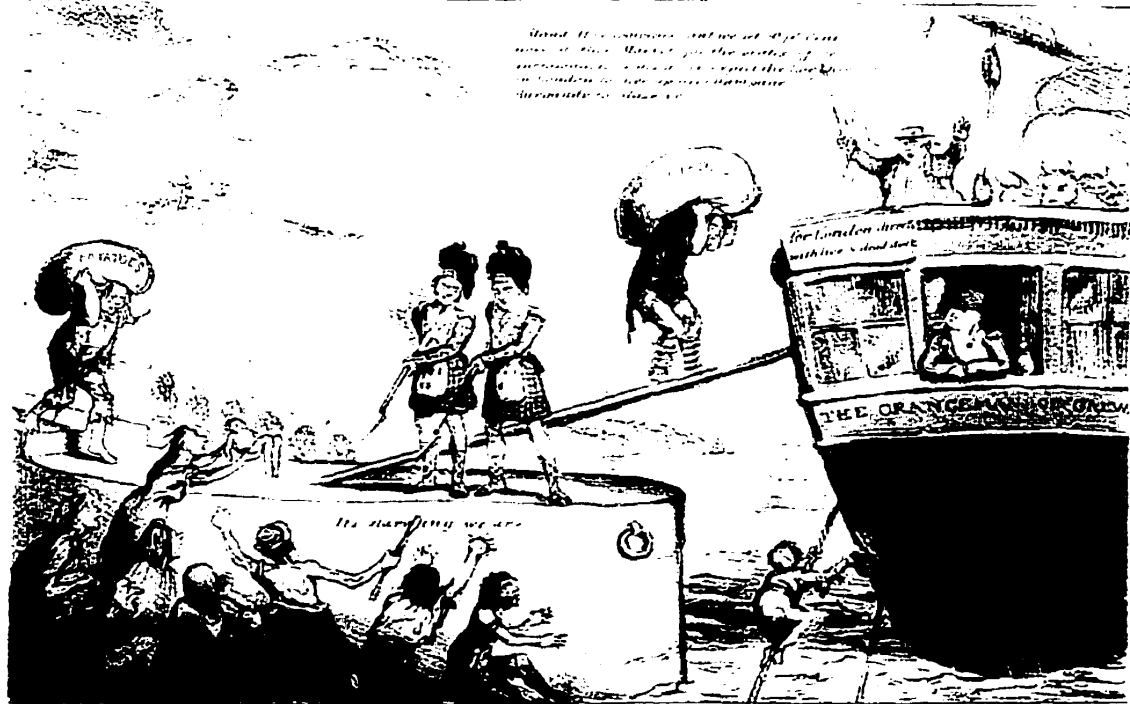
7. Printed by  
J. W. Smith of 2572 Washington St. S.W.,  
Seattle, Wash.

But my honest man Why let Even the Pig come in ?  
Why then Why not your honor' Is it there every convenience for a Pig ?

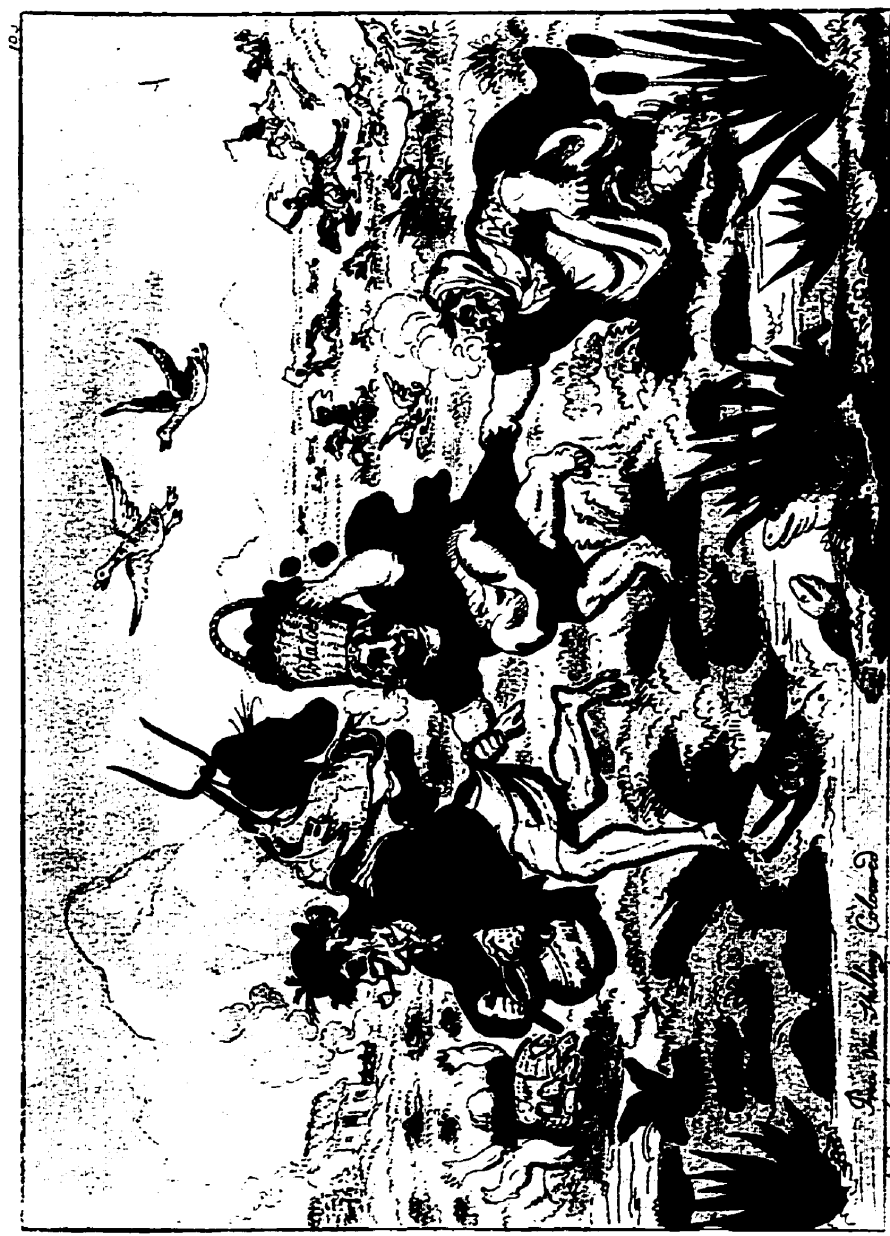
Going to School, and eating a Potatoe  
for his Breakfast.



MR. LEAN'S MONTHLY SHEET OF CARICATURES NO. 19.



IRELAND



IRISH BOTTLEDERS.

1847

## Chapter II– Section A

### British Art Trends and the Depiction of Poverty in Britain

In England, scenes of the urban and rural poor were not really common until after the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>60</sup> However, as the century wore on, the political and social concerns of the industrial age and the new democratic society were taken up by artists whose aim was to draw attention to the condition of the poor. For many British artists, like their continental counterparts, this change was more a shift in attitude than of style. About 1870 in England, a major shift in style occurred as a new generation of artists began to turn their attention to the grim depiction of contemporary poverty. The following section will explore the artistic trends and interrelationships between art and society that helped to form the pictorial representation and the contemporary assessment of the poor during the first half of the nineteenth-century in Britain. A consideration of these trends and customs will explain to some degree why pictorial depictions prior to the shift elicited so little real compassion for the poor.

Throughout the nineteenth-century, British art adhered to the broad trends of romanticism, realism, and symbolism, although it diverged from the grand design of European painting. Artists in Europe who followed the doctrines of realism attempted to adjust the historical preference for the grand and spectacular by depicting not just natural subjects but by choosing the humble and commonplace. However, in Britain, truth, sentiment, and beauty were the measure by which contemporaries judged Victorian art. And while the critical emphasis shifted, the constant standard centered on truth to nature, the propriety of the sentiment, and the public suitability of the work's moral content.

For the most part, portraiture, landscape, and genre painting dominated the British art market during the first half of the nineteenth-century. And although most artists and critics held high art or history painting in great esteem, the demand for paintings of a religious, military, or historic character was slight in England. Since Protestant churches in England were not open to the painter's art, there was little need or interest in large heroic pieces. There was, however, a notable demand for genre painting. Genre painting or narrative painting as it was sometimes known originated in seventeenth century

Holland and Belgium as artists chose to paint domestic scenes and contemporary life. Its popularity rose in part because of the tastes of a new group of wealthy collectors who emerged early in the century.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, British painters found that what suited the English taste most were cheerful and decorative pictures that might be enjoyed at home.

By 1850 nearly fifty major private galleries and societies in London exhibited contemporary art on a regular basis. Each year the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition unveiled between 1000 and 1200 new oil and watercolor paintings.<sup>62</sup> Admission to the Royal Academy conferred upon artists prestige, social acceptance, and celebrity. Artists were no longer considered craftsmen, and if successful, lived gentlemen's lives, acquired a professional status, and generally became wealthy. The public sale of engravings expanded patronage beyond educated aristocrats, although British copyright law did not protect nineteenth-century authors or artists from intellectual copyright piracy abroad.<sup>63</sup>

It was not uncommon for art critics to impugn English art even though it was well received by the public at large. Some British artists questioned whether their financial success was due more to a congruence in moral philosophy than in artistic conception and execution.<sup>64</sup> Edwin Landseer once said, "If people only knew as much about painting as I do they would never buy my pictures."<sup>65</sup> In 1844, Daniel Maclise wrote from Paris, "I feel that I could not mention a single name with full confidence, were I called upon to name one of our artists in comparison with one of theirs."<sup>66</sup> The bleak state of English artistic competence was repeatedly attributed to the stinginess and improper direction of English art patronage, especially its want of patronage for high art.

Like the great art patron, John Sheepshanks (1784-1863), a Leeds wool manufacturer, many collectors were middle-class businessmen whose industrial or commercial successes created great fortunes. Since patrons such as these often lacked a classical education, they generally preferred signed recognizable artwork by current

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<sup>60</sup> Howard David Rodee, *Scenes of Rural and Urban poverty in Victorian Painting and Their Development, 1850-1890* (New York: Columbia University Ph.D. Thesis, Fine Arts, 1975), ii.

<sup>61</sup> Julian Treuherz, *Victorian Painting* (London: Thames And Hudson, 1993), 33.

<sup>62</sup> Howard Rodee, *Scenes of Rural and Urban Poverty in Victorian Painting and Their Development, 1850-1890* (New York: Columbia University, Ph.D. Thesis, Fine Arts, 1975) vi.

<sup>63</sup> The new source of income was largely achieved in the eighteenth century due to the efforts of William Hogarth and the copyright law. Later known as the Hogarth Act, Hogarth promulgated the Act, and it passed into law in 1735.

<sup>64</sup> Paula Gillett, *The Victorian Painter's World* (Gloucester, England: Allan Sutton, 1990), 3.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

artists to Old Masters which were frequently forged at this time.<sup>67</sup> Their taste was defined by their middle-class evangelical values. Consequently, subject or genre paintings that espoused the merits of decency and respectability, hard work, home and family, piety, and self-improvement were highly desired by buyers. In addition to workmanship, detail, and finish, genre paintings were admired for their characterizations, stories, and moral lessons, similar to the great novels of Scott, Dickens, and Thackeray.

The injunctions, censure, or approbation expressed by the critical press in periodicals like the *Art Journal*, *The Art Union Magazine*, or the *Illustrated London News* inculcated moral messages and increased the appreciation and the appeal of genre painting. Besides the use of humor and the convention of the picturesque, described below, types were also important to understand. In 1862 a critic for the *Saturday Review* remarked:

We must literally read an incident-picture as we read a novel, if we wish to enjoy it and do it justice. We must throw ourselves into the plot of the painter as into that of the novelist, and gradually learn his characters as the incidents come upon us one after another.<sup>68</sup>

During the first half of the century, genre painting assumed a variety of different styles. Paintings ranged in style from a mawkish sentimentalism inspired in part by the notion of the picturesque to a relative realism, although much variation existed. However, the sentimentality that ran through much of Victorian art had a strong religious component also. Empathy with another's sufferings was virtuous, a means of becoming a better Christian. In his book on Victorian painting, Kenneth Bendiner noted that "numerous Victorian sermons described the surrender to pathetic emotions as a Christian act. To feel other's sadness and to weep like a child was to be reborn, and made innocent again."<sup>69</sup>

Paintings on the subject of poverty were made more acceptable by the idea and pleasure of the "picturesque," a style that dictated the manner in which the poor were portrayed and was utilized from its conception well into the last third of the nineteenth-

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>68</sup> Mary Cowling, *The Artist As Anthropologist. The Representation of Type and Character in Victorian Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 2.

<sup>69</sup> Kenneth Bendiner, *An Introduction To Victorian Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 22.

century.<sup>70</sup> The theory of the “picturesque” can be traced to the earlier concept of the “sublime” introduced in 1650 in the paintings of the Italian artist Salvator Rosa, but was formally presented by Edmund Burke in his *Inquiry into the origin of our ideas on the Sublime and Beautiful* in 1756. The idea of the picturesque was developed by the Reverend William Gilpin whose various tracts published between 1769-1808 defined its rules. According to Gilpin who was also an artist, the sublime and the beautiful were not achievable pursuits for painters, because of their interdependent relationship.<sup>71</sup> Often used interchangeably, the theories stressed the importance of isolation and idealization, attributes especially characteristic of Irish landscape painting. Gilpin’s theory of the picturesque “valued asymmetry, irregularity and uneven texture more than balance, harmony and smoothness.”<sup>72</sup> As the pleasure of the picturesque grew, a significant change occurred in painting as it released the artist from the limits of place and reality. Often such paintings presented a prettified representation of a subject or scene.

An 1861 definition of the “pleasure” of the picturesque given by William Bell Scott to his senior students at Newcastle clarifies how artists applied the theory in the nineteenth century.

The pleasure it gives is not so much a natural as an artificial or simply artistic one; it is only when painted that we learn to admire those conditions of nature that are picturesque...Whatever we would consider undesirable as a personal adjunct or condition, that is what the picturesque painter for the most part covets for his canvas...beggary is the most picturesque condition of social life.<sup>73</sup>

In fact, paintings, engravings, and literature pictured in this manner presented a method of “containing and distancing,” as Sheila Smith puts it, the threatening appearance of the poor. And, it is not surprising that artists rarely made overt political or social statements in paintings since such commentary could easily place them in a more vulnerable economic position. In her article on images of the urban poor in Victorian literature and art, Smith suggests that:

The picturesque was a ready method for an artist or a writer who did not want to

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<sup>70</sup> At which point realism overcame this convention is debated. Certainly, the subjects chosen after the shift to social realism were more commonly of a direct nature.

<sup>71</sup> Colleen Margaret Dube, ‘Enabling Institutions’ and Disabling Illustrations: Images of Connemara in Tourist Handbooks 1850-1880. Thesis 1994, University College, Galway, 34.

<sup>72</sup> Julian Treuherz, *Victorian Painting*, 66.

<sup>73</sup> Ira Bruce Nadel and F. S. Schwarzbach, eds. “‘Savages and Martyrs’: Images of the Urban Poor in Victorian Literature and Art” in *Victorian Artists and the City* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1980), 17.

alienate his public by his depiction of the Other Nation, for it not only enabled the spectator or reader to contemplate the poverty which he preferred to ignore in real life but also gave him pleasure.<sup>74</sup>

In the late eighteenth century, the convention of the picturesque was primarily used in landscape painting. Subject or genre paintings in the picturesque style were not as common until the next century.

William Hogarth's (1697-1762) harsh and penetrating satirical portraits of the English high and low life established a momentous tradition and were considered the forerunners of the critical depiction of Victorian society. That his subjects and style were conceived before the idea of the picturesque became popular is probably an important factor in his achievement. Thus, due in part to the influence of Hogarth, the position of realism in the graphic arts in England in 1801 was akin to its position in poetry, popular with the middle classes but condemned by critics as "ugly and trivial."<sup>75</sup> The great British Romantic painters who followed, Gainsborough, Reynolds, Constable, and Turner, did not follow Hogarth's lead and turned instead to a picturesque and romantic vision of landscape and portraiture.

An important trend in the depiction of the poor in landscape painting is noted in John Barrell's landmark study, *The Dark Side of the Landscape* (1980). Barrell observes that a basic rule of landscape composition placed the dwellings of the rich in full light and those of the poor in shadow--on the "dark side of the landscape." He suggests that a demand for realism necessitated peasants in a landscape while capitalistic morality dictated a prescriptive image, that they be at work and not idle. At this time, industry was not only recognized as the chief virtue a poor man could display, but it was also understood that in artistic representation, the poor must be shown as industrious, with few exceptions.<sup>76</sup> Idyllic pastoral scenes also demanded observable stability and order. The work of Gainsborough (1727-1788), George Morland (1763-1803), and John Constable (1776-1837) can be seen as part of this tradition.

As time progressed, paternalism gave way to the "new" economic individualism and rustics became more and more ragged yet consistently cheerful. How the poor were

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Carl Woodring, *Nature into Art. Cultural Transformation in Nineteenth-century Britain* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 114.

<sup>76</sup> John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape* (Cambridge, England: University of Cambridge Press, 1980), 21.

portrayed was extremely important. According to Barrell, in the mid-eighteenth century the poor are depicted pleasantly at work since work was considered an agreeable social activity. At the end of the century, they are portrayed cheerfully in the middle ground where their labor but not their resentment can be seen. However, when figures were placed in the foreground, the poor could be uncomfortably close especially in Morland's compositions. Morland turns out to be somewhat of a rebel in this tradition. His peasants, especially in *The Alehouse Door* (1792) (Figure 1) painted shortly before the war with France, present a spirit of independence and liberty, seen by some as "insolence in peace" and by others as "bravery in war."<sup>77</sup>

Gainsborough and Constable's paintings naturalized the poverty of the poor and represented it as a fixed reality of the political economy. Theirs was a Georgic portrayal of the poor, a connection of toil and virtue. But as capitalism replaced paternalism, there was a need to convey to the poor the importance of their industry, and its eventual rewards

Barrell argues that Constable cannot help but divulge the rural life of the poor in *The Hay Wain* (1821), *A View of Salisbury Cathedral* (c.1823) (Figure 2), and *The Cornfield* (1826). His laborers are drawn as serfs living in a pleasant and almost comfortable relationship within the natural world. Social harmony of this sort is in reality social division concealed within the boundaries of line, form, and paint.<sup>78</sup> Yet Morland's interpretation of the poor in *The Cottage Door* (Figure 1-a), *The Harvest Waggon*, *Return From Market*, *Haymaker and the Sleeping Girl*, and the *Woodsman* all seem to evoke the artist's keenly felt awareness that the common folk were the victims of injustice despite idealization: ragged clothes on rounded, seemingly well-fed, pink-cheeked children, mothers, and swains. Although some critics take Morland's paintings as a branch of the picturesque, Carl Woodring maintains that in Morland's time, his paintings

were thought to be disturbingly faithful to a loutishness with which his own habits made him familiar. His figures expressed the vulgar and coarse manners of the lowest part of society, and [his work] was an intermediate stage on the way from grandeur to ash-can realism.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 113

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 104

<sup>79</sup> Carl Woodring, *Nature into Art: Cultural Transformations in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 114.

An example of the Romantic image of poverty is captured in *Coalbrookdale by Night* (1801) (Figure 3) by Philip de Loutherbourg (1746-1812). The painting shows the town of Coalbrookdale in Shropshire, the cradle of the iron industry, and suggests the sublime in the Romantic sense and the alarm of the Industrial Revolution. A fiery glare symbolizes Hell, while a woman and child stand aside from excavations, which have literally shoved aside homes to make room for the foundry. The dramatic lighting and colors, beautiful imagery, and symbolic representation of the both the foundry and the dislocation, which it caused, are in the typically romantic sphere.

Although the roots of Victorian genre painting and the artistic treatment of the poor can be traced to Hogarth, Morland, Singleton, and Allan, in the early nineteenth-century, Sir David Wilkie (1785-1841) of Scotland and William Mulready (1786-1863) of Ireland became highly acclaimed in this class of art. Wilkie, one of the few artists to paint Irish subjects, was most famous for his themes of character, celebration, and incident drawn from the domestic life of the Scottish peasantry such as *The Blind Fiddler* (1806), *The Village Festival* (1811), and *The Penny Wedding* (1818) (Figure 1-b).

At this time, it was customary for artists to invent the incidents that they painted.<sup>80</sup> Mulready and Wilkie did this, and both, as was the custom, painted the lower classes using high-born models dressed in suitably ragged, purchased clothing. The use of Sir Walter Scott's family as models for peasants in *The Penny Wedding*, exhibited in 1818 and engraved in 1837, is an example of this occurrence.<sup>81</sup> The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood often used family and friends as models. John Everett Millais took great care to ensure a realistic scene in *Christ in the House of His Parents* (Chapter III, Figure 1) The picture was actually painted in the shop of a carpenter, and the artist's father was the model for the Joseph's face.<sup>82</sup>

Lindsay Errington has noted that Wilkie's 1835 visit to Ireland and his pictures on Irish themes such as *The Irish Whiskey Still* and *The Peep-o-Day Boy's Cabin* (Figure 1-c) may have helped bring Ireland into fashion as a place for artists to visit on the touring painter's circuit of countries. Maria Edgeworth, who enticed Wilkie to paint Irish subjects, noted that in *The Peep-o-Day Boy's Cabin* (1835-6) he needed "more negligence, more

<sup>80</sup> Richard and Samuel Redgrave, *A Century of British Painters* (London: Phaidon Press, Ltd., 1947), 301.

<sup>81</sup> Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower, *Sir David Wilkie* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1902), 50.

<sup>82</sup> Thomas Prideau, *The World of Whistler* (New York: Time Life Books, 1970), 70.

slovenliness, more recklessness in the costume.”<sup>83</sup> More convenient than Europe, Ireland was still “picturesquely backward” and as spectacularly beautiful as Spain, Italy, the Alps, and North Africa. Wilkie later toured the Holy Land and similarly set that example for later artists such as Hunt and Goodall. However, critics cautioned artists against returning from touring visits to Ireland with examples of anything squalid, although the “touching, colorful, or quaint” found approval.<sup>84</sup> An 1847 comment from the *Art Union* praised R. B. Scanlan for his painting, *The Irish Mother*, because:

although he has here portrayed a mother and child of the humblest class, he has not thought it necessary to picture misery or to degrade the Irish character by any touch of that vulgarity not unfrequently introduced into Irish pictures... It is a passage of poetry no the less valuable because it is homely and perfectly natural.<sup>85</sup>

Paintings of rural life and of poor children roaming the backwoods in search of food and work were not uncommon in the first half of the century. Paul Falconer Poole's (1810-1879) painting *The Heath Belle* (1831) (Figure 4) displays a gentle and lyric quality. In *Rustic Civility* (1832) (Figure 5) by William Collins (1788-1847), three poor children in ragged and torn clothing have tossed aside their bundle of firewood to open a gate for a rider, presumably the lord of the estate, who we see only by his shadow which falls across the road. The scene hardly indicates that agricultural riots or stack burnings that were prevalent during this decade could take place here. *The Stonebreaker and His Daughter* (1830) (Figure 6) painted by Sir Edwin Landseer (1802-1873) shows an old Highlander resting, exhausted from his labor. His daughter has brought him a meal in a basket. In the background, smoke drifts up from the crofter's cottage alluding to the moral theme of contented domesticity in spite of rural poverty, a state which Robert Burns praised in poetry.

Stonebreaking, necessary for the new macadam roadways that were being built throughout Britain, was one of the lowest and worst paid positions in society. In the 1820's and 1830's, during the age of William Cobbett, machine breaking, the Swing riots and the Reform Bill, Landseer often painted sentimental scenes of poverty and distress,

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<sup>83</sup> Ann Crookshank, *The Watercolors of Ireland*, 178.

<sup>84</sup> Lindsay Errington, *Social and Religious Themes in English Art, 1840-1860* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1984).

191.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

although he was best known for his pictures of animals and genre. However, pictures of social and economic agitation were not depicted.

As charity became institutionalized in 1834, pictures of individual acts of compassion began to disappear. Paintings on this theme in the early 1840's indicate a concern for the problem, although the subject was rarely approached head on. *Charity* (c. 1840) (Figure 7) attributed to Frank Stone (1800-1859) and Charles West Cope's (1811-1890) *Poor Law Guardians--Board day application for bread* (1841) (Figure 8) are two of very few paintings in this category. *Charity* shows two rich women with a servant bringing food to an impoverished family. This watercolor probably corresponds to the District Visiting movement which increased in size in the 1820's and 1830's. Blackwood's Magazine may have had *Charity* and Mulready's *Train Up A Child* in mind when it ridiculed certain subject pictures in 1848:

Go where you will, you will see specimens of the style--mawkish sentimentality, Goody Families, Benevolent Visitors, Teaching children. There is nothing more detestable than these milk-and-water affectations of human kindness; all the personages are fools, and as far as their little senses will let them, hypocrites.<sup>86</sup>

The cleanliness of the cottage in *Charity* is more faithful to the tradition of Dutch genre interiors than to a realistic portrayal of the poor in the 1840's. The cottagers seem not only well fed and happy, but show proper deference toward the visitors. The beauty of the lady visitors and the folds and design of their dresses are the artist's focal point, while the family's simple clothes and frugal surroundings are shown in stark contrast.

Cope's painting *Poor Law Guardians* was exhibited in the spring of 1841.<sup>87</sup> The picture, also reminiscent of Wilkie, commanded a great deal of attention at the Royal Academy and was praised by the *Art Union* magazine and the *Times* for its artistic excellence and noble subject. But its theme, a negative comment on the New Poor Law, was not to the public's taste. Despite the positive reviews and the public success of the picture, Cope never sold the painting. Thoroughly discouraged, Cope abandoned this type of subject.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Treuherz, *Hard Times*, 17. Dickens also mocked ladies societies in *Sketches by Boz* in 1839 as well as in *Bleak House* in 1853.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

The social problems of the cities became glaringly apparent as the decade continued in England. Chartist agitation, poverty, and the Irish Famine exacerbated the condition of the already stressed poor and working classes. While questions of employment, wages, and severe destitution were issues of constant public concern, Richard Redgrave (1804-1888) and George Frederick Watts (1817-1904), men of deep humanitarian sympathies found new points of reference not so much in direct adaptations from contemporary life but in literature, poetry, or earlier artistic iconographic images. Pictures based on popular literature or poetry were likely to be more saleable and have a wider appeal. For example, Redgrave's *The Sempstress* (Figure 9) shown at the Academy in 1844 was inspired by Thomas Hood's poem, *The Song of the Shirt*, which appeared in the Christmas issue of *Punch* in 1843.<sup>89</sup> Redgrave's inclusion of a quotation from Hood's poem in the Academy's catalogue documents the connection.<sup>90</sup>

The popularity of both *The Sempstress* and Hood's poem *The Song of the Shirt* combined to create an iconographic form that became the most commonly depicted social realist subject in Victorian painting,<sup>91</sup> and was known to have aroused the concern of the public to the exploitation of seamstresses in the clothing trade. *The Sempstress*, similar to all of Redgrave's socially conscious subjects, depicts an indigent defenseless woman at the mercy of a cruel society. The artist's choice of subject, the composition's symbolism and iconographic style struck a chord. Redgrave had created a visual type. And although Thackeray and others thought the painting was "namby pamby" and "would be relished by all lovers of bourgeois pathos," Redgrave's sentimentality was the result of ingrained personal feeling.<sup>92</sup> His quiet sweetness and sentimentality was more akin to public taste than to that of the critics. The English public's sympathy for its own industrious lower classes was genuine. Pictures of Irish poverty could not engender the same response.

Redgrave was one of the first Victorian artists to declare his role as a painter of social themes:

It is one of my most gratifying feelings, that many of my best efforts in art have

<sup>89</sup> Treuherz, *Hard Times*, 24. With fingers weary and worn, With eyelids heavy and red, A woman sat in unwomanly rags, Plying her needle and thread—Stitch! Stitch! Stitch! In poverty, hunger and dirt, And still with a voice of dolorous pitch, She sang the song of the shirt.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. Oh men with sisters dear, Oh men with mothers and wives, It is not linen you're wearing out, But human creatures' lives.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Errington, *Social and Religious Themes*, 94.

aimed at calling attention to the trials and struggles of the poor and oppressed. In the *Reduced Gentleman's Daughter*, *The Poor Teacher*, *The Sempstress*, *Fashion's Slaves*, and other works, I have had in view 'helping them... who suffer wrong' at the hands of their fellow men.<sup>93</sup>

Although Redgrave and Watts painted exceptional pictures with humanitarian themes and neither artist painted very many, Redgrave's paintings were acclaimed and sold. Watt's Irish subjects were not even exhibited.

Sweated female labor was a subject which *Punch* could not resist. It too took up the subject in 1849 in the engravings *Needle Money* (Figure 10) and *Pin Money* (Figure 11) drawn by John Leech. These engravings may well have been part of the commotion to which the *ILN* news reporter referred in his article on eviction in Ireland on December 15, 1849. (See Chapter IV, Section D, *ILN* "Condition of Ireland. Illustrations of the New Poor-Law").

The deep sense of tragedy that G. F. Watts's *The Irish Famine* (1849-50) (Figure 12) displays, contrasts starkly with the prettily painted details of Redgrave's paintings. Watts based four of his modern life subjects upon poems. *Found Drowned* and *Under A Dry Arch* may have been based on Hood's *Bridge of Sighs* or perhaps on Leech's engraving for *The Chimes*; the *Sempstress* was probably based upon Hood's *Song of the Shirt*. *The Irish Famine*, was clearly based on Aubrey De Vere's poem, *The Year of Sorrow*. Although conjectures have been made as to why these paintings were not exhibited or followed by anything similar, he may simply have found this artistic direction not to his taste.<sup>94</sup> *The Irish Famine* will be discussed more completely in the next section.

By mid-century, pathetic images of the poor similar to William Daniels' *Two Children Selling Matches* (1851) (Figure 13) became popular. In Daniels' picture, the children comfort each other posed against a wall in picturesque but well-fitting rags. It is night and the scene is dramatically lit. Although the children appear well fed and clean, their eyes are raised to heaven and their expressions crave pity. Paintings like this, which were clearly staged and melodramatic oversimplified and diminished the difficulties of the poor. As Mayhew noted: "the clothing of the street-children, however it may

<sup>93</sup> *The Art Journal*, February 1850, 49.

<sup>94</sup> Errington, *Social and Religious Themes*, 182.

vary...has one pervading characteristic--it is never made for the wearers.”<sup>95</sup> “The worst particular of these girls’ appearance, is their foul and matted hair, and the broken and filthy boots...which they seem never to button or to garter.”<sup>96</sup> In fact, the match-girl’s tears in Daniels’ painting are quite out of character also. As the eight-year old Watercress Girl told Mayhew, “I bears the cold--you must... No; I never see any children crying—it’s no use.”<sup>97</sup>

Although fine art had the potential to impart a far stronger statement than satirical art, at mid-century the “condition of England question” was infrequently addressed in the fine arts, and when it was, diplomacy blended into distortion.

### Irish Art Trends

The preceding attempts to explain British art trends affecting the first half of the nineteenth-century...But what of Irish art trends of the same period? Prior to discussing this, we should look briefly at the life of William Mulready, for his career lends insight into both the Victorian art world and the life of an Irish artist.

Mulready’s life is typical of Irish artists’ lives in many respects. He lived in London as did many other Irish artists who found their careers blossomed as they met and socialized with other artists and Academy members, for London was the center of the art world for much of the nineteenth-century. Mulready’s reliance on patronage and his conformance to the dictates of English taste was also a common feature of being Irish in England. He was born into a poor Irish Catholic family, the son of a leather-breeches maker in Ennis, County Clare, Ireland in 1786. William was raised in London from the age of five and spent most of his life there. He never traveled abroad or returned to Ireland. As a youth, Mulready showed early artistic ability and was encouraged to apply to the Royal Academy Schools to prepare for a profession in painting. Once accepted, he achieved early fame as a draftsman in the Academy Schools. If Mulready’s humble Catholic beginnings were not perhaps typical of other British artists, his election to the Royal Academy and his life thereafter was more so.

In 1803, Mulready married Elizabeth Varley, the daughter of the watercolorist, John Varley, but after seven years of marriage and four sons, the couple formally

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<sup>95</sup> Henry Mayhew, *London Labour And The London Poor* (London: The Morning Chronicle, 1862): reprint, selections, Victor Neuburg, ed. London: Penguin Books, 1987) 180.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. 181.

separated. Mulready feared that rumors of his marital difficulties might jeopardize his chances for acceptance into the Royal Academy. Apparently Mulready's reputation and career survived unaffected, despite a report that circulated at the Academy on the subject of his moral character;<sup>98</sup> for in 1816, at age 29, Mulready was elected to the Royal Academy. An explanation of some of the couples' difficulties has survived in a letter composed by Elizabeth Mulready, written many years after their separation. In it, Elizabeth threatens legal action and suicide, bitterly complaining of Mulready's abuse, violence, homosexual and heterosexual improprieties.<sup>99</sup>

In fact, the Academy's appraisal and acceptance of Mulready under the circumstances illuminates some of the political, social, and moral requirements of Academy recognition. Mulready himself noted this, when he informed John Linnell that "it would be better for him and his chances of preferment if he made himself a little more of the courtier and paid more attention to his dress, general appearance, etc." Then pointing to a spot of mud upon his cloak, he said: "That is what stood in the way of your election more than anything else."<sup>100</sup> Although family problems troubled Mulready throughout his life, they did not overwhelm it.

Mulready's career like many other artists of the period was supported by a few loyal and generous patrons. Mulready's principal patrons were Sir John Edward Swinburne, Bart., John Sheepshanks, Robert Vernon, and Thomas Baring. Swinburne, who supported many other artists besides Mulready, was also a Catholic and a friend of the artist. Besides buying Mulready's paintings, Sir John hired Mulready to teach his daughters, as well as to paint portraits of family members. Sir John and Mulready became such close friends that the artist spent many summers at the family home. Swinburne probably introduced Mulready to a broad circle of Whigs, many of whom bought his paintings.

Fortunately for Mulready, teaching, painting sales, and the generosity of his patrons essentially allowed him to live a modest upper middle class life, achieve financial security, and to paint whatever he wished. Mulready generally chose not to associate with

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<sup>97</sup> Treuherz, *Hard Times*, 24.

<sup>98</sup> Kathryn Moore Heleniak, *William Mulready. Studies in British Art*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980), 13, 231.

<sup>99</sup> Pointon, *Mulready*, 60.

<sup>100</sup> Heleniak, *Mulready*, 231.

dealers or to copy former subjects at the request of a patron. Had he allied with dealers, he could have become financially independent as did other artists. When requested by Prince Albert to copy his famous painting, *Choosing The Wedding Gown*, from the *Vicar of Wakefield*, he declined, saying that a copy “would be unworthy of the Prince’s Collection.”<sup>101</sup>

It was well known that Mulready was sensitive about his Irish Catholic background. But, like many other artists of his time, Mulready seemed to understand the importance of acceptability in life and in art. Public taste dictated which paintings sold and which did not. It is hardly surprising that Mulready avoided Irish subjects likely to reap commercial failure and critical scorn when *Returning from the Ale House* (1809), *The Convalescent from Waterloo* (1822), and *The Widow* (1823) all failed to find buyers because of unpopular, unsuitable, unhappy or painful themes.<sup>102</sup> And it is interesting that Wilkie and not Mulready painted the *Irish Whiskey Still*. For him to do so would have declared an affiliation with Ireland that Mulready evidently wished to avoid. As an artist, an Irish Catholic immigrant, as an estranged husband, and the son of a poor craftsman, Mulready’s Irish background was not something he could capitalize on as did Wilkie. And although Mulready professed his faith throughout his life, he left instructions that his funeral be arranged according to Anglican rites.

Perhaps, the final blow was the fiasco over the Mulready postal envelope (1839) (Figure 14). Mulready was commissioned to design the first pre-paid postage envelope. A few days after its issue, Mulready’s design was “abused and ridiculed on all sides”<sup>103</sup> as pretentious, ridiculous, and exclusive. The envelope was almost immediately withdrawn. In departing from the former “Lion and Unicorn” motif and attempting to instill a taste for fine art, the Post Office provoked a storm of public scorn and a focus for anti-Irish resentment, much of it directed at Mulready. Caricatures of the design featured blarney stones, an artist called “Moll Rooney,” anti-Papal narratives, and other anti-Irish publicity. It was no wonder that Mulready, extremely distressed by this turn of events, was highly sensitive on the subject of his Irish background and maintained tight control over his personal life and canvases.

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 261.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 169.

<sup>103</sup> Poynton, *Mulready*, 131.

Paintings like William Mulready's (1786-1863) *Train Up A Child* (1841) (Figure 15), a picture of two women teaching a child to give alms (pictorially an acceptable form of beggary), and *Choosing The Wedding Gown* (1844) a popular subject from the *Vicar of Wakefield* were applauded for their grace and beauty. Although Mulready's paintings have been described as attractive and technically competent, and occasionally superficial, most deal with a hidden text, an intermingling of Mulready's life and work. The complete title *Train Up A Child in the Way He Should Go; and When He Is Old He Will Not Depart from It* (Proverbs) is at first a moral lesson illustrating the importance of training children for their future in the avoidance of poverty. But it also addresses the importance of charity. The beggars in the picture are Lascars, native sailors from India. Hired for the trip home by the East India Company to replace British sailors who died from war or disease, the vagrancy and suffering of these East Indiamen in the cold English winter drew the attention of the *Times*.<sup>104</sup> Heleniak suggests that Mulready is "re-enacting the myth of British Imperial beneficence, but on English rural soil."<sup>105</sup> Marcia Pointon submits that based on the articles in the *Times*, Mulready connected the plight of the Lascars with the homelessness and suffering of the Irish poor, especially when one considers "the profound ambivalence that the painting displays, the way in which it encourages misrecognition of its subject, [and] the way in which it neutralises the topical and the political by assimilating it into an essentially literary field."<sup>106</sup> The issues of race and power become subtle subtexts under those of education and charity. Having been publicly ridiculed and mortified by the failure of the postal envelope, Mulready dared do no more.

Called 'the picture of the year,' *Choosing the Wedding Gown* (Figure 16) caused a great sensation when it was first exhibited. Besides its brilliance in colour and delicacy in technique, the painting was acclaimed for the exquisite "narrative effect seen through a sequence of controlled looks and gestures."<sup>107</sup> Subjects on literary themes were highly

<sup>104</sup> On October 5, 1838, the *Times* noted the plight of the Lascars in a report on the police break-up of a mob of several thousand people congregated to observe their unfamiliar burial rites. On October 8, 1838, an Episcopalian clergyman whose church was in the area where the rites had taken place wrote to the *Times* to point out that the dissenters and poor Irish papists who swarmed the same vicinity were also unprovided for by the small chapel of which he was rector. On December 10, 1841, the *Times* reported a worsening of conditions of the Asiatic crews of the East Indiamen in the docks as they suffered from insufficient clothing, provisions, and accommodations. The Lascars were increasing the already severe problem of vagrancy, which included many Irish Catholics.

<sup>105</sup> Kathryn Heleniak, *William Mulready* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 100.

<sup>106</sup> Marcia Pointon, *William Mulready: 1786-1863* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1986), 121-126.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.* 159.

popular, but despite the success of this painting and the *Whistonian Controversy* (1844) also from the *Vicar of Wakefield*, Mulready found book illustration regressive, not an advancement in his art.<sup>108</sup>

Well cognizant of the presence of Irish prejudice, Mulready avoided depicting the convulsive changes that characterized his own urban settings or those in Ireland. Mulready's notes reveal what he believed could be painted:

Almost any subject matter may be raised into importance by truth and beauty of light and shade and colours with an ostentatious mastery of execution. The higher qualities of art, beautiful form, character and expression are chatted about not felt or understood, but by very few. Expression, if strong, or character bordering on caricature are recognised by the people. Female beauty and innocence will be much talked about and sell well. Let it be covertly exciting, its material flesh and blood approaching a sensual existence and it will be talked more about and sell much better, well in the first state, doubly well in the second, but let excitement appear to be the object and the hypocrites will shout and scream and scare away the sensuality, the birds that would be pecking: when the scarecrow hypocrisy is silent, some blessed watchful crow will bear the fruit to his quiet parsonage.<sup>109</sup>

Artistically, Mulready was not a risk-taker, nor was his output prolific. He would tamper with his style, redraw compositions and redefine colors before committing to a final painting.<sup>110</sup> Mulready's rustic scenes, brilliant palette, high color, and personally innovative approach to established themes, landscape or genre, inspired younger artists, notably the Pre-Raphaelites. In general, Mulready's paintings were not particularly contemporary. His rustic children displayed a sweetness and sentimentality common in England to the 1820's and 1830's, while his later work completed during the famine years developed literary, nude, and courtship themes exhibiting a timeless quality. By the late 1840's, Mulready's long interest in life drawing turned to the controversial theme of women bathing. Despite the disapproval of critics like Ruskin and Thackeray, who opposed nudity in art on general principles, Mulready's career culminated in the ancient, classical, and modern French tradition of the nude.

In accordance with a colonial rather than a creative agenda, Irish landscape painting emerged from a tradition of topographical paintings where property was depicted rather than peasants. Stylistically, Irish landscape paintings followed the

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid. 136.

<sup>109</sup> From William Mulready's Notebook in Pointon, *Mulready*, 92.

<sup>110</sup> Heinen, *Mulready*, 179.

aesthetic and technical conventions that developed in Europe in the seventeenth century, but symbolically the topographical tradition formed a pattern of disdain for the Irish peasantry, a pattern entrenched in topographical paintings and commented on as early as the twelfth century by Giraldus Cambrensis (1146-1223).<sup>111</sup> In his *History and Topography of Ireland*, Cambrensis commended the Irish landscape, but criticized the indolence of the native Irish.<sup>112</sup> While Giraldus Cambrensis maligned the Irish customs and traditions, Edmund Spenser (c. 1552-1599) attempted to obliterate them.<sup>113</sup>

By the 1750's, Irish landscape painting began to develop beyond the needs of ownership and the limitations of topography. Edmund Spenser's famous recommendations to "cut," "cleanse," and "scrape away the foul mass" of Irish peasantry in his *View of the Present State of Ireland* (1596), was visually achieved by the first generation of landscape artists who either relegated the peasantry to the "dark side of the landscape" or eliminated them altogether. In eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Ireland, landscapes in which visualizations of feelings were paramount rarely included figures. When figures do appear, they are either wayfarers communing with nature or peasants battling against it. The landed class, however, is shown, as "mastering nature, while the peasantry is mastered or marginalized by it."<sup>114</sup> By comparison, figures in contemporaneous English landscape paintings were generally much larger, holding a distinct although subservient function.

Although Nathaniel Grogan (1740-1807) was primarily a landscapist and followed the course stated above, he was also known for his peasant scenes. Few of these paintings still exist, however. Two that are extant are *The Itinerant Preacher* and *The Wake* (Figures 17 and 18). Both paintings harshly satirize the lives and homes of the Irish country folk, and their odd expressions, dark rooms and thatched roofs are reminiscent of the Dutch style. Grogan is best known for his landscape, *Boats in the River Lee below Tivoli, Co. Cork*, (Figure 19) conventional in its romantic scenery.

<sup>111</sup> Colleen Margaret Dube, *Enabling Institutions and Disabling Illustrations: Images of Connemara in Tourist Handbooks 1850-1990*. Thesis 1994, University College, Galway, 19.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 20. Spenser recommended that the native Irish peasantry, "like the wild parts of the landscape, had to be 'cut away' with a strong hand before any good can be planted...and the foul mass cleansed or scraped away, before the tree can bring forth any good fruit."

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 30

Like painters in England, Irish painters also fell under the influence of theories of the “sublime” and the “picturesque.” The paintings of James Arthur O’Connor (1792-1841), George Petrie (1789-1866), and Francis Danby (1793-1861) illustrate the stylistic stages in Irish landscape painting, the topographical, sublime, picturesque, and romantic. It is not known if O’Connor, the son of a Dublin printseller and engraver with little means, attended the Dublin Society Schools where Petrie and Danby were trained.<sup>115</sup> But, we are aware that the three friends visited London in 1813 to view the Royal Academy exhibition. Only Petrie returned permanently to live and work in Ireland. *The Grounds, Ballinrobe House, Co. Mayo* (Figure 20) (c.1818) by James O’Connor is a continuation of the “property portraits” favored with patrons such as Lord Sligo and Lord Clanricarde for whom O’Connor painted. George Petrie’s paintings, *Twelve Pins*, a romanticization of the Connemara region (1831) (Figure 21) and *Gougane Bara, Co. Cork* (Figure 22) illustrate the public’s preference for sublime and romanticized images of Ireland. *The Last Circuit of Pilgrims at Clonmacnoise* (Figure 23) (1828) depicts the monastic site with its ancient crosses and ruined round towers destroyed during the reformation. The pilgrims visit on “Pattern Day” to celebrate the feast day of Saint Ciaran, (d.545 A.D.) and “emerge, as if from graves, to signal the destruction of the culture of Celtic Ireland.”<sup>116</sup> Thackeray, whose disdain for the Irish peasantry is well known, not surprisingly saw Petrie’s drawings as “exceedingly beautiful, and, above all, trustworthy: no common quality in a descriptive artist at present.”<sup>117</sup>

Francis Danby became one of the principal Irish exponents of romantic landscape painting. His interest in genre led him to people his landscapes with figures, even though his imaginary landscapes are atmospheric and sometimes Turneresque. Although Danby achieved recognition as an A.R.A. in 1825, his career took a downward turn, and in 1829 he fled to Paris to escape creditors and scandal. Despite his past difficulties in England, Danby returned to London in 1838, for to Danby, “Ireland [was] a desert without an interest.”<sup>118</sup> Danby’s *View Near Killarney* (c. 1817) (Figure 24) is typical of his style. The painting’s highly romantic mood is expressed in the depiction of a brooding lake and distant mountains. In the foreground, two tiny shepherds on the “dark side of the

<sup>115</sup> Anne Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, *The Watercolors of Ireland* (London: Barne & Jenkins, 1994), 157.

<sup>116</sup> Kennedy, *Irish Painting*, 18.

<sup>117</sup> Crookshank and Glin, *Watercolors of Ireland*, 163.

landscape," wave their flock downwards, high above the valley floor.

Between 1700 and 1850, Irish landscape painting developed from topographical depiction into landscapes characterized by the romantic and the ideal. Nineteenth-century Irish landscape artists painted romanticized pictures of unpopulated picturesque districts in which the colonial desire to disconnect the Irish peasantry from the landscape persisted. Yet, it is significant to note that in the decades prior to the Great Famine in Ireland, when population density and destitution was nearing its zenith, isolation and idealization painstakingly characterized Irish landscapes at the same time that poverty in the painter's tradition was considered the most picturesque circumstance imaginable.

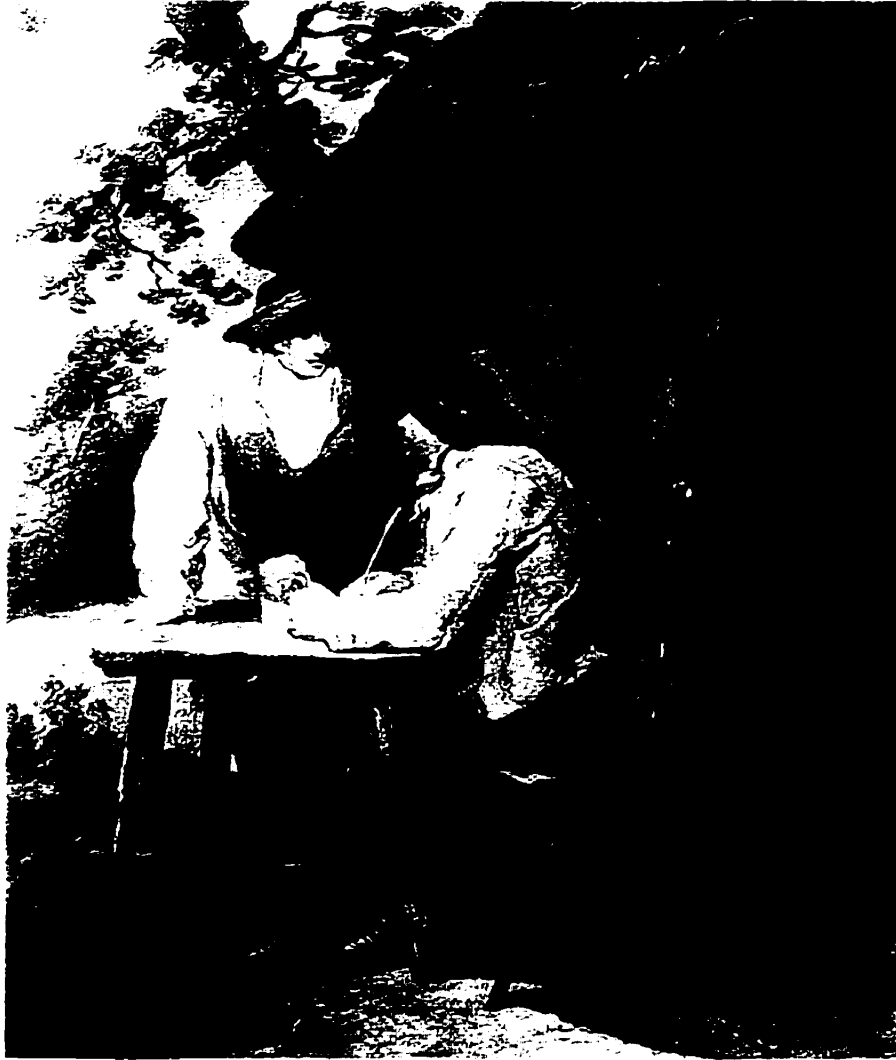
Meanwhile, after the Act of Union in 1801, conditions and opportunities for artists were worsening in Ireland. Dublin society lost much of its allure, as London's appeal as a cultural, social, economic, and political center drew the Irish elite, its politicians, and its artists to it. By 1820, London had become the center of the European art market.<sup>119</sup> In the eighteenth century, Dublin Society Schools had served Irish artists well in drawing, sculpture, and architecture. But between 1780 and the formation of the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1823, and again around 1851, discord and schism among various artists' societies caused great disillusionment spurring emigration. Although many artists did not emigrate during the first half of the nineteenth century, others like O'Connor and Danby did leave. As Strickland has noted, "many young artists of talent and ambition would not remain where there was no outlet for showing their powers, but emigrated to London."<sup>120</sup> Consequently, art in Ireland suffered from public apathy, neglect, and a scarcity of artistic talent.<sup>121</sup> More importantly, however, many of the artists who emigrated to England such as Mulready, Maclise, O'Connor, and Danby to name just a few, or who, like Mahoney, worked for English employers in Ireland distanced themselves from their Irish heritage and often placed their allegiance on English shores primarily for reasons of social, artistic, and economic acceptance.

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid. 158.

<sup>119</sup> Marcia Pointon, *Mulready*, (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1986), 43.

<sup>120</sup> Bruce Arnold, *Irish Art* (London: Thames And Hudson, 1977), 94.



























NEEDLE MONEY.



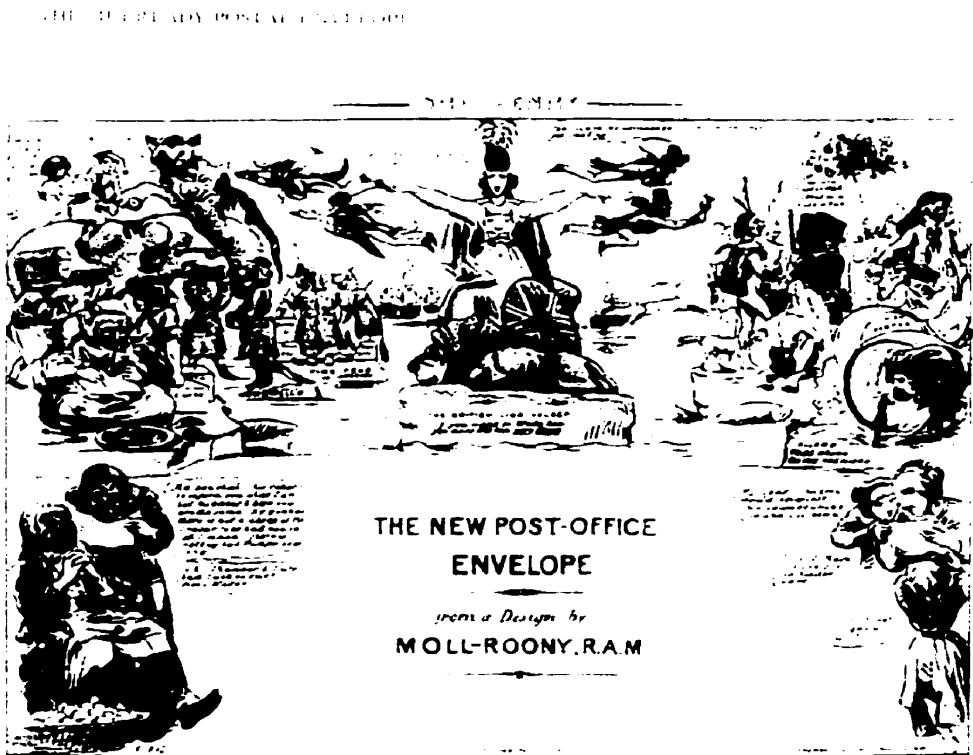
PIN MONEY.







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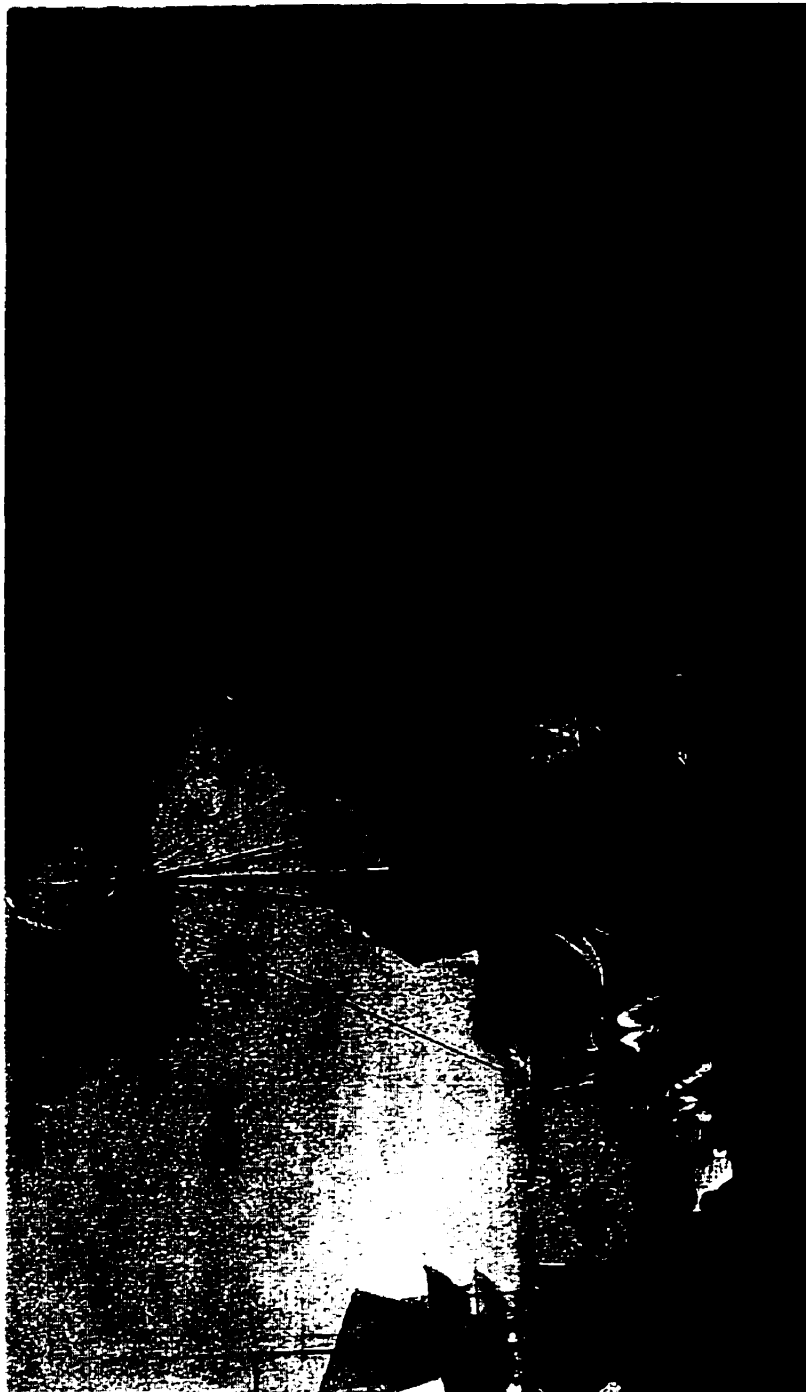
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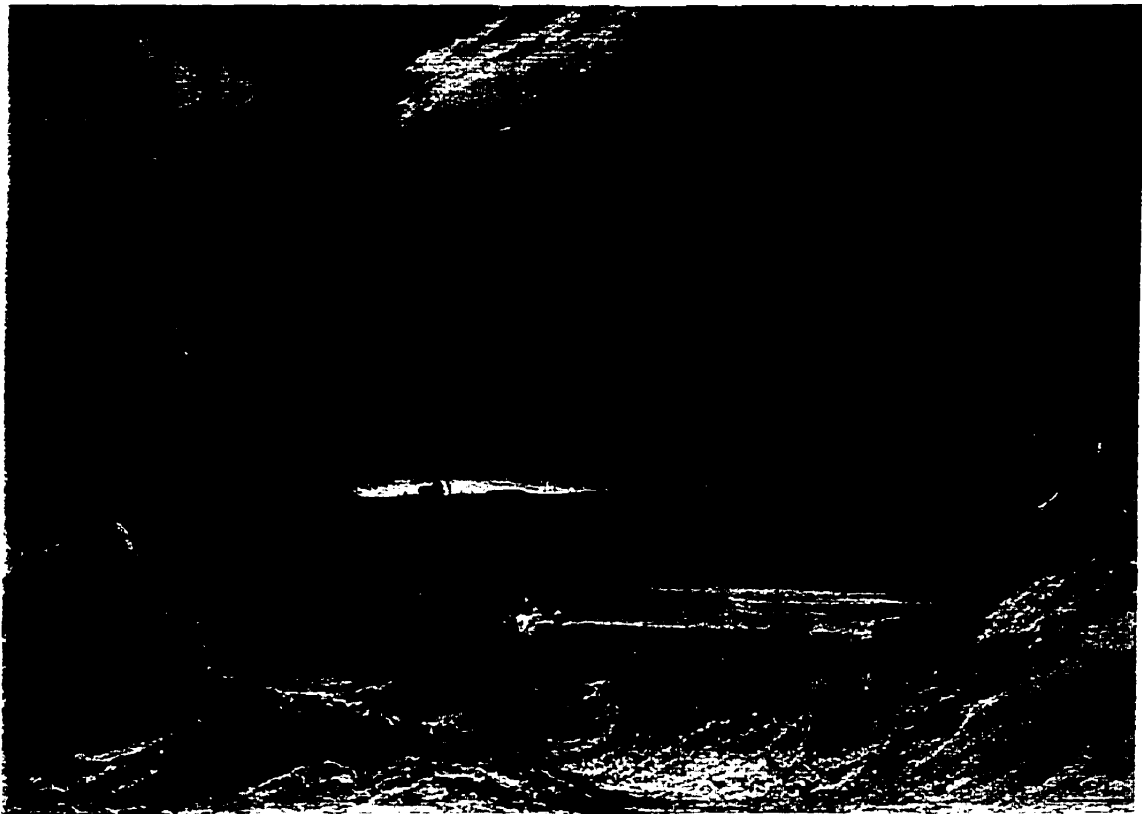














## Chapter II – Section B

### Paintings and Watercolors

The basic trends of romanticism, symbolism, and realism discussed in the previous section persisted in England and Ireland throughout the 1840's, each with its own variations. Sundry forms of the picturesque persevered well into the 1870's. Anecdotal, sentimental genre themes, and subject pictures offered more intriguing glimpses of social life than did portrait painting, which was often very dull. Nonetheless, considering the length and course of the Famine, few artists devoted themselves to themes of distress or eviction, even though history painting at this time was held in high regard. The political constraints of the subject were perhaps one of the most discouraging features of such decisions. The following section will chronologically examine images of Ireland in the 1840's. Few English artists painted Irish subjects; thus most of the images presented here are of Irish origin. Some artists may have exhibited their work in England; lesser artists may not have done so.

Paintings and watercolors which were shown at exhibitions sponsored by establishments such as the Royal Academy, the British Institution, the Old Watercolour Society, various Art Unions in England and Ireland, and the Royal Hibernian Academy in Dublin attracted crowds and were invariably reviewed by the popular press. English artists sent paintings to Ireland for exhibition, as Irish artists sent paintings to English institutions. Such exposure not only sold paintings and developed interest in a painter's work, it also spread and promoted ideas and attitudes.

Irish artists who stayed in Ireland found little patronage for subject pictures, although most artists painted some. One such picture is *The Limerick Piper* (Figure 1) painted by the Galway artist, Joseph Patrick Haverty (1794-1854). Haverty resided principally in Dublin, although he found patronage in Limerick. He also spent many years in London where he exhibited at the Royal Academy and the Society of British Artists. *The Limerick Piper* is quite well known, in part because it is one of few politically inspired paintings, and also because it exists in several versions. Lithographs of the painting are still found all over Ireland. Its picturesque style, patriotic and forlorn

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

theme of a blind piper playing for a lost Ireland displays Haverty's strong nationalist bias, a sentiment rarely exhibited in art in Ireland.

Formerly attributed to Mulready, *Children Dancing at a Crossroads* (Figure 2) is a lively but conventional painting by the portrait painter Trevor Thomas Fowler (fl. 1830-1844). It depicts a picturesque scene of young peasants dancing. While their clothes are ragged, their faces, the composition, and the appealing colors attract. The artist inserts some realism by including a pig and bottles of drink.

A fashionable Dublin portraitist who also painted genre pictures was the Irishman, Robert Richard Scanlan (fl. 1826-1876) who lived much of his life in England. Although he painted in oils, most of his work was done in watercolors. Scanlon specialized in group portraits and animal scenes. *Donnybrook to Dublin* (c. 1841) (Figure 3) typifies much of his work. This painting of a car-driving scene depicts a commonly chosen Irish topic, perhaps for reasons of their notorious nature.<sup>122</sup> Although the work is very competently executed, it is not a particularly serious composition. Scanlon returned to Ireland in 1853 to direct the newly formed Cork School of Design. The artist was known for his charming portrayals of leisured Victorian society in Ireland. Note a common rendition on this theme *In Days of Yore* (1839) (Figure 4) signed 'Captain Williams del Dublin 1839' in which a prognathous cab driver and wry-necked nag are depicted.

One of Ireland's most talented artists during this period was Sir Frederick William Burton, R.H.A. (1816-1900). Burton was born in Corofin, Co. Clare, the son of a country gentleman who was an amateur painter. Burton showed a great love of art from an early age. He studied drawing at the Dublin Society Schools under Robert West and Henry Brocas. Like his friend, George Petrie, Burton was interested in Irish history, legend, and folk life. As a friend of Thomas Davis and the Young Irelanders, Burton was asked to help establish a cultural identity for Ireland. Burton refused, declaring the impossibility of creating a nationalist art. Although he did produce a cover for their magazine, *The Spirit of the Nation*, Burton suggested Davis turn instead to poetry and song.<sup>123</sup> The artist's exceptional ability is well documented in *The Aran Fisherman's Drowned Child* (1841) (Figure 5) which was exhibited at the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1841 and was an immediate success. When it was shown at the Royal Academy in London in 1842, it

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<sup>122</sup> Wilkie, Maclise, William Henry Brooke, and numerous others painted (often humorous) sidecar pictures.

received wide acclaim. This glowing reception was possibly precipitated in part by the high quality of the depiction as well as by the non-political nature of the painting. The picture is an emotional one, centering on the tragic death of a child and the reactions of the family and neighbors to it. It is a genre painting depicted in a romantic style describing a unique community life. In fact, the painting is more descriptive of the Claddagh district of Galway rather than of the Aran Islands in the title. Marie Bourke notes in her essay on this painting, "Rural Life in Pre-Famine Connacht: A Visual Document" in *Ireland, Art Into History* that Burton has relied upon the use of compositional forms taken from several other artists. The mother and child grouping is taken from *The Massacre of the Innocents* engraved by Raimondi after Raphael, and several other figures follow compositional forms of Maclise, Landseer, and Michelangelo. Burton regularly exhibited at the Royal Hibernian Academy until 1854 when, like so many other Irish artists, he took up residence in London. In 1874 William Gladstone appointed Burton the Director of the National Gallery and in 1884 he was knighted.

*The Irish Peasant's Grave* (1843) (Figure 6) by John Tracey (1813-1873) is a genre painting depicting the Irish peasant. The picture was purchased by the Irish Art Union and engraved. Tracy's attempts at realism are considered a new thrust in this genre. The painting was completed two years prior to the Great Famine, which may explain in part the robustness of the group. While most of Tracy's pictures are on classical themes, he did paint the occasional Irish subject for William Carleton (1794-1869), the Anglo-Irish author of tales of Irish life. Art historians Anne Crookshank and the Knight of Glin suggest that the depiction of the Irish peasant was probably an extensive genre, but was generally considered a distasteful subject by Irish painters and avoided until the second half of the century<sup>124</sup>.

In 1845, Samuel Watson (1818-1867) an Irish artist from Cork exhibited two paintings at the Royal Hibernian Academy: *The Irish Jig* (1845) and *The Battle of Clontarf* (1845). Watson was known for his lithographed portraits of leaders of the Young Ireland movement, completed in the 1840's, as well as his execution of a booklet on Furniture in 1853. *The Irish Jig* (Figure 7) is a highly polished folk piece. This

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<sup>124</sup> Anne Crookshank, *Painters of Ireland*, 242.

watercolor painting depicts a lively shebeen where music and dancing, political discussions, drinking and fighting all take place amidst the additional noise and confusion of dogs and cats and people coming and going. If the subject and style is somewhat reminiscent of Grogan and Wilkie, the artist was no doubt aware of Grogan's peasants and Wilkie's interiors.

One of the more gifted Irish portrait and subject painters living during this period was Richard Rothwell, R.H.A. (1800-1868). Born in Athlone, Rothwell was educated at the Dublin Society Schools and seems to have gained his rich sense of color before he went to London in 1829. In London, Rothwell's ability to paint flesh in the style of the Old Masters was commented upon by Sir Edwin Landseer. Sir Thomas Lawrence declared him an "Irish Prodigy."<sup>125</sup> Rothwell's desire to improve his art inspired him to visit Italy. But on his return in 1834, his prospects dimmed, and in 1847 he returned to Ireland discouraged. *Novitiate Mendicants* (1838) (Figure 8) is one of few Irish subjects Rothwell painted. More typical of his work is the painting *The Mother's Pastime* (1844) (Figure 9). After the death of his first child and his difficulties in England, Rothwell became unsettled. He moved to London in 1852, to America in 1854 and 1855, to Rome in 1857, and to England in 1858 where he remained until a quarrel over the hanging of a picture sent him off again to Rome, leaving his family in Belfast. Strickland notes that Rothwell's high opinion of himself, his sensitive nature, "his wrongheadedness and peculiar temper brought him into collision with his brother artists both in London and in Dublin."<sup>126</sup> Rothwell's paintings were characteristic of the Romantic and picturesque style.

Originally from Leeds, Francis W. Topham (1808-1877) moved to London where he met Fripp and Goodall. In 1844, Francis Topham and Alfred Downing Fripp (1822-1895) accompanied Frederick Goodall (1822-1904) on a sketching tour of Ireland. According to Goodall's biography, the three friends found the people to be "guileless, open folk, who wore their heart on their sleeves."<sup>127</sup> Several curious experiences revealed their superstitious and ignorant natures. Although the artists offered to pay a

<sup>124</sup> Anne Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, *The Painters of Ireland* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1978), 178.

<sup>125</sup> Anne Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, *The Painters of Ireland* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1978), 226-7.

<sup>126</sup> Walter George Strickland, *A Dictionary of Irish Artists*, 2. Vols. Dublin and London: 1913, Reprinted with an intro by Theo Snoddy (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1969) 306.

<sup>127</sup> Frederick Goodall, *The Reminiscences of Frederick Goodall, R.A.*, (London: The Walter Scott Publishing Co., Ltd., 1902).

shilling each to sitters, the people began to surmise that the men were being conscripted and the women that had been drawn would be “transported to an uninhabited country.”<sup>128</sup> Another report circulated that the artists had come to convert the people from their faith. This rumor brought two priests to investigate the matter. The priests realized quickly there was nothing to fear and spoke to an angry crowd, which soon dissipated. In Connemara, the artists found that slight of hand tricks made the Irish fearful of black magic. In 1845, Fripp and Topham went again to Ireland to sketch; in 1860 and 1862, Topham visited Ireland again.

Francis Topham’s *Cabin Interior with Mother and Child* (1844) (Figure 10), his *Saturday Evening in Connemara* (c.1845), and Alfred Fripp’s *Poachers Alarmed* (c.1844) and *Irish Mendicants* (1845) all depict the rude realities of Irish peasant life. *Irish Mendicants* was exhibited at the Society of Painters in Watercolor in 1845 and engraved by Linton Company for the *Illustrated London News* for May 3, 1845. The reviewer applauded Fripp’s efforts as “Another excellent drawing by A.F. We have engraved this masterly performance.” The painting depicts three destitute and degraded figures against a barren and mountainous landscape. The emotional landscape is also clearly depicted—loss of hope and resignation in the figure of the old man, uncertainty in the woman, and anger and disgust resound from the boy. Topham’s numerous sketching trips to Ireland furnished him with material for some of his best-liked genre paintings. Although Topham’s watercolour *Galway People* (Figure 11) is undated, the painting’s sentimentality would suggest an earlier rather than later date. While Topham sympathetically depicts an attractive mother and child against a desolate landscape, the overall tone is one of a people apart, so totally separate from the life of the sophisticated English on the other side of the Irish sea as to be a curiosity.

Goodall painted various Irish subjects, many made from sketches of the Galway area. Among them were the *Fairy-struck Child*, *The Holy Well* (1847) (Figure 12), and *An Irish Eviction* (1850). An engraving of *The Holy Well* was published in the *Illustrated London News* on February 20, 1847. The writer notes that although Goodall “has made very little progress in his art within the last two years, he is yet young.” He expects “still higher excellence in conception and execution...” and advises Goodall to “give his days

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and nights to Wilkie."<sup>129</sup> Criticism was a constant concern, since it potentially affected the market for a painting.

Goodall designs a peasant grouping of two women, a man, and a child around a holy well. Their clothes signal their poverty while their rosary beads disclose their piety. Ruins of a chapel stand in the distance, and an Irish cross marks the well. The composition is pleasing and the depictions seem sympathetic. However, from the engraving, we cannot judge color or painting technique. Yet, perhaps it was the subject matter that concerned the critic most. In Ireland holy wells were associated with peasant beliefs and superstitions and were often dedicated to the water saint, John the Baptist. Rites at holy wells often included the use of special stones shaped like limbs and body parts or marks on cups or crosses on stones.<sup>130</sup> A favorable time to visit holy wells was on June 23, St. John's Eve, when the power of magical forces was at their greatest height. St. John's Eve came at a time when the midsummer sun was about to wane so communal dancing and bonfires were planned to encourage good fortune, good weather, and good harvests. The hungry month of July was always a critical time.

Other superstitions, represented in paintings and stories, set the Irish peasantry well apart from English understanding or compassion. In Tyrone County nearly a third, and in County Donegal nearly half, of the houses in 1841 consisted of only one room. Called a byre-dwelling, there was no division between human and animal sections of the house. There were practical as well as magical purposes for a cow to live in the house. Besides the warmth given off by the body heat of the cow and the necessity of storing dry cow dung as fertilizer for the planting season, it was considered lucky to have the cow living with the family.

Four quarter-days, February 1, La Fheile Brighde; May 1, La Bealtaine; August 1, La Lunasa; and November 1, La Samhna were of extreme importance to the Irish peasant. Supernatural powers were most apt to break into the natural world on these days; and at these times the powers of the fairies were most intense. The time for fairs would come in the middle of the summer half of the year. It culminated in the celebration of Lughnasa,

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>129</sup> *Illustrated London News*, February 20, 1847, 120.

<sup>130</sup> E. Estyn Evans, "Peasant Beliefs in Nineteen-Century Ireland," in *Views of the Irish Peasantry, 1800-1916*, ed. Daniel J. Casey & R. E. Rhodes, (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1977), 47-48.

on August 1, and was characterized by a mixture of pagan and Christian rites.<sup>131</sup>

Goodall's *An Irish Eviction* (Figure 13) (1850) is one of only a few paintings that contemplates the problems of the Irish during the Great Famine. *An Irish Eviction* depicts the plight of a family outside their turfed cottage. Evidently the household has been informed that they are to be evicted. The barefoot cottier stands looking dejected and confused, as his wife sits by with her chin in her hands. Their smallest child plays in the road, while the two other children huddle together before the oncoming storm. Although the painting is a sympathetic one, Goodall's interpretation is cautious; his rounded figures and picturesque style somehow do not impart the perilous reality of the eviction. It is understandable that the picture's appeal was narrow. The subject itself was a disheartening one. Whether this painting sold in 1850 is questionable since paintings of this sort were routinely found to be unpleasant or offensive. The painting now resides at the Leicester Museum and Art Gallery in England.

His caution, however, was not surprising considering his background and connections. Frederick Goodall (1822-1904) was the son of Edward Goodall, a London engraver who transferred Turner's paintings into engravings. His brother, Edward Alfred Goodall, was also an artist. At thirteen, Goodall left school to study with his father until the age of twenty-one. Through his father, Goodall met Turner and Pugin; and later at Redleaf, the home of Sir Henry Wells a well-known art patron, he met almost every academician of the time. Among many other influential individuals, Goodall knew Sir Robert Peel, William Gladstone, and Charles Dickens. Goodall's early works were primarily genre or peasant scenes inspired by the great genre painter, Sir David Wilkie. Later Goodall concentrated on views of Egyptian life and biblical scenes. He was elected an associate of the Royal Academy in 1852 and a R.A. in 1863. At the height of his popularity, Goodall earned over 10,000 pounds a year, although by 1902, he was declared bankrupt.

The painting *Reading "The Nation"* (Figure 14) attributed to Henry MacManus (1810-1878) R.H.A. (c.mid-century) is a colorful portrayal of Irish individuals reading Young Ireland's newspaper, "The Nation." The tone of the painting seems somewhat humorous and would suggest that MacManus was probably a Unionist. However, without

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<sup>131</sup>

Ibid.

further investigation, it would be inappropriate to speculate on MacManus's political views or motives especially since Strickland has noted that "his pictures, as a whole, were poor in color, and in his later years became puerile and even ludicrous."<sup>132</sup> In any case, the picture itself does not seem to support the Irish cause. MacManus, known as a history and figure painter, also worked as a teacher, portrait painter, and illustrator. He exhibited many watercolour landscapes at the Royal Hibernian Academy. In 1837 MacManus moved to London where he exhibited at the Royal Academy, the British Institution, and the Old Watercolour Society. His work for *Hall's Ireland* was probably finished about 1840. One of his best and the most interesting paintings for *Hall's Ireland* is probably his *Irish Hedge School*. From about 1845 until 1849, MacManus held the position of Head of the Glasgow School of Design in Scotland. When he finally returned to Ireland about 1850 to teach at the Dublin School of Design, the worst of the Famine was over.

One of the most compelling paintings was contributed by another Cork artist, Daniel MacDonald (1821-1853), the son of an artist and musician. MacDonald exhibited at the RHA from 1842-44. His favorite subjects seem to have genre and peasant scenes. Two delightful examples of his work are the Cork pastime, *Bowling* (1842) and *The Eagle's Nest, Killarney* (1841). *Bowling* received a harsh review by the *Examiner* in 1842. In the mid 1840's the artist moved to London. In 1847 he exhibited *An Irish Peasant Family Discovering the Blight of Their Store* (1847) (Figure 16) at the British Institution. MacDonald's interpretation of the Famine is a haunting, dignified and an emotional depiction of the disaster. Though the people are confounded as they face their destruction, as yet they show no signs of starvation. The somber colors and dramatic lighting intensify the scene. The family has only themselves, their dog, a spade, and a few utensils to their name. It would be interesting to know how this painting fared in critical review. MacDonald exhibited again in 1849, 1850, and 1851. In 1853, he contributed his first and only painting for exhibition at the Royal Academy. Strickland, in his *Dictionary of Irish Artists* remarks that the artist was well on his way to success. MacDonald died of fever later that year at only thirty-two years of age.

In 1853, a Dublin born artist by the name of Robert George Kelly (1822-1910) exhibited a painting on this same theme at the British Institution. Kelly was the son of a

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<sup>132</sup> Walter George Strickland, *A Dictionary of Irish Artists*, 2. vols. Dublin and London: 1913. reprinted with an intro by Theo

naval commander and was educated at a private school at Stranraer. He studied art at the Royal Dublin Society and the Royal Hibernian Academy. The painting that Kelly exhibited on the Famine was called *An Ejectment in Ireland* or *A Tear and a Prayer for Erin* (Figure 17). In this case, we know the outcome. Strickland notes that the painting was “much criticized as a political picture, which the artist never intended it to be, and was actually discussed in the House of Commons.”<sup>133</sup> And as Catherine Marshall has pointed out, Kelly wisely avoided such contentious subjects for the rest of his long career. A few other artists did attempt to record the Irish Famine in paint, but Kelly and MacDonald were the only Irish artists who dared confront the topic openly in England. At the time their paintings were exhibited, the Famine was still in force and both men were still young. Kelly was twenty-six and MacDonald thirty-one. Perhaps as young ideologues, they were more willing to confront the English establishment than older artists. But it is also interesting to note that 1853 also marks the year that Kelly left Ireland for England, where he spent the rest of his active life, and continued to paint, exhibit and teach art.

Three more artists address this subject head on, although none of the three is Irish. The artist who best captured the tragedy of the Irish Famine in art was the English artist, George Frederic Watts (1817-1904). Watts was apprenticed to a sculptor at the age of ten and entered the Royal Academy Schools in 1835. When the artist began painting the picture, he had recently returned from Italy, and classic and monumental subjects were no doubt on his mind. The social subjects of Watts were well ahead of their time and foreshadowed in style and intent the paintings of the social realists of the 1870's. *The Irish Famine* was part of a small group of pictures, *The Sempstress*, *Found Drowned*, and *Under A Dry Arch*. Lindsay Errington argues they were not, as Mrs. Watts and Wilfred Blunt suggest, therapeutic exercises to counteract the depression that Watts was going through at the time, but rather the result of a “period of uncertainty, tentative efforts, soon discarded, to discover whether the distresses of modern life could not furnish the painter with subject matter at once moral, high minded, and immediately relevant.”<sup>134</sup>

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Snoddy (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1969), 80.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 573.

<sup>134</sup> Errington, *Social and Religious Themes*, 180, 181, 182.

*The Irish Famine* (c.1849-1850) (Figure 18) was painted over a Greek subject from Xenophon, and the arrangement of the figures recall a *Holy Family* or *Rest on the Flight Into Egypt*.<sup>135</sup> Although the painting was based on the poem, *The Year of Sorrow – 1849* by Watts's friend Aubrey De Vere who lived in Ireland, the painting was completed before Watts visited him there. The painting's large size, 72 inches by 78 inches, indicates the artist's intent to produce a painting of high art. Genre paintings were generally small in scale. The painting expresses the universality of suffering in its somber colors and the simple design of Watts' familial archetype. Although the modern title of the painting is *The Irish Famine*, in 1849 De Vere refers to the painting as *The Irish Eviction*. In fact, the painting is really about eviction, since in 1849 the Famine was several years old, and news about evictions were reported daily. Thus Watts was responding to the most recent Irish crisis with a painting of historical significance and topicality. Why then wasn't the painting exhibited? It may well have been that this artistic direction was not to his taste.<sup>136</sup> Yet the depression that Watts was undergoing, triggered by career difficulties, a lack of recognition on the part of the English public, and an unsuccessful love affair, may have caused him to act cautiously especially in terms of an Irish subject. Hence the painting was not exhibited at this time, but must have been held in some esteem since it was not destroyed and was later shown at the Grosvenor Gallery in the winter of 1881-2.<sup>137</sup> Watts was not popular with the critics or the public for much of his life, and it was not until several exhibitions in the 1880's that he began to receive recognition. Watts said of himself that he painted ideas, not things. He believed in the moral message of his art, though the public lagged behind. In 1885, and in 1894, Watts refused a baronetcy twice, but ultimately accepted the Order of Merit.

*The Eviction* (c.1853) was painted by Erskine Nicol (1825-1904) A.R.A., R.S.A. Nicol came from Leith, Scotland. After a period as a house-painter's apprentice, Nicol entered the Trustees' Academy in Edinburgh to study art. In 1845, he received an appointment to teach art in Dublin where he remained until 1850 during which time he made many sketches of Irish rural life. Nicol's five-year stay in Ireland coincided with the worst years of the Famine. Initially, Nicol's early tendency to caricature drew

<sup>135</sup> Julian Treuherz, *Hard Times, Social Realism in Victorian Art* (London: Lund Humphries, 1987), 28.

<sup>136</sup> Errington, *Social and Religious Themes*, 182.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. 446.

criticism, although as his work took on a Wilkiesque element his reviews improved. He returned to Scotland and was elected an A.R.S.A in 1851 and an R.S.A. in 1859. In 1862, Nichol moved to London, but made regular visits to Ireland. Nicol shows a fondness for treating Irish subjects in a farcical and theatrical way. Dr. Brian Kennedy, now Director of the National Gallery of Australia commented about Erskine Nicol during conversation in 1995 and maintains that Nicol's inclination to portray Irish social life in a humorous and satirical manner could be offensive and coarse at times, stretching his humorous spirit too far. His well composed and meticulously executed genre scenes exhibit his excellent memory for detail, though his work is not far removed from stage and farce. Although the artist's racial humour sometimes yields to sympathy and compassion such as in the *Eviction*, Dr. Kennedy noted that "if we examine many of the paintings of Nicol, the representation of the Irish peasant is rather similar to many of the cartoons published, for example, in *Punch*."<sup>138</sup>

The quality of Nicol's work varies, although his substantial output may in part account for this. Some of his paintings, however, do elicit a wide range of feeling. One of these is *The Eviction* (c. 1853)(Figure 20). *Outward Bound* (c. 1850) (Figure 19) exemplifies Nicol's more caustic and satirical side. *The Eviction* is more dramatic and touching than Goodall's painting, and is on one level somewhat optimistic. Again an Irish family is dispossessed of their home. The painting depicts a family standing homeless on a roadside pictured against a background of black clouds that herald an approaching storm. As the elderly parent bends with age, despair, or the last stumbling stage of starvation, the mother and her children look to the young father for deliverance. In his resolute expression, some element of hope is imparted.

*Irish Vagrants in England* (1853) (Figure 21) was painted by Walter Howell Deverell. Born in Charlottesville, Virginia, Walter Deverell (1827-1854) returned to London with his father in 1829. Deverell studied at Sass's Drawing School where he became a friend of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), one of the founding members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. They later shared a studio together. Although Deverell never became a part of the Brotherhood, he socialized with them and was inspired by them. The artist's promising career ended at twenty-seven in poverty and death. Jeremy

Maas, author of *Victorian Painters*, places Deverell as a luminary of the second order of Pre-Raphaelites. Among the Royal Academy, the British Institution, and the S. S., Deverell exhibited only eight paintings. *The Pet* is his only well-known picture, but he is the only artist of whom I am aware to paint a picture on the subject of the Irish in England. Ruskin's injunction to "Go to nature in all singleness of heart, selecting nothing, rejecting nothing" is said to have inspired William Holman Hunt, Rossetti, and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. It may also have inspired Deverell to paint *Irish Vagrants in England* (1853).

Certainly the Stockport riots of 1852 could also have motivated Deverell to undertake the subject. Set against the earlier "No Popery" crisis of 1850 when the Pope reestablished the Catholic hierarchy after an absence of 300 years, and the flood of Irish immigration into England and Scotland in the forties, the Stockport riots were considered the most destructive of the 1850's. Major riots broke out over several days between June 28 and 30th. The police, the mayor, and the magistrates arrived after the initial damage was done, with the aid of a detachment of sixty men of the 4<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Infantry. The Riot Act was read, but the crowd proceeded to move on to ransack the town's two Catholic chapels. In the aftermath, two Catholic chapels and twenty-four Irish homes were wrecked and ransacked, one Irishman was dead, and fifty-one Irish were injured. Of 113 persons arrested, only two were English. The *Stockport Advertiser*, a Protestant and High Tory newspaper, blatantly exacerbated the situation by leading the anti-Catholic campaign and promoting a Protestant Association, and openly attacked the Stockport Irish. "What is it," the *Advertiser* queried, "that so often disturbs the peace of our borough, increases our rates, and saps the very foundations of all our charitable institutions, but popery embodied in Irish mobs, paupers, and fever patients." <sup>139</sup>

With such recent violent occurrences, Deverell's painting records the harsh reality of the arrival of an Irish immigrant family. The painting depicts an older man, a husband and wife, and three partially clad small children. The family presumably has recently left its holdings in Ireland and has come to England to escape the Famine and search for work. The adults recline on a pile of logs exhausted as if they have walked a great way. The oldest child races off to beg for alms from a prosperous couple riding by, but the

child is ignored. The painting is a sympathetic and relatively realistic portrayal of what was a common occurrence and probably a common reaction by the English well-to-do. With Deverell's early death, the painting may never have been exhibited, but if it was, I have no information on how it was received.

How did other artists depict Ireland during this period? Marine paintings were popular and acceptable subjects for artists to undertake. Little is known about Philip Phillips (fl. 1826-1865) other than that he was a London painter of panoramas, architectural subjects, and landscapes. He exhibited between 1826-1864, at the R.A. 1841-1859, and was the only pupil of W. Clarkson Stanfield. His wife Elizabeth Philips was also a painter who often helped him with his large panoramas. His watercolors, *Queen Victoria Arriving at Kingstown Harbour* (1849) (Figure 22) and *Queen Victoria Arriving at Belfast* (1849) (Figure 23) are two of very few representations of the Queen's historic trip to Ireland. Philips paints the pomp and circumstance, the fanfare and excitement of the royal visit. Flags, docks, boats, distant buildings, sky and sea, and tiny people complete the scenes.

One of the more prolific Irish artists was the marine painter George Mounsey Wheatley Atkinson (1806-1884) born of English parents in Cove (Cobh) (then Queenstown, Co. Cork) about 1806. He spent his early life at sea as a ship's carpenter. Thereafter, Atkinson was employed as the Government Surveyor of Shipping and Emigrants at Queenstown. His many views of Cove, Cork harbor, river views, and scenes of ships at sea were exhibited in Cork at the Cork Art Union, and the Royal Hibernian Academy in Dublin. He was a self-taught artist who specialized in notable events which took place in Cork Harbour. Atkinson completed several paintings of the Royal Squadron in the harbor and the landing of the Queen's party in the town of Cove. According to the Crawford Municipal Art Gallery's Summary Catalogue (1991), *The Royal Yacht previous to Her Majesty Landing* (1849) of the landing of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert at Cove (Cobh), renamed Queenstown in honor of the Queen's visit, seems to be the only visual record of this visit surviving. Atkinson's *A Boating Party in Cork Harbour* (1840) (Figure 24) and *Naval Squadron in Cork Harbour* (c. 1849) (Figure 25) are excellent examples of his work and of acceptable standards of marine painting. The *Boating Party*

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<sup>146</sup> Pauline Millward, "The Stockport Riots of 1852: A Study of Anti-Catholic and Anti-Irish Sentiment", in *The Irish in the*

depicts a lovely afternoon excursion on the water. In the distance Cork fishermen ply the waters with their nets for the day's catch. The painting portrays the pleasantries of life in the area around Cork Harbor. Thackeray's 'face of popular starvation,' is in no way in evidence in this painting. Atkinson's work followed maritime themes throughout the Famine.

Robert Lowe Stopford (1813-1898) was born in Dublin in 1813. As a young man, Stopford moved to Cork and although privately trained, the artist earned a considerable reputation for landscape and marine paintings. He was well known for his watercolor views of local scenes about Cork, and was also a teacher. Stopford worked for many years in the south of Ireland as an art correspondent for the *Illustrated London News* and also for other papers. His *View of Queenstown* (Figure 26) shown here is typical of his technique and displays the wealth and architectural elegance of Queenstown (now Cobh) to its best advantage. *The Wreck of the Sirius in Ballycotton Bay in 1847* was one of a number of paintings that the artist lithographed and published in Cork. Stopford also recorded in watercolor various building projects under construction during the Famine. Since the relief employment of the Irish Board of Works officially ended in the middle of July of 1847, the structures that Stopford depicted were public works projects considered essential tasks, although they could have been begun as part of the earlier relief operations. Among them were the *Monard Viaduct, Co. Cork* (1849), *Kilnap Viaduct, Co. Cork* (1849), and *Arch Bridge Crossing, The Blackwater At Mallow* (1849) (Figure 27).

One of the few paintings we have of emigrant ships is by James Glen Wilson (1827-1863). His best known works include *The Emigrant Ship leaving Belfast* (1852) (Figure 28) and a view of the *Belfast Ferry Steps, Donegall Quay* completed in 1851. According to Crookshank and Glin, Wilson was thought to come from a family of independent means in Co. Down and may have trained at the Belfast School of Design in the early 1850's. *The Emigrant Ship* depicts the departing and farewells of emigrants leaving from Belfast. Sometime after painting *The Emigrant Ship*, the artist joined the Royal Navy's hydrographic survey ship the H.M.S. Herald and journeyed South Africa and Australia via Rio de Janeiro, where he painted watercolors of society, reaching Sydney in 1853.

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*Victorian City* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 210.

Another emigrant ship was painted by the artist Edwin Hayes, R.A. (1820-1904). Hayes was born in Bristol, England but moved to Ireland when his father became a hotelier in Dublin. Hayes decided to become a marine painter early on and studied at the Dublin Society Schools. He sailed about Dublin Bay on his own yacht and to America as a steward to learn the moods of the sea. Hayes exhibited at the R.H.A. from 1842 until he left for London ten years later. Hayes spent the rest of his life in London, although he travelled about England and Europe. His best known painting is *The Emigrant Ship, Dublin Bay, Sunset* (Figure 29) painted in 1853. The peaceful harbor waters and brilliant saffron-rose and salmon sunset starkly contrasts with the tragedy of the subject.

*Watching the Departure of the Emigrant Ship* (1849) (Figure 30) by Frederick Goodall attracted critical attention in the *Athenaeum* and provides insight into the approach of critical reviewers in England. The journal's review is remarkably similar in sequence to those published by other reviewers. As Lindsay Errington has noted, the picture is considered first as "a staged performance...the painter rewarded or reproached for his skill as a casting manager and producer. At the end the artist is given a clap of approbation or a warning tap for his drawing or his finish."<sup>140</sup> The reviewer thought that the painting "though painful...a fine one - but requiring very high power to redeem it from the melodramatic and give it the true character of unaffected pathos."<sup>141</sup> The portrayal of the "aged people" was "just and appropriate ...[but] "the children...want juvenile character...and heads and limbs and extremities all provoke disappointment."<sup>142</sup> While the method indicates the review is designed for readers, and not the artist, this disappointing critique may indicate that this Irish subject was less acceptable than admitted.

In stark contrast to the marine paintings mentioned above is the work of Richard Doyle (1824-1883). After leaving *Punch*, Doyle alternated between conventional book illustrations of daily life and watercolor paintings of fairy and fantasy scenes. Doyle's natural fondness for fantasy sprung forth as early as age fifteen in the pages of his illustrated journal completed in 1840. His genius was given full range in his world of fantasy pictures. In 1851, Doyle completed some of his first fairyland illustrations in

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<sup>140</sup> Errington, *Social and Religious Themes*. 195.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

Ruskin's "King of the Golden River". *The Witch* (Figure 31) is one of many paintings that illustrates Doyle's interest in fairytales and folk legends.

Ancient British, Celtic, and Irish legends, mythology, and folklore also contributed extensively to fairy themes, as did the works of William Shakespeare. Francis Danby, Frederick William Burton, Richard Dadd, Frederick Goodall, and Daniel Maclise all illustrated fairy scenes from Shakespeare, while Irish stories such as William Carleton's *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry* and Crofton Croker's *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland* furnished Maclise and others with typically Irish subject matter. Scenes from *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* were commonly exhibited throughout the mid-nineteenth century. In 1847, Robert Huskisson exhibited *Titania Asleep* from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Royal Academy; and in 1850, Sir John Everett Millais exhibited *Ferdinand lured by Ariel* from *The Tempest* at the Royal Academy. Jeremy Maas, the author of *Victorian Painting*, gives an insightful explanation for the phenomenon of fairy painting. Close to the center of the Victorian subconscious, he says, fairy painting embodied the new spiritualism;

the desire to escape the drear hardships of daily existence; the stirrings of new attitudes towards sex, stifled by religious dogma; a passion for the unseen; a psychological retreat from scientific discoveries; the birth of psychoanalysis; the latent revulsion against the exactitude of the new invention of photography.<sup>143</sup>

It was a genre of escapism, evasion, and retreat, and as such appealed to artists and the art market as a safe and salable commodity. Hence, fairy painting flourished in Britain and Ireland as artists forged a new intensity in landscape painting by joining fantasy, literature or myth, and a realistic interpretation of nature. Clearly, these themes were a form of escapism from the realities of the Famine.

Reality could be distanced in many ways in art. In 1851, William Powell Frith (1819-1909) a Yorkshire born artist realized that he was weary of costume painting. He wrote that he was determined 'to try his hand at modern life subjects with all its drawbacks of unpicturesque dress.' Frith depicted life as he saw it in precise detail and often in large panoramas. He developed a sure sense of the public taste, similar to such novelists as Dickens and Thackeray, and his work always displayed a polite distance and sense of propriety. His large panoramic *Life at the Seaside, Ramsgate Sands* begun in the

summer of 1851 received instant success when it was shown at the Academy and was purchased by the Queen.

One of his most charming paintings is *The Sleepy Model* (1853) (Figure 32). The painting constituted the required Diploma picture that each R.A. must offer gratuitously to the Royal Academy as a specimen of his work. Opposed to painting the nude, Frith's model is dressed as is characteristic of his work. The artist met the model by becoming a large purchaser of oranges. But as an Irish Catholic, the girl insisted that Frith procure consent from her priest before modeling for him. A young Catholic friend of the artist agreed to intercede with the priest so that Frith might paint her laughing face. Although permission was never received, the model consented to sit. The painting depicts a young Irish Catholic street-seller of rare beauty with a basket of oranges on the floor beside her. By 1840 the orange trade in which the model engaged was almost exclusively taken up by Irish street-sellers.<sup>144</sup> What is particularly interesting in this picture is the emphasis on class. Although the characters may not be far apart in age, the social distance between the elegantly dressed painter and the costermonger's picturesque attire is impressed upon the viewer not only by the differences in dress between the two people, but by other methods defining separation. The standing artist looks down upon his subject while the girl nods asleep exhausted from her work. A decorative screen divides the picture and the people, while the refinement of the room and an elaborately carved cabinet points up the differences in their lives. Frith had chosen a beautiful young woman, but was dismayed that she was unable to stay awake at sittings. When he asked if she was sometimes annoyed by the soldiers and street-loafers she replied, "Yes, sometimes she was bothered, but it was by swells." "Gentlemen," she said, "is much greater blackguards than what blackguards is."<sup>145</sup>

From various comments about his models, we can probably surmise that Frith was not particularly enamoured with the Irish. While working on a later painting, *The Crossing Sweeper*, Frith recorded his first impression of his young model:

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<sup>143</sup> Jeremy Mass, *Victorian Painters* (New York: Abbeville Press, Inc., 1984), 148.

<sup>144</sup> In *London Labour and The London Poor* Henry Mayhew explains that about 1810 'Jew lads' gained the orange monopoly when vagabonds were induced to enlist in the army. But as the Jews began to trade in the more profitable goods of pencils, sealing-wax, pen-knives, razors, and combs, they began to abandon the orange trade which between 1836 and 1840 fell to the wives and children of the Irish bricklayers' families. The Irish gradually superseded the Jews in the fruit trade because they were eloquent in their benedictions and sales, begged pathetically, and were always willing to 'lend a hand' as well as to undersell a competitor.

<sup>145</sup> William Powell Frith, R.A. *My Autobiography and Reminiscences*, 2 Vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1888), 174-175.

a low dull Irish boy for crossing-sweeper, one degree removed from a pig... The crossing-sweeper's face warned me not to leave him alone in my painting room; I neglected the warning with the consequences related elsewhere...<sup>146</sup> The boy sat two or three times fairly well, hair cut very short, his face though not good-looking, was full of character, and I succeeded pretty well in getting a good likeness of him.<sup>147</sup>

Not long afterwards, the boy stole from the artist. From the police, Frith learnt that the boy has just been released from prison, which explained the short prison haircut, and that the boy's father, mother, and sister were presently in prison, and that one or the other of them was always there.

It is interesting to note that neither Cork born James Mahoney (1810-1879) (discussed earlier in the chapter on the *Illustrated London News*) nor Dublin born Robert Lowe Stopford (1813-1898) ever addressed the Famine in fine art even though both artists had worked as artists for the *Illustrated London News* in the mid 1840's. The artist is best known today for his series of several large and colorful watercolors of the great Irish Exposition held in Dublin in 1853. Included here is *The Visit by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert to the Fine Art Hall of the Irish Industrial Exhibition* (1853) (Figure 33) The elegance in costume and the refinement in the physiognomies of the visitors in these paintings contrast sharply to Mahony's representation of the Irish peasantry in his contributions to the *Illustrated London News*.

Probably the most famous Irish artists at mid-century were Daniel Maclise (1806-1870), William Mulready, the Doyles, and James Mahoney. Of all of these men, Daniel Maclise and William Mulready were the most gifted and would have been most likely to leave to posterity some commentary in their work on the troubles of Ireland. But both men living in England found their Irish heritage more of a burden than an asset. Mulready's complete avoidance of Irish subjects discussed previously is glaring. But like Mulready, Maclise had no wish to be considered Irish, although his "eccentric" brother, an officer in the army, certainly considered himself and the Maclises Irish.<sup>148</sup> In the better circles, being Irish was certainly a drawback, however educated, cosmopolitan, or talented a person was; and at times, the unremitting prejudice had to be quite painful. But

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 204.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 412.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., Vol. 2, 173.

of all the Cork-born artists who went to London to make their fortune, Maclise was conceivably the most successful (including the exceptionally talented James Barry who died in poverty). Maclise once complained to Frederick Goodall that "I am always taken for and talked of as an Irishman, but I am not Irish. My real name is Macleish, and my father went over to Ireland during the rebellion of 1745."<sup>149</sup> Strickland states that Maclise's father, Alexander McLeish, was an ex-soldier from a Scottish regiment, which arrived in Cork in 1797. McLeish remained, set up a leather-cutting shop, and married Rebecca Buchanan in December of 1797. The marriage is recorded in the register of the Presbyterian Church in Princes Street. Thus, Maclise's heritage is probably Scottish. Nonetheless, Maclise was born in Cork and lived in Ireland until he was twenty-one, and as such was legitimately an Irishman.

Before studying at the Cork Institute of Art, young Maclise worked briefly in Newman's bank. He was first noticed for a drawing that he made of Sir Walter Scott while the author was visiting a bookshop in Cork. From the sale of portraits, Maclise moved to London and entered the Royal Academy Schools. He progressed there quickly, winning several medals. The artist travelled to Paris and Spain in 1830, and in 1832 went on a sketching tour of England, Wales, and Ireland. Maclise became well established as a history and literary subject painter, enjoying great success and popularity. Through his membership in the Royal Academy, his lively and engaging personality, and his fascination with literature, history, and heroic figures, Maclise joined the company of the artistic and literary circles of London, becoming acquainted with the Queen, and close friends with Dickens, Thackeray, and Forster. In 1840, Maclise was elected a full member of the Royal Academy and in 1844 was one of six chosen to decorate the newly built Houses of Parliament for which Maclise contributed *The Meeting of Wellington and Blucher* (1861) and *The Death of Nelson* (1865). Additionally, he was a prolific painter of portraits, as well as a painter of historical, literary, and Biblical subjects. Nevertheless, Maclise rarely visited Ireland and painted relatively few Irish subject pictures. *Snap-apple Night* (1832), *The Installation of Captain Rock* (1834), *Irish Girl* (1841), and *The Marriage of Strongbow and Aoife* (1854) constitute the majority of these. Maclise did, however, illustrate a number of books on Irish subjects. He contributed to J. Barrow's *A*

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Goodall, *Reminiscences*, 227.

*Tour Round Ireland*, Mahony's *Reliques of Father Prout*, Hall's *Sketches of Irish Character*, Hall's *Ireland, Its Scenery and Character*, Moore's *Irish Melodies*, and Carleton's *Fruits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*.

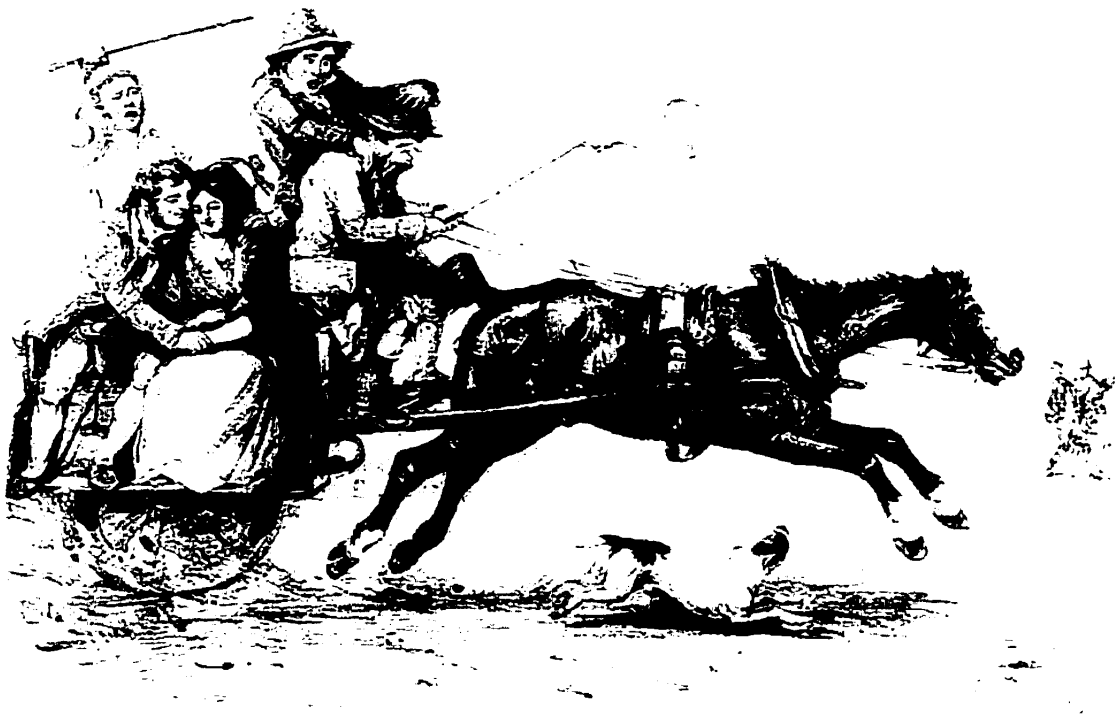
In view of Maclise's experience as a history painter, the fact that he makes no direct reference to Ireland's contemporary troubles of famine and eviction is significant. *The Marriage of Strongbow and Aoife* (1854) (Figure 34) may be the only allusion he made to Ireland's contemporary problems. In her article "Painting Irish History: the Famine," Catherine Marshall has suggested that considering Mulready's troubles and the fact that the Irish were generally seen to be dirty, uneducated, and uncivilized, any allusion to the Famine even through allegory would be commendable. The painting immortalizes the first step towards the annexation of Ireland by England. The invasion of Ireland by Richard de Clare, Earl of Pembroke (known as Strongbow) is concluded by the wedding of the conqueror, Strongbow, and Aoife, the daughter of the King of Leinster. The marriage cements a political union between the two islands. Although the marriage may not have been forced by the victorious Earl of Pembroke and the King of Leinster, the union is presented in the painting as a sacrifice. Maclise carefully constructs the symbolic elements of the painting. The wedding takes place in front of a ruined Irish church and round tower, symbols of Ireland's spirituality and monastic past. Strongbow places his foot and sword on a broken high cross, ignorant of his bride's cultural heritage. The Normans are pictured as dark and evil, while Princess Aoife and her attendants are bathed in a swath of light representing not only their goodness, but their helplessness. If we link the painting's message to the time period in which Maclise was painting, it is possible to correlate the destruction of the Irish Celts by the Norman invaders to the destruction of Ireland by England's inadequate famine relief and eviction policies. Maclise's excellent draughtsmanship, his nostalgia for Ireland's Celtic history, his use of romantic classicism and the heroic nude, and as Marshall says "his attempt to set the record straight"<sup>150</sup> also presents an analogy with the conquest of ancient Greece by Rome. Rome conquers Greece, but Greece triumphs as her culture is embodied by Rome. If Maclise's contemporaries were able to perceive these points as Marshall suggests, an allegory of the Famine was obscure enough not to draw criticism.

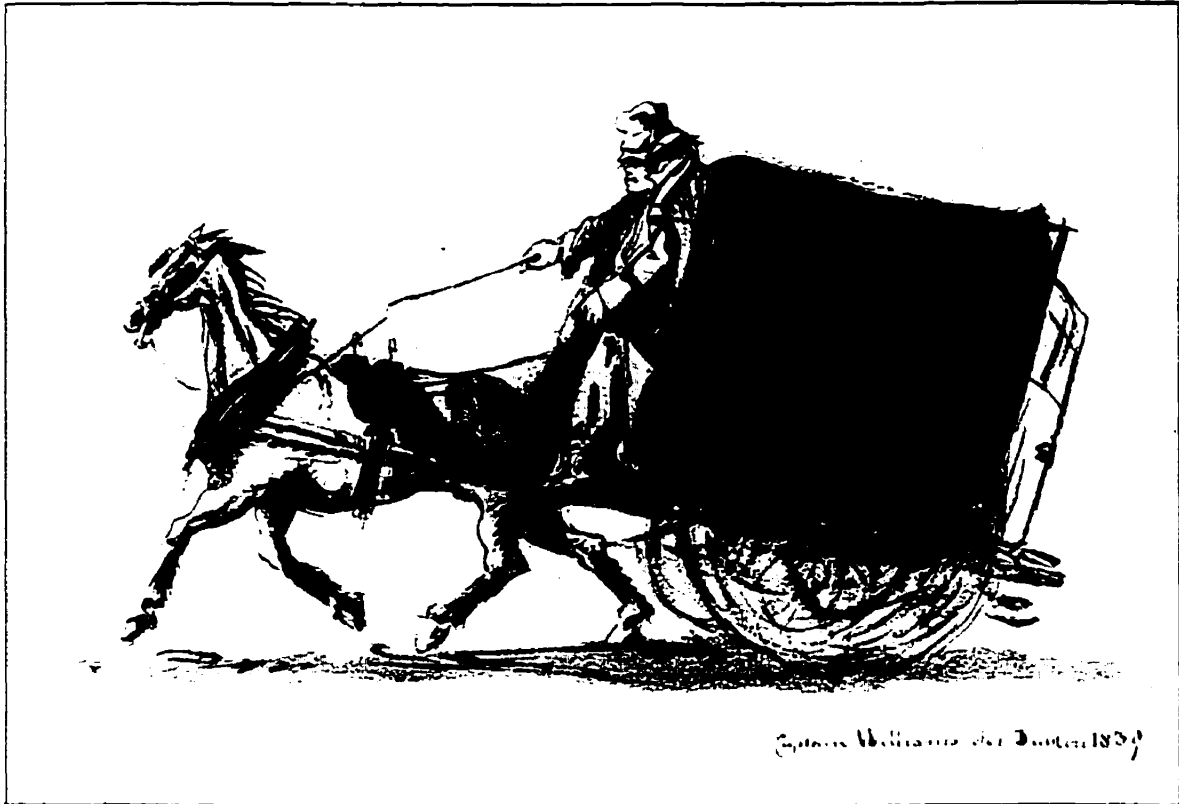
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<sup>150</sup> Catherine Marshall, *Irish Art Masterpieces* (Southport, Connecticut: Hugh Lauter Levin Associates, Inc., 1994) 68.

























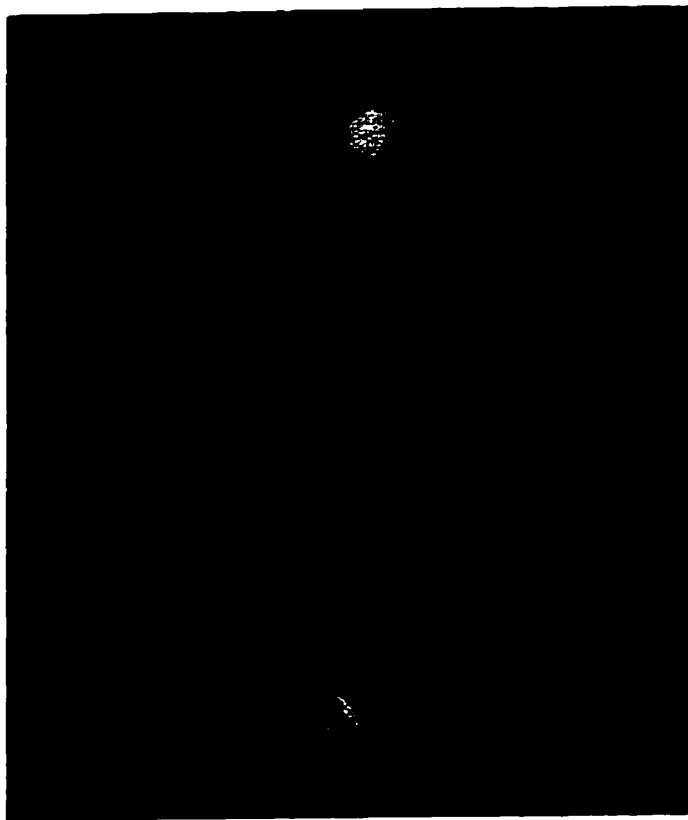
THE BODY WELL.—PAINTED BY P. GORDALL.











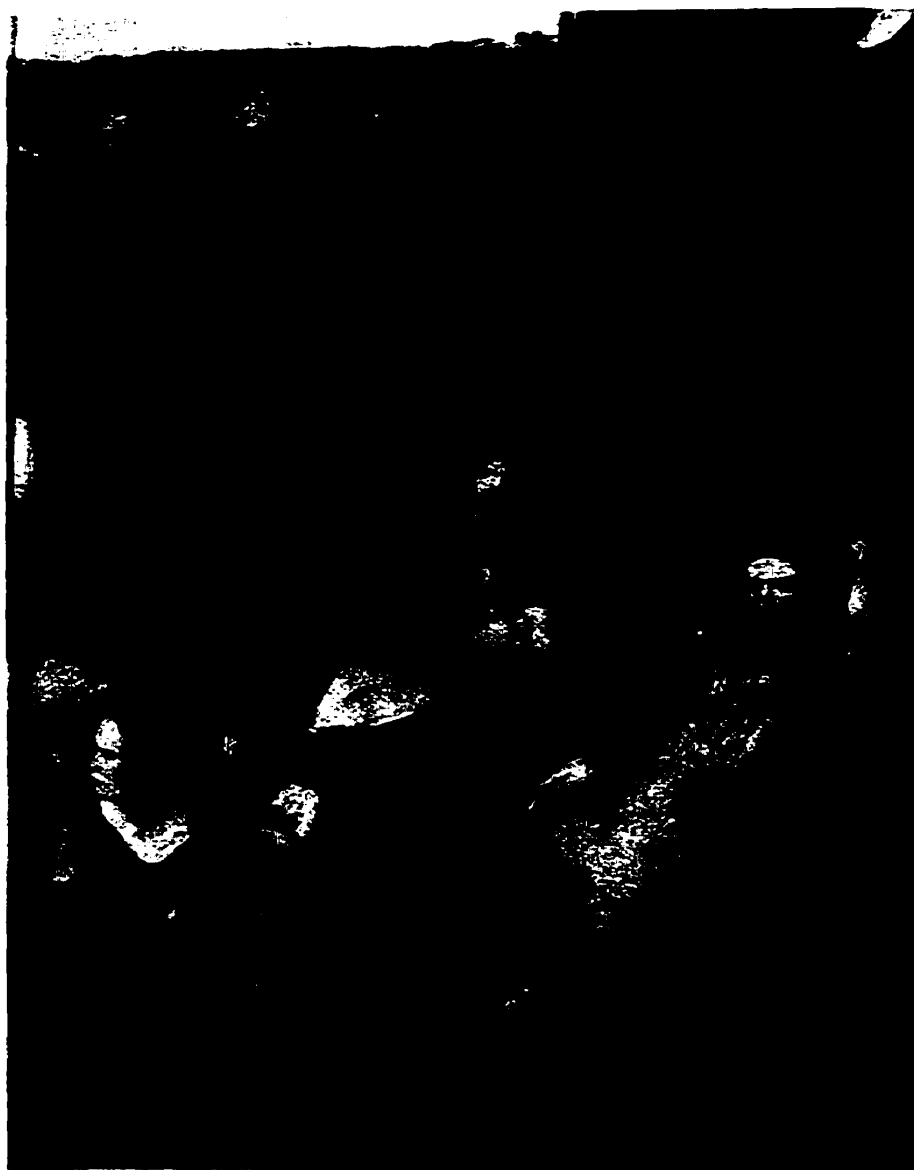


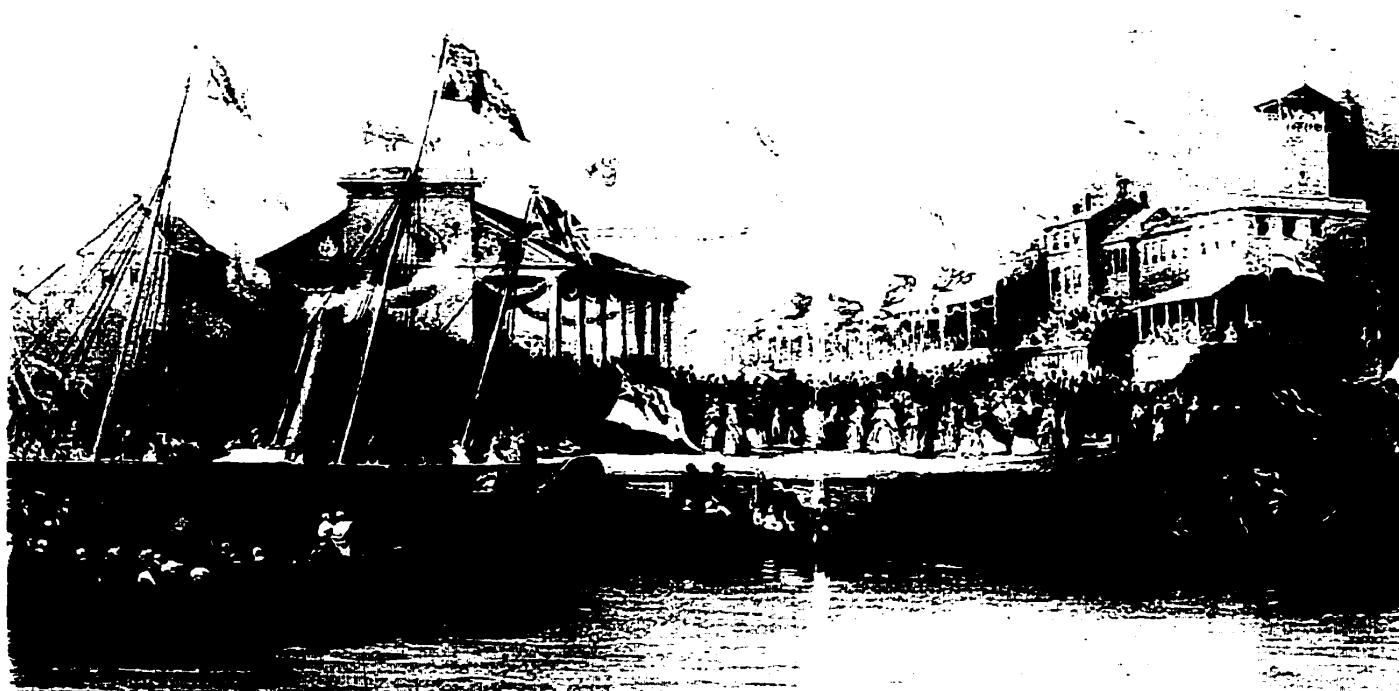




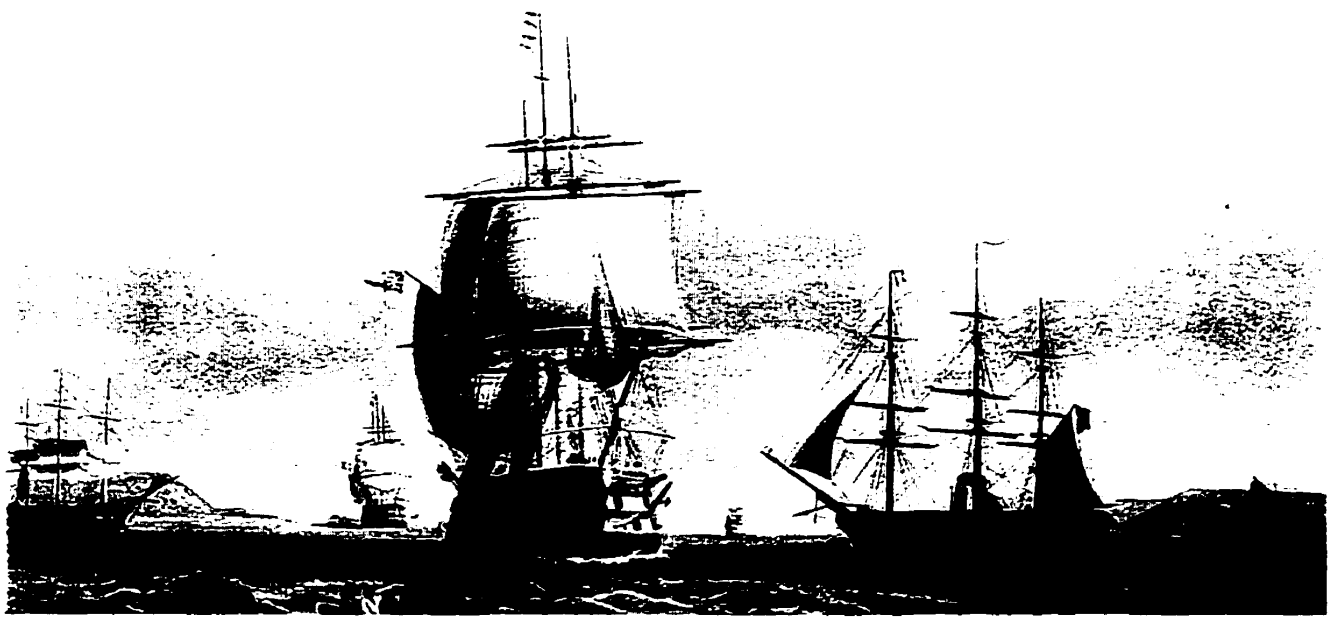
















Stopford, Robert Lowe (1813-98)



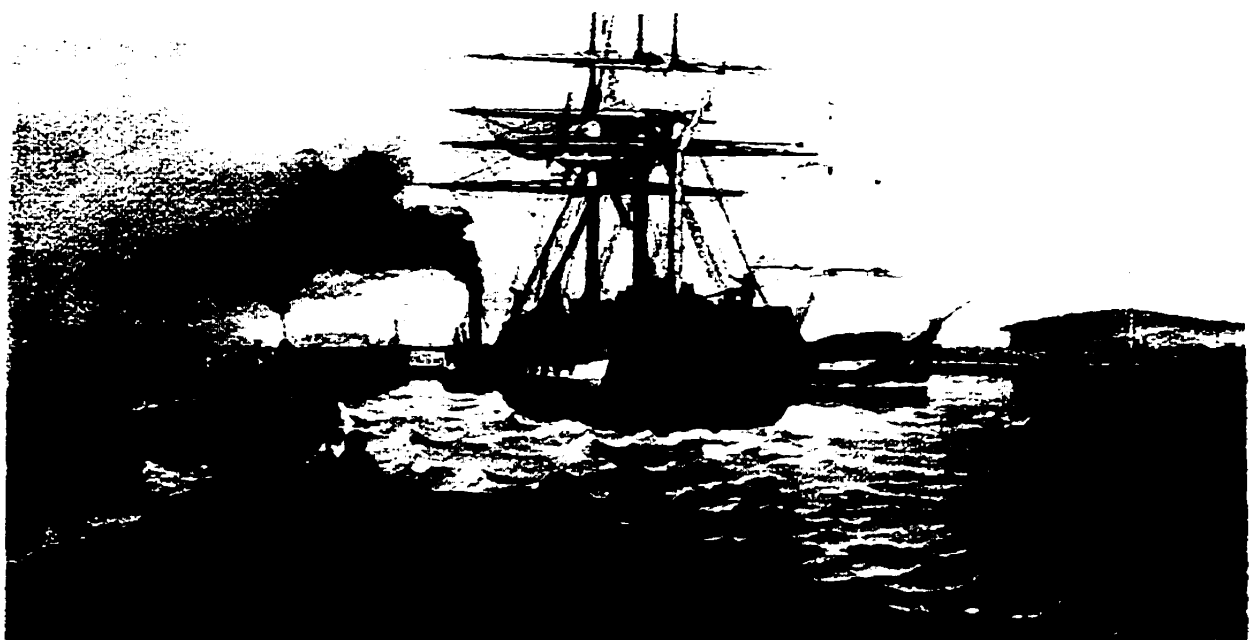
ARCH BRIDGE CROSSING GS&WR,  
THE BLACKWATER AT MALLOW



MONARD VIADUCT (GS&WR) Co Cork



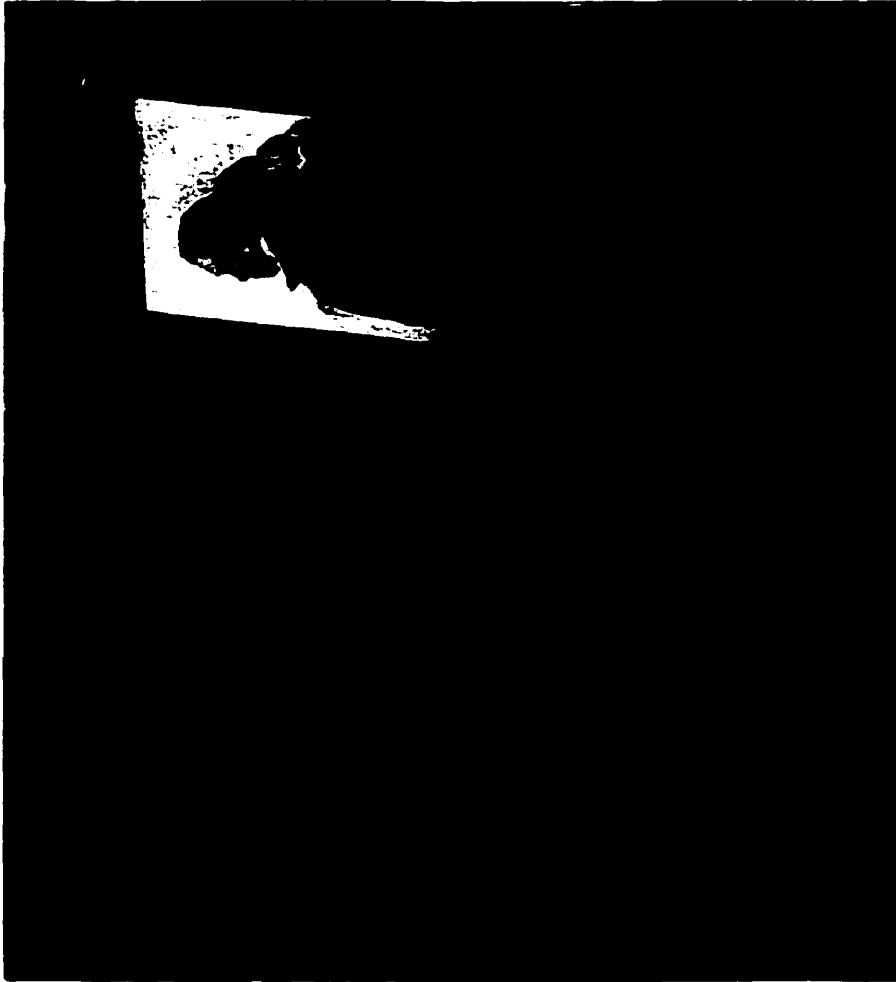
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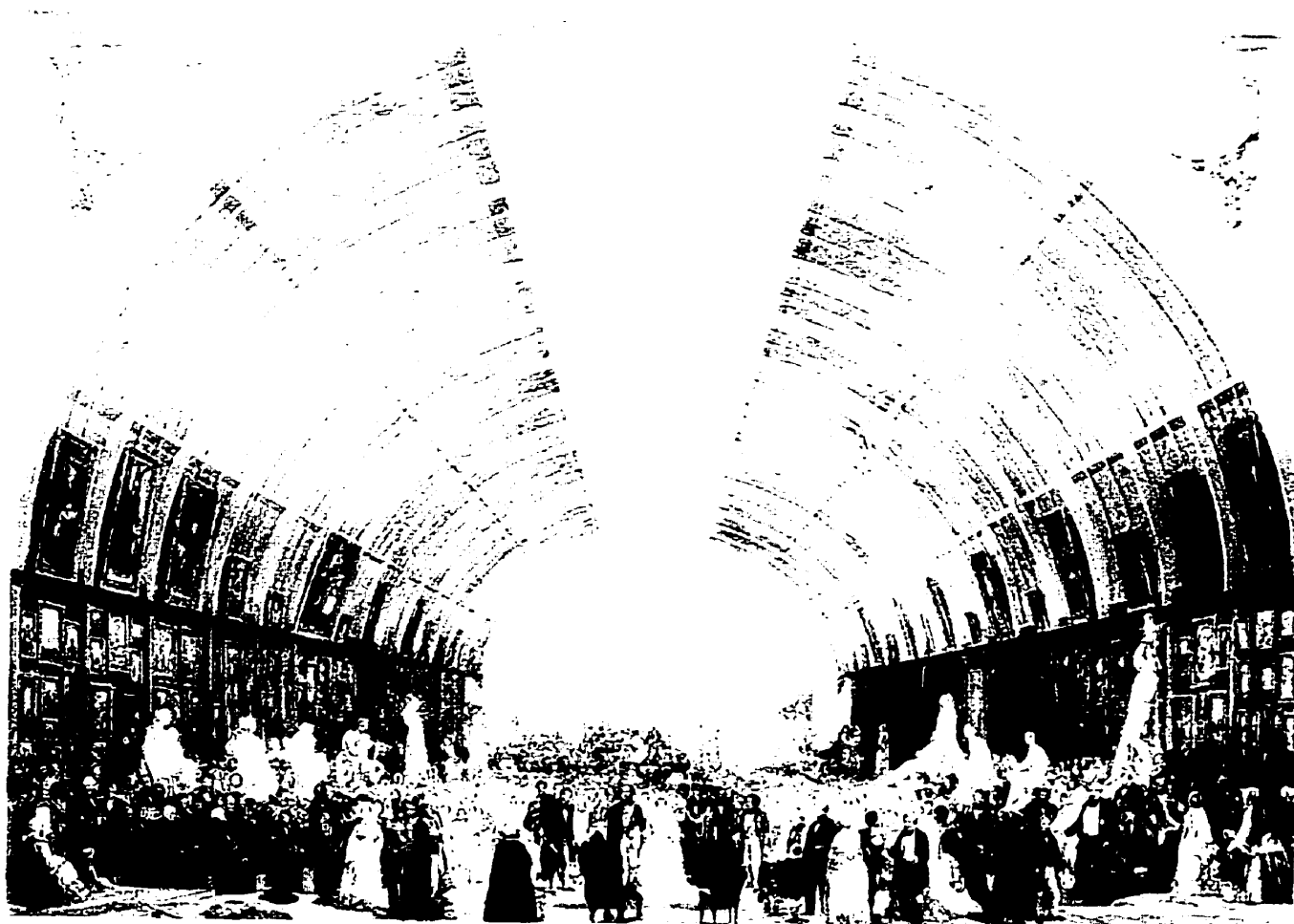














## Chapter II – Section C

### Book Illustrations

An examination of the images of Ireland in Victorian book illustration published in the decades adjoining the Famine era is a topic so broad in scope that it can only be touched on here. Its influence, however, must at least be noted. Some of the illustrations discussed below were published in book form, others in serial publications. We will take a brief look at a few of the illustrations drawn for Charles Dickens, Charles Lever, William Carleton, Mrs. Anna Marie Hall, Camden Pelham, and William Hamilton Maxwell. Although Dickens kept tight control over the subjects and settings for the illustrations of most of his novels, Lever and Ainsworth willingly adapted the text to the illustrations.<sup>151</sup> Many of the illustrations discussed below were drawn by Hablot Knight Browne (1815-1882). Browne (otherwise known as Phiz) was the primary illustrator for Dickens for many years, as well as the illustrator of a number of novels for Lever, Carleton, Ainsworth, Trollope and others. In addition to the illustrations of Browne, I will discuss other artists including George Cruikshank, Daniel Maclise, William Makepeace Thackeray, J. C. Timbrell, and Watts Phillips.

The novels of Dickens provide a number of Irish images. A good example is from *The Pickwick Papers* (1837) when Mr. Pickwick, Sam Weller, Bob Sawyer, and Ben Allen are travelling by coach. Reference is made to a boisterous Irish family who seems to think the coach, Pickwick, and his friends constitute some sort of official procession and run alongside “begging all the while.”<sup>152</sup> The engraving *Mr. Bob Sawyer's Mode of Travelling* (Figure 1) drawn by Hablot Knight Browne is clearly a disparaging depiction of the Irish. A family of perhaps seven, eight, or nine races barefoot around the carriage clothed in rags, wielding shillelaghs.

Another illustration of the Irish also drawn by Phiz for Dickens is *The Visit to the Brickmaker's* in *Bleak House* (1853) (Figure 2). In *A Companion to Bleak House*, Susan Shatto points out that the brickmakers whom Esther visits are intended to be Irish. She concludes this from the details Dickens introduces: Jenny's husband drinks, beats her, and gets into fights—tendencies ascribed as characteristic of the Irish in articles like “On

<sup>151</sup> John Buchanan-Browne, *Phiz!* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1978), 19.

<sup>152</sup> Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers* (London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd. & Humphrey Milford, 1900), 816.

Duty with Inspector Field” in *Household Words*.<sup>153</sup> The description is stereotypically Irish: “it was one of a cluster of wretched hovels in a brickfield, with pigsties close to the broken windows, and miserable little gardens before the doors, growing nothing but stagnant pools.”<sup>154</sup> Because the trade of brickmaking was primarily limited to the five summer months, brickmakers were otherwise commonly unemployed and were presumed to be disreputable types with reputations as drunkards, liars, and degenerates.<sup>155</sup> In Figure 2, Phiz pictures a small windowless cottage where Mrs. Pardiggle and company call upon the inhabitants of a damp smoky household. Within the house, a woman with a black eye sits by the fire nursing a sick baby, a “bold” girl washes clothes in dirty water, while the brickmaker lies on the floor smoking, indisposed from the previous night’s revelry.

Camden Pelham’s the *Chronicles of Crime* or *The New Newgate Calendar* (1841) includes fifty-two drawings by Phiz and contains a series of memoirs and anecdotes of notorious characters who outraged British laws. Part of this compilation is *The Irish Wake* (Figure 3), a raucous and macabre variation of the commonly depicted Irish jaunting car scene. Phiz humorously depicts the body of a hanged man in a donkey cart bounced and jolted so much over the rough Irish roads that he almost comes alive. Note the simian-like features of all the participants, the rope around the dead man’s neck, and the gallows in the distance.

About 1850, a small cleverly conceived picture book of captioned satirical plates entitled *The Queen in Ireland* was published. In the summer of 1849, Queen Victoria and her family visited Ireland for the first time. The trip was planned to demonstrate English concern and support for the sufferings of the Irish peasantry during the Famine. *The Queen in Ireland*, a clever and artful example of prejudice, was written, designed, and etched by the playwright Watts Phillips (1825-1874). The captioned scenes portray Mr. Smithers’ comical visit to Ireland in eighteen hand-colored engravings. Upon learning that her majesty intends to visit the “sister isle,” Smithers determines to follow her

<sup>153</sup> Susan Shatto, *A Companion to Bleak House* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), 91. Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*, First Published, 1853 (London: Penguin Books, 1985), 156. Charles Dickens, *The Uncommercial Traveller and Reprinted Pieces* (London: Oxford University Press, 1987), 517, 518. The description of the brickmaker’s house is thought to refer to the London district of Agar Town inhabited by the impoverished Irish who fled from Ireland during the famine years.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Graham Storey and K. J. Fielding, eds. *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981, Vol. 5: 231-2: Note 3. In a letter to William Browne dated January 11, 1848, Dickens confirms this view: “The main circumstance against the man, is his running away. But he is a brickmaker; and all brickmakers are supposed to be prowling vagabonds with more or less reason to run away, arising in petty-larceny recollections.”

example, and if possible, hopes to join the royal cortege. The book describes the unsuccessful attempt of Mr. Smithers to follow in the footsteps of her majesty and comments on the mishaps that Ireland metes out to her visitors. While Smithers' trip was a fiasco, the Queen's visit was accorded to be more successful.<sup>156</sup>

How extensively the book was read or distributed is not clear. What is certain however, is that the book characterized the Irish experience in strong negative stereotypical terms. Watts captions (Figure 4) as follows:

He lands at Cork, and is much annoyed to find that her Majesty has quitted that city... He is however received with loud acclamations by the usual deputation of Mendicants... who very kindly escort him to his Hotel.<sup>157</sup>

And so it goes on. Over the next several days, Smithers hires a car, which immediately falls apart. He walks through wind and rain only to find shelter in a cabin amidst the pigs, is nearly shot by a tithe proctor, falls into a melee of Irish gentlemen and peasants, and is felled by a flying pot. With the aid of poteen, Smithers makes merry and toasts the Queen, is robbed completely and nearly "kilt" entirely. Having completely missed the Queen, he returns by way of Cork and doesn't rest until he reaches the home of the "Saxon." In all the plates, note the bestial physiognomies. The woman and the Irish mendicants (Figure 4), all the Irish onlookers (Figure 5), and the brutish facial features of the entire room of peasants and gentleman (Figure 6) are exceptional for their ugliness.

Derisive remarks and drawings about the Irish and their physiognomy were not limited to the English but emanated from Irishmen also. In 1839, the Irish doctor and novelist Charles Lever, expressed concern to his publisher M'Glashan about the details of the illustrations for his first novel *Harry Lorrequer*, scheduled to be illustrated by Hablot Knight Browne. He wrote:

Has Phiz any notion of Irish physiognomy? If not, and as 'Lorrequer' abounds in specimens, pray entreat him to study the Tail, [the name which O'Connell's parliamentary followers were contemptuously called], when they meet in February; he can have nothing better, if not too coarse, for his purposes."<sup>158</sup>

<sup>156</sup> A letter from the O'Connor papers (The O'Connor Don, Irish Catholic landlord and M.P. from Co. Roscommon) documents her visit. Manuscript: 9:2:127 To Honoria O'Connor from her cousin R. J. McDermot. "The little Queen danced all night long. Is she not a merry Sovereign! Our Young Ireland friends will be ready to fly at all who could enjoy themselves thus while the poor Irish starve and die. But it would be a very unfair conclusion to come to."

<sup>157</sup> Watts Phillips, *The Queen in Ireland* (London: D. Bogue, c. 1850).

<sup>158</sup> John Buchanan-Browne, *Phiz!* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1978), 18.

From 1839 to 1863, Hablot Browne illustrated fifteen of Lever's novels, from *Harry Lorrequer* to *Luttrell of Aran*. *Harry Lorrequer*, Lever's first novel was written in Brussels, illustrated by Browne in London, and published by M'Glashan in Dublin. Throughout the collaboration, their communication at a distance made for many difficulties and frustrations. *Jack Hinton*, which followed *Charles O'Malley*, was an attempt to show how Englishmen misunderstand Ireland, partly due to the Irish love of hoaxing, and through the dramatic character of the Irish.

Yet Lever and the Nationalists were generally at odds with each other. O'Connell blasted Lever in his speeches. "From the *Nation*," Thackeray said, "you would fancy that Lever was a stark traitor."<sup>159</sup> The Nationalists believed Lever falsely represented Irish character by portraying them as lighthearted like himself, not as an oppressed peasantry in need of emancipation from tyrannical England. At the time, it seems as though Thackeray alone understood that melancholy was the basis of Lever's humor. The English critics, unaware of any sadness beneath, responded primarily to the rollicking tales.<sup>160</sup> Attacked by both political parties, Lever gave up his magazine and retired to the Continent. He settled at Florence where he lived during the revolutionary year 1848. Lever's early tales deal with the reckless young Irishmen amusing themselves; his later, with sad old Irishmen who are reaping the fruit of their amusement such as the fate of the ruined Irish squire.

*Harry Lorrequer* (1837) and *Confessions of Con Cregan, The Irish Gil Blas* (1849) were two of Lever's most popular novels. *The Supper at Father Malachi's* (Figure 7) in *Harry Lorrequer* may have offended some of the priesthood in its portrayal of excess and high spirits while the rollicking figure of Con Cregan in "A Quiet Chop" at "Killeen's" (Figure 8) depicts an Irish opportunist and upstart. Note the demeanor of the figures in both illustrations.

Charles Lever was born in Ireland in 1806. Educated at Trinity College, Dublin, Lever qualified for the practise of medicine in 1831, but after excessive gambling and extravagant living, he turned to writing. He produced a series of rollicking romances initially set in post-Napoleonic Ireland, depicting colorful and enterprising heroes on their

<sup>159</sup> Charles Lever, *Harry Lorrequer* (New York: The Athenaeum Society, {n.d.} ), xxvii.  
<sup>160</sup> Ibid., xxvii

world travels. Lever's novels exhibit a love of display, conviviality, and high spirits that have been characterized as quite un-English.<sup>161</sup> Even though Lever's father was an Englishman from Lancashire, his mother, the daughter of a Cromwellian family, had long been settled in Ireland. According to his reviewer, Andrew Lang, heredity and climate could perhaps account for his un-English love of display, ebullience, and moral purity of love.<sup>162</sup> Yet, despite the host of Victorian racial assumptions that lurk within this comment, an ascendancy view colored the themes of his novels. Often humorous and satirical, Lever's superiority to the Irish peasantry was understood not only in his tales, but also in the engravings that he commissioned from Phiz. Although Lever thought that his artist, Hablot Browne, exaggerated the uproarious element in his romances<sup>163</sup>, perhaps reality served as a model for the engravings, for at the time, it was fashionable for literary men to rollick. On one occasion when Phiz stayed with Lever in Brussels, "the novelist averred that nine dozen of champagne was drunk in sixteen days."<sup>164</sup>

When William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863) dedicated *The Irish Sketch Book* to his good friend Charles Lever in 1843, he noted that the author of *Harry Lorrequer* and editor of the *Dublin University Magazine* "might disapprove of a great deal which it contains."<sup>165</sup> *Ainsworth's Magazine*, however, gave *The Irish Sketchbook* a favorable review in May of 1843. "We had...pronounced Mr. M. A. Titmarsh to be considerably more of an author than artist, until our eyes feasted on the illustrative Irishmen appropriately adorning these pages, when we found him to be alike vigorous, original, and true, in both characters—independent in both of the ordinary rules of art."<sup>166</sup>

By 1845, the popularity of the book generated a second edition, and a third in 1849. In 1880, Thomas Carlyle concurred with *Ainsworth's Magazine* when he remarked to Gavan Duffy, the editor of the "Nation," that Thackeray's chief talent in drawing was "making wonderful likenesses with pen and ink, struck off without premeditation, and which it was found he could not afterwards improve."<sup>167</sup> Although Thackeray

<sup>161</sup> Ibid. xi.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., xii.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., xii.

<sup>165</sup> William Makepeace Thackeray, *The Irish Sketch book and Critical Reviews* (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1879), i.

<sup>166</sup> John Buchanan-Brown, *The Illustrations of W. M. Thackeray* (London: David and Charles, Newton Abbot, 1979), 26.

<sup>167</sup> Buchanan-Brown, *Illustrations of Thackeray*, 28.

complained in a letter to his mother in March of 1843 that “all the Irish blocks are spoiled,”<sup>168</sup> he did not have them re-cut.

In Figure 9, Thackeray depicts two remarkably homely Irish women standing at the entrance of a recently discovered cave located by the seashore near Dublin. The women had agreed to sit for their portraits only under the promise of a glass of whiskey. Later, on the road to Bantry Thackeray provides a similarly unflattering sketch and comments that “in regard of pretty faces, male or female, this road is very unfavourable. I have not seen one for fifty miles; though as it is market-day all along the road, we have had the opportunity to examine vast numbers of countenances. The women are, for the most part, stunted, short, with flat Tartar faces; and the men no handsomer. Every woman has bare legs, of course; and as the weather is fine, they are sitting outside their cabins, with the pig, and the geese, and the children sporting around.”<sup>169</sup> *A Car To Killarney* (Fig. 10) depicts a miraculous vehicle that carried a cargo of thirteen from Kenmare to Killarney, illustrated with beggars. Throughout the text, Thackeray complains of the nuisance of beggars, but in this instance his interest lies in the impossible load, the genteel and pretty female passengers of whom some are English, and a delightful journey of laughing, singing, and hugging to avoid falling off the car. In Figure 11, Thackeray depicts the area around the village of Muckross, where “all around the town miserable streets of cabins are stretched.”<sup>170</sup> People loll about and stare as ragged children and thimblers idle in the gutter. In response to all this, Thackeray asks

Are we to set all this down to absenteeism, and pity poor injured Ireland? Is the landlord’s absence the reason why the house is filthy, and Biddy lolls in the porch all day? People need not be dirty if they are ever so idle; if they are ever so poor, pigs and men need not live together. Half-an-hour’s work, and digging a trench, might remove that filthy dunghill from that filthy window. The smoke might as well come out of the chimney as out of the door. Why should not Tim do that, instead of walking a hundred-and-sixty miles to a race? The priests might do much more to effect these reforms than even the landlords themselves...<sup>171</sup>

Mrs. Anna Maria Hall (1800-1881) provides another view of Ireland. Mrs. Hall first wrote *Sketches of Irish Character* in 1829 and over the years expanded and revised it numerous times. The third edition, published in 1846, was lavishly illustrated with over

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid. , 18.

<sup>169</sup> Thackeray, *The Irish Sketch Book*, 90.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 129.

sixty engravings by nineteen artists. The “Sketches” refer to the parish of Bannow on the seacoast of the County of Wexford where the author spent her early years. Mrs. Hall singles out the Bannow area for its moral and social advantages, declaring that the district of Wexford was superior to any other part of the south of Ireland since the landlord was not an absentee. The tenantry were prosperous and the land naturally rich. These were “a peculiar people,” she averred, descendants of the Anglo-Norman settlers who retain to this day much of their English character, apparent

in the skillfully farmed fields, and comparatively comfortable cottages, the barns attached to every farmyard, the well-trimmed hedgerows, stocked with other vegetables than potatoes; the peasantry are better clad than we have seen them elsewhere, and have an air of sturdy independence, which they really feel, and to which they are justly entitled, for it is achieved by their own honest industry.<sup>172</sup>

Mrs. Hall’s object in writing these stories was more than mere amusement -- she desired to make the Irish character “more justly appreciated, more rightly estimated, and more respected, in England;” and “at the same time ...to notice the errors and faults that prevail most among my countrymen and countrywomen, as to be of some use in inducing a removal of them.”<sup>173</sup>

Despite Mrs. Hall’s desire to create more respect for her countrymen, taken as a whole the stories and the illustrations provide a slightly backhanded defense. The following engravings illustrate this point. *Philip loitering at the Gate* (Figure 12) by J. C. Timbrell illustrates “We’ll See About It,” a story about the national habit of procrastination resulting in ruin. *The “Pattern” Tent* (Figure 13) and *Mary Ryan’s Daughter* (Figure 14) are two of several illustrations provided by Daniel Maclise for this edition. Maclise’s illustration of the Pattern tent depicts the coarse atmosphere of rural gaiety, revelry, and high spirits typical of Irish fairs, while his drawing of *Mary Ryan’s Daughter* portrays a pretty young peasant girl whose bare feet, unkempt hair, and rustic clothing instantaneously indicate her low station in life.

Another mode of characterizing the Irish is found in illustrations of Irish peasant beliefs in fairies and superstitions. Stories and engravings from both Anna Maria Hall’s *Sketches of Irish Character* and William Carleton’s (1794-1869) *Tales and Sketches*,

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid. 130.

<sup>172</sup> Anna Maria Hall, (Mrs. S. C.) *Sketches of Irish Character* (London: Nattali & Bond, 1855), vi. (Introduction to the Third Edition, 1846).

*Illustrating the Character, Usages, Traditions, Sports and Pastimes of the Irish Peasantry* (1845) exemplify this theme. Carleton published numerous books on the Irish peasantry including *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry* and *Stories of Irish Life* in which he recorded for posterity many of the oddities of the Irish life. Although his sketches were drawn directly from life and were nearly without exception the names of real people, places, and scenery, Carleton's portraits were meant to represent a class of people, not individuals. Born of Irish peasantry, Carleton understood their hardships, but wished to guide his countrymen in their social duty. He believed their flaws stemmed from secret societies, sloth, and drink, but understood that in Ireland their industry was an excuse for rack-renting, if not expulsion to poorer lands, and that what seemed to be sloth was simply utter despair. Yet his stories are said to represent Anglo-Irish literature at their finest.<sup>174</sup> However, his changing point of view left his allegiance in question.

Carleton's ambivalence towards the Irish peasantry is expressed in much of his writing, and in both the stories and the illustrations for "The Three Wishes" and "The Irish Senachie," selections from *Tales and Sketches of the Irish Peasantry* (1845). Phiz illustrated both narratives. *The Three Wishes* (Figure 15) represents the legend of Billy Duffy, who is so great an Irish rogue that by way of his poverty, idleness, and dishonesty, he is able to outwit and overcome the devil. In "The Irish Senachie," Carleton relates how the Irish historian and storyteller was a common village fixture. He was usually a uneducated person whose gift of memory and storytelling enabled him to invent words and stories, relate old family anecdotes, tales of lore, and dim traditions. Generally, the senachie's stories were innocently and ignorantly believed by the uneducated peasantry. *The Senachie* (Figure 16) pictures the storyteller surrounded by an entranced audience, barefoot and rag-clad children, young and old adults, and the ubiquitous family pig.

George Cruikshank (1792-1878) also provided views of Ireland. One of his projects involved creating the illustrations for the *History of the Irish Rebellion in 1798* written by William Hamilton Maxwell (1792-1850) first published in 1845. By 1854, the book had gone into its fourth edition. Curiously, the 1845 edition of this book owned by Harvard University includes an (inlaid) original pen and ink drawing on which is

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

inscribed (Figure 17) "This infernal Fenian fiend is sketched by me Geo Cruikshank."<sup>175</sup> The sketch depicts a man charging forward holding a dagger in his right hand and a whiskey bottle in his left. Although there is no information on when or how the sketch came to be incorporated into the book, the drawing would suggest that Cruikshank's personal political perspective reiterated the anti-Irish one illustrated in the plates. The artist completed twenty-one plates of brutal savagery for Maxwell's history. In *Rebels Destroying a House and Furniture* (Figure 18) Irish revolutionaries hack away with axes at the floor and walls of the house, dance on a piano, and set the room on fire. In *The Loyal Little Drummer* (Figure 19) and *The Murder of George Crawford and His Granddaughter* (Figure 20) rebels stab a drummer boy with pikes and with equanimity and mercilessness slay George Crawford, his granddaughter, and their dog in the same manner. Cruikshank caricatures the Irish insurgents as bestial and barbaric, portraying them with ape-like features and committing murderous acts. Other drawings from the series *Rebels Executing Prisoners on Wexford Bridge* and *The Rebel Camp on Vinegar Hill* display the same prognathism and inhuman behavior. The engravings are so brutal in nature that E. H. Johnson of Princeton<sup>176</sup> has compared their ferocity to Goya's monumental series of etchings of the Peninsular War in *Los Desastres de la Guerra*, although in my opinion the plates lose much of their intensity by the artist's use of caricature and overstatement. Cruikshank never illustrated another history, possibly because of his emotionally charged interpretation of the text. On the other hand, at this time, perhaps only works of fiction justified the additional cost of artistic plates.

In effect, most of the stories illustrated here were written by English or Anglo-Irish writers. All of the illustrations are in some way disparaging. They may portray high-jinks, moral fables, or tales of superstition, and lend themselves to humor, but the laughter is not usually generalized, but directed at the Irish.

<sup>175</sup> William Carleton, *Carleton's Stories of Irish Life, with an Introduction by Darrell Figgis* (Dublin: The Talbot Press, Ltd., 1916), xx, incl. William Carleton, *Tales and Sketches, Illustrating the Character, Usages, Traditions, Sports and Pastimes of The Irish Peasantry* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1845).

<sup>176</sup> William Hamilton Maxwell, *History of the Irish Rebellion in 1798: With Memoirs of the Union, and Emmett's Insurrection in 1802* (London: A. H. Baily & Co., Cornhill, 1845).


<sup>176</sup> E. D. H. Johnson, "The George Cruikshank Collection at Princeton" in *George Cruikshank: A Revaluation*, ed. Robert L. Patton (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 19.



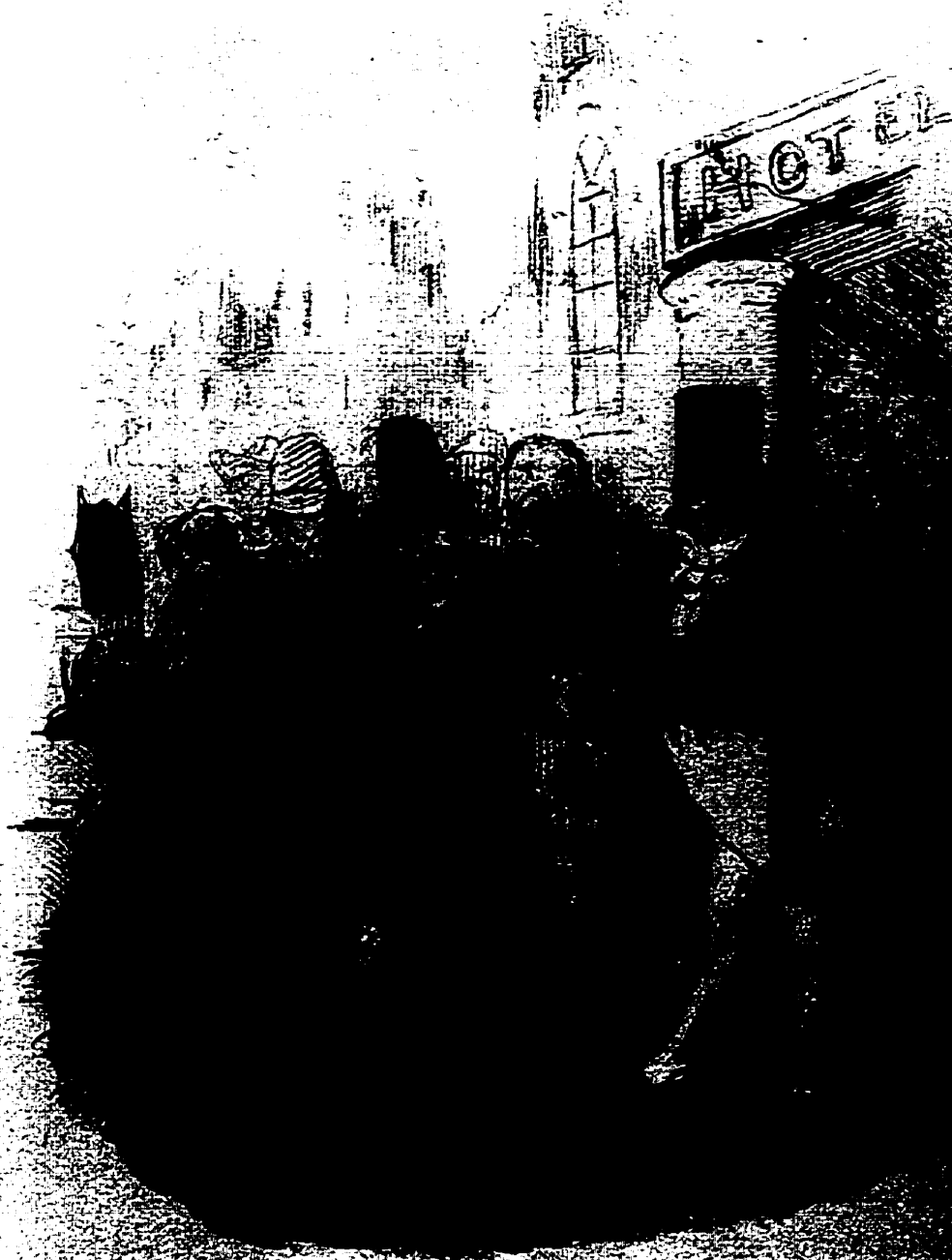








He lands at Cork, and is much annoyed to find that  
Majesty has quitted that city. He is however received  
with loud acclamations by the usual deputation of  
dicants — who very kindly escort him to his Hotel.



After some discussion with the driver he had  
and amidst a volley of jeers from the bys  
proceeds on a tour of observation.



Enters and is immediately felled to the earth by a party of soldiers. The soldiers then proceed on the tail of another gentleman and coat it has somewhat disturbed the good understanding between them.

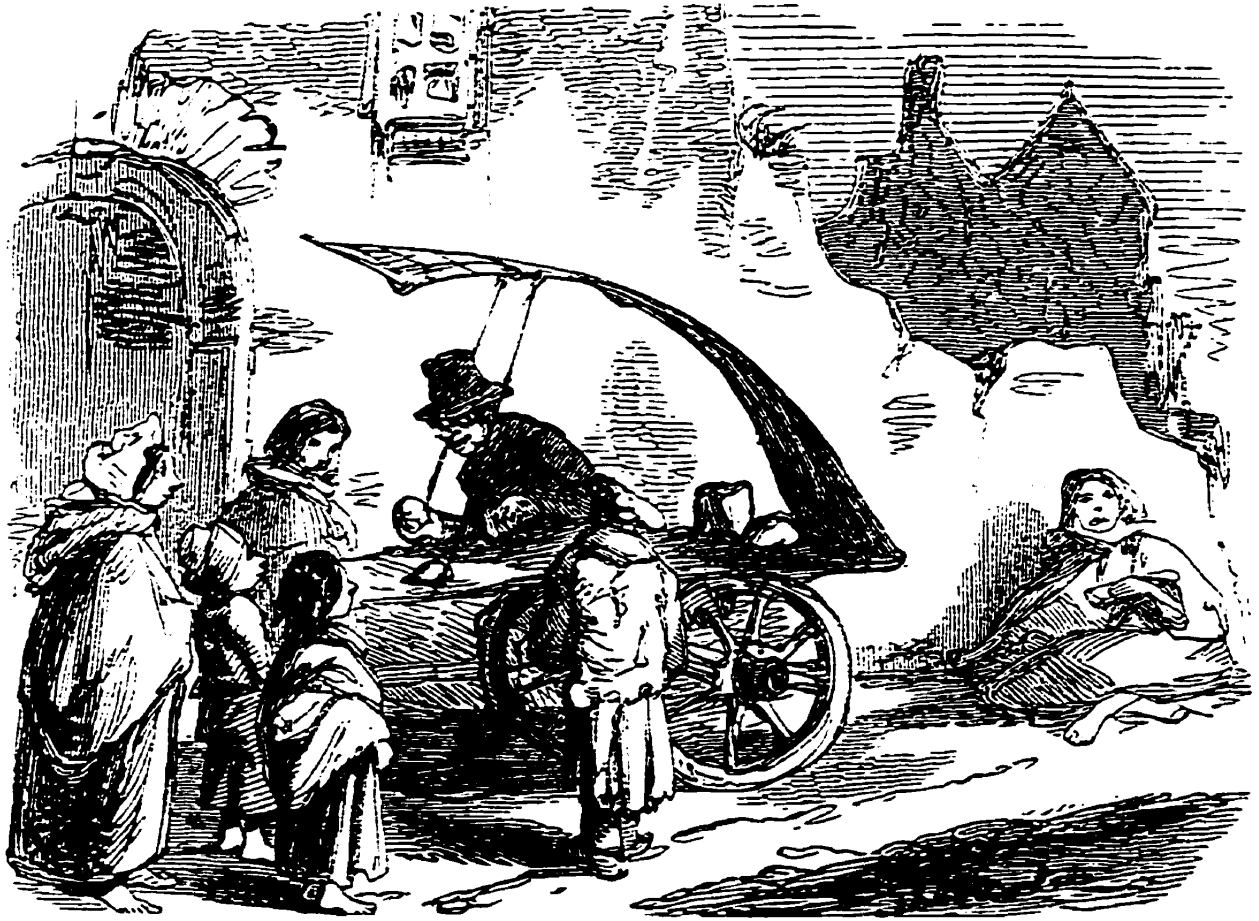








A CAR TO KILLARNEY.















This informal Fencian Fiddle  
is sketched by the G. B. 1914







### Chapter III

#### Dickens and The Irish

“My art has brought acquaintances by scores,  
But to my character I owe my friends.”<sup>177</sup>

The following chapter will examine Dickens's contribution to England's vision of Ireland and the Irish. Although it may seem curious that the novelist would figure prominently in a study on images and the Irish Famine, Charles Dickens knew nearly all of the important artists of his day, as well as many of the most powerful and famous individuals of the era. By 1854, Dickens had completed eleven novels, five Christmas books and two travel books, and had founded the *Daily News* and *Household Words*. Dickens was considered the “ideal of friendship” – “the good, the gentle, high-gifted, ever friendly, noble Dickens, ever inch of him an honest man.”<sup>178</sup> Gregarious and charismatic, Dickens was remarkably influential during his adult life. He was representative of his circle of artists and elite opinion-makers and of upper and middle-class London. It was through his popularity with the reading public and this social circle that he inculcated ideas of prejudice and influenced the production of art. And by 1845 and the onset of the Irish Famine, the popularity of his various writings and the illustrations for them, gave Dickens, like Thackeray and Carlyle, the power to mould public opinion, helping to set the tone of his age.

Dickens was a reformer and moralist. His profound understanding of human nature and of the period in which he lived gave him an extraordinary ability to portray the social problems of his era through his poetic use of language. Dickens expressed his concerns about society through his articles and books, his control of the illustrations for them, and through his frenetic schedule of social engagements. His most recent biographer, Peter Ackroyd, emphasized how the author's middle-class Englishness was essential not only to his work, but also to his appeal.<sup>179</sup> And although Dickens propounded both radical and conservative ideas in his novels, like his English contemporaries, he avoided extremes in politics and art.

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<sup>177</sup> J. W. T. Ley, *The Dickens Circle* (London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd., 1919) 1.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>179</sup> Peter Ackroyd, *Dickens* (London: Minerva, 1990), 390, 757.

If the novelist's political principles stemmed more from emotional needs than from argument, as Ackroyd suggests, a number of paradoxes are more easily explained. Dickens wrote repeatedly about the miserable conditions under which the average poor Englishman lived. But as Ackroyd so succinctly put it, he "never really sympathized with the working class as such; he pitied and helped individual members of that class, but had scant sympathy for any kind of collective...within it."<sup>180</sup> Like the men of *Punch*, Dickens habitually linked the poor with filth and disease, disgust with beggary and the Irish. He shrunk from "low" companions, having "suppressed any public knowledge of his working-class life in the blacking factory."<sup>181</sup> He opposed insularity, but from *American Notes* and *Pictures from Italy*, we can see he was excessively nationalistic. Dickens well understood the obligation of an artist or a writer to truth and beauty, but carefully avoided straying from the public taste.<sup>182</sup> His political principles were also defined by the extensive and growing financial obligations necessitated by his large family. To meet these commitments, Dickens developed a hardheaded business sense and a desire for status and material gain. Debt and the importance of money were acutely obvious on a day to day basis not only to Dickens, but to all Victorians.

Despite a masterful and domineering temperament, Dickens was an extraordinary person. His intelligence and generosity, his candor, his joyful outlook and love of humanity won him a host of friends. He thrived on constant activity and stimulation. When not writing or travelling, he walked and visited, gave and attended dinner parties, organized and directed private amateur theatricals, and participated in elite societies and clubs. He helped found the Guild of Literature and Art, and among others belonged to the Portwiners, Shakespeare, Athenaeum, Garrick, and Albion Clubs. He gave brilliant speeches and worked untiringly for charitable causes.<sup>183</sup>

Nevertheless, Dickens had a dark side characterized by moods of morose indifference, nervous anxiety, aggressiveness, and self-absorption. He could be as arbitrary, implacable, and heartless, as he could be noble, sympathetic, and kind. Dickens became "so intently fixed on his own opinions," John Forster said, and "in admiration of his own works," "that he Forster, was useless to him as a counsel," and

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<sup>180</sup> *Dickens*, 779.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> Monroe Engel, *The Maturity of Dickens* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1959), 6-7.

"since he refused to see criticisms on himself, this partial passion would grow upon him, till it became an incurable evil."<sup>184</sup> Referring to her father's treatment of her mother, in later life Katherine Dickens described him as "an uncanny genius," and "a wicked man, a very wicked man... My father was not a gentleman – he was too mixed to be a gentleman... He was not a good man, but he was not a fast man, but he was wonderful!"

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### The Dickens Circle

An early biographer wrote, "All his associates, great men as well as lesser men, are dominated by the personality of this man who, in social upbringing, education, and all that usually counts for so much, was their inferior."<sup>186</sup> Dickens was clearly the moving force amongst his friends.

Dickens was closely allied to the men of *Punch*. Although not formally a member of the staff, he often sat at the *Punch* table, and undoubtedly played an influential but unacknowledged role in the magazine. Not only were John Leech, Mark Lemon, Gilbert a Becket, Blanchard and Douglas Jerrold, William Thackeray, Perceival Leigh, and Dudley Costello all *Punch* men, they were also members of the amateur theatricals organized by Dickens.

Besides his friends at *Punch*, the Dickens circle included artists, writers, actors, musicians, and lawyers. Dickens regularly visited and corresponded with John Forster, the author's close friend and earliest biographer, William Macready, William Harrison Ainsworth, Lord Francis Jeffrey, Thomas Noon Talfourd, Thomas Carlyle, Wilkie Collins, Lord Normanby, Robert Browning, Walter Landor, William Jerdan, Thomas Hood, Charles Knight, Lady Blessington, Comte D'Orsay, and Baroness Burdett-Coutts.

Since his early days as a parliamentary reporter, Dickens held a low opinion of the House of Commons, its members, and its effectiveness. Consequently, few politicians were part of his circle. Still, Sir Austen Layard, Lord Shaftesbury, and Sir Bulwer Lytton, with whom Dickens founded the Guild of Literature and Art, were all friends, as were Disraeli and Gladstone, though the last two were less closely associated.

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<sup>184</sup> Charles Dickens, *The Speeches of Dickens*, ed. K. J. Fielding (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), xix.

<sup>185</sup> Edgar Johnson, *Charles Dickens His Tragedy and Triumph* (New York: Simon And Schuster, Inc., 1952), Vol. 1, 579  
<sup>186</sup> Dickens, 869.

<sup>186</sup> J. W. T. Ley, *The Dickens Circle* (London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd., 1919), 4.

Lord John Russell, however, the Prime Minister whose ministry spanned the famine years (1846-1852) was a friend profoundly esteemed by Dickens. Apparently, the friendship was familiar enough for Dickens to request two Civil List pensions from him.<sup>187</sup> In 1852, shortly after the worst of the Irish famine, Dickens wrote that Lord John "is worth a score of official men; and has more generosity in his little finger than a Government usually has in its whole Corporation."<sup>188</sup> However, when one applies this glowing personal compliment to Lord John's famine policies, which the absence of political consensus and a series of harsh economic decisions made most inadequate, the praise indicates a strong lack of sympathy on the part of Dickens on this issue.

Unquestionably, Dickens and Lord John held a number of principles in common. Both championed civil and religious liberty, and advocated educational reform, literature, and letters. And both had "a conscientious abhorrence of Popery everywhere."<sup>189</sup> Lord John's position did not prevent Dickens from being astonishingly outspoken.<sup>190</sup>

While the author's political connections were quite impressive, many of his closest and most intimate friends were artists. Apparently, Dickens knew most of the artists of any distinction during his day.<sup>191</sup> With two or three exceptions, all of the illustrators who worked for Dickens enjoyed the close personal intimacy of Dickens and his family circle.<sup>192</sup> In fact, the circle was so close that Frederic Kitton,<sup>193</sup> author of *Dickens and His Illustrators*, noted that the "Novelist not unfrequently availed himself of the traits and idiosyncrasies of his familiars."<sup>194</sup>

One of Dickens's closest and oldest friends was the Irish Catholic painter, Daniel Maclise. Maclise, a great favorite of the Queen, painted several notable portraits of Dickens and his family, but designed only a few illustrations for Dickens's stories.<sup>195</sup> Early on in his career, Dickens met David Wilkie; Edwin, Tom, and Charles Landseer;

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 172. One for his friend, the author Leigh Hunt, and another for John Poole, a playwright who had fallen on hard times.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>189</sup> John Prest, *Lord John Russell* (London: Macmillan, 1972), 194.

<sup>190</sup> *Tragedy and Triumph*, Vol. 2, 846. One evening while dining at Lord John's, Dickens became so irritated over the suppression of reform endeavors in Parliament that he "gave them a little bit of truth" ...which was recorded as being "like a Sebastapol battery among polite company." Dickens may have been the harder of the two men.

<sup>191</sup> Richard Lattis, "Dickens and Art," *Dickens Studies Annual*, Vol. 14 (New York: Ams Press, 1985), 94.

<sup>192</sup> Frederic G. Kitton, *Dickens and His Illustrators* (London: George Redway, 1899), viii.

<sup>193</sup> Kitton's statement can be attributed to his personal acquaintance with Dickens's daughters and many of the author's surviving artist friends.

<sup>194</sup> *Dickens and His Illustrators*, viii.

<sup>195</sup> *The Dickens Circle*, 61.

and George Cruikshank, the illustrator of *Sketches by Boz*, *The Pickwick Papers* and *Oliver Twist*. The best known of the Dickens's illustrators was Hablot Knight Browne, who often signed his work, "Phiz." Browne designed the illustrations for ten of Dickens's novels, although after almost thirty years, Dickens dropped Browne abruptly.<sup>196</sup> It is not known whether Dickens replaced Browne with the son of his friend, the artist Frank Stone, as a favor, or because Marcus Stone, a younger but less talented artist, did provide a fresher look, or because Brown began working for a rival periodical.<sup>197</sup> But this is only conjecture, and despite Browne's natural disappointment, the two men remained life-long friends.

Other artists close to Dickens were W. P. Frith; Luke Fildes, Augustus Egg, Samuel Palmer, William Mulready, Francis Topham, and Frederick Goodall.<sup>198</sup> Topham illustrated *A Child's History of England* (c.1852-1854) for Dickens and was a participant in Dickens's company of distinguished amateur actors. Several *Punch* artists can be added to this list -- Richard Doyle, John Tenniel, and John Leech, who shared holidays, a hatred of loud noises, and marital frustrations with Dickens.

In his *Life of Dickens*, John Forster noted that artists did not have an easy time with the author. His requirements were so exacting that insofar as the illustrations were concerned, "he had rarely anything but disappointments."<sup>199</sup> Yet, it is the visual portrayals of the Dickens's characters provided by the illustrators which are perhaps the most memorable, "simply because the eye absorbs impressions more readily than the mental eye."<sup>200</sup>

Careful and precise as a writer and editor, Dickens sought to bring a similar accuracy to the illustrations of his novels,<sup>201</sup> believing that illustrations should be a strict extension of the verbal description of character and plot. He usually chose topics for his illustrators to picture and described his intent in considerable detail. And occasionally, he

<sup>196</sup> J. W. T. Ley, *The Dickens Circle*, 61. Browne told his partner: "I don't know what's up any more than you do...Dickens probably thinks a new hand would give his old puppets a fresh look...Confound all authors and publishers, say I; there is no pleasing or satisfying one or t'other."

<sup>197</sup> *Dickens*, 993-4. Brown may have been discharged when Dickens found out the illustrator had begun drawing for *Once A Week*, owned by his former publishers and enemies, Bradbury and Evans.

<sup>198</sup> Richard Lattis, "Dickens and Art," *Dickens Studies Annual*, Vol. 14 (New York: Ams Press, 1985), 94. *Dickens and His Illustrators*, xiii.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.* viii.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>201</sup> *Dickens and Art*, 101.

would pressure artists to more than art could do.<sup>202</sup>

Dictatorial at the age of twenty-three, Dickens told his publisher that, "Cruikshank," at the time, a mature and experienced artist, "requires the spur."<sup>203</sup> He wanted the artist to complete his drawings faster and more carefully. Dickens believed that the worst fault in an illustration was the failure of an artist to follow the story, something that happened occasionally and would upset him considerably.<sup>204</sup> For example,<sup>205</sup> Hablot Knight Browne's illustrations for *Dombey and Son* frightfully upset Dickens: "I can't say what pain and vexation it is to be so utterly misrepresented."<sup>206</sup> And later when John Leech put the wrong character in a scene at the end of Part II in the *Battle of Life*, Dickens considered dealing with the mistake a "monstrous enormity."<sup>207</sup> If one considers that a major part of Dickens's literary success was based upon his genius for vivid characterization, then the author's emphasis on the importance of synergy between drawn characterization and described characterization becomes not only understandable but was artistically necessary.

#### Dickens's Writing on the Irish Poor

If *Oliver Twist* depicted conditions in the backwaters of London investigated personally by "Boz," what Dickens understood of Ireland and the Irish was as much a mixture of stereotypical statements as personal observation. His intimate knowledge of London obtained through his incessant day and night walking tours is recorded in his fiction and documented in his non-fiction articles. Numerous essays published in *Sketches By Boz*, *Reprinted Pieces*, *Household Words*, and the *Uncommercial Traveller* assure us that Dickens knew of the large Irish population in London and the harsh circumstances under which they lived.<sup>208</sup> His love of the theatre exposed him to the tradition of the stage Irish actor as well as the work of Irish balladeers and poets. Indeed, the visual quality of Dickens's writings may be linked to his associations with artists, and also to the general Victorian concern with the appearance of the poor and their dwellings.

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<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Edgar Johnson, *Charles Dickens His Tragedy and Triumph* (New York: Simon And Schuster, Inc., 1952), 107; Maturty.

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 103

<sup>205</sup> *Dickens and His Illustrators*, 39. In 1836, Dickens requested Seymour to redraw an engraving for *The Pickwick Papers*. Forty-eight hours later, Seymour committed suicide. Seymour's family and friends claimed that Dickens had heavily contributed to Seymour's death by his ruthless insistence on this issue, although there is no evidence of this.

<sup>206</sup> Richard Lettis, "Dickens and Art," *Dickens Studies Annual* Vol. 14 (New York: Ams Press, 1985), 93-146: 104.

<sup>207</sup> "Dickens and Art," 103.

For the most part, the Irish stereotypes that Dickens created and disseminated were based upon the collective imagery of the period and the author's anxiety over political events, worries shared by many of his English contemporaries.

Consequently, Irish stereotypes were frequently incorporated into Dickens's work. However, they would often appear as unnamed "laborers"... "who have been alternately shaking hands with, and threatening the life of each other" in the Gin Shop (Sketches By Boz, 29); as prisoners in Newgate, "indifferent" to the presence of visitors (Sketches By Boz, 32); as occupants of Saffron Hill public houses, "wrangling with might and main" (Oliver Twist, 8); as servants to the likes of Harold Skimpole (Bleak House 43); and as the mass of urban poor whose "miserable affairs" are observed by the Uncommercial Traveller (Uncommercial Traveller, 30)."<sup>209</sup>

Dickens makes references to the poor of varying nationalities including his own and seems to impose a specific quality on each that he did not apply to the others. He frequently refers to the Irish poor as relentless beggars.

In *Nicholas Nickelby*, Chapter 2, Dickens writes:

And when the petition had been read and was about to be adopted, there came forward the Irish member (who as a young gentleman of ardent temperament,) with such a speech as only an Irish member can make, breathing the true soul and spirit of poetry, and poured forth with such fervour, that it made one warm to look at him...<sup>210</sup>

Unfortunately, the Irish member turns out to be a part of the fraudulent United Metropolitan Improved Hot Muffin and Crumpet Baking and Punctual Delivery Company.

In 1850, Dickens founded *Household Words*, a two-penny journal of "Instruction and Entertainment." The journal was directed towards a general readership, which was mainly middle class, not particularly critical, and interested in the thoughts of Dickens "on any subject whatever."<sup>211</sup> As the "Conductor" of *Household Words*, Dickens had total control over his writers' contributions and all the articles included were published with his full knowledge and approval. Contributors were anonymous and editorial revision was extensive and at times drastic. Parts of articles were "looked to," deleted,

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<sup>208</sup> The Irish population of London neared five per cent in 1851.

<sup>209</sup> Noted by Leon Litvack, School of English, Queen's University of Belfast via Dickens-L@UCSBVM.UCSB.EDU.

<sup>210</sup> Charles Dickens, *Nicholas Nickelby*.

altered, or “bettered.” Story endings were changed to make them more palatable, and statements that were too broad or that contradicted his views were entirely rewritten.<sup>212</sup>

Like his novels, stories, and his books on travel, *Household Words* was designed to inform and to entertain, but the intentions of the journal went further. *Household Words* encouraged its readers to involve themselves with the well-being of those below them.<sup>213</sup> Articles that focused on the “lower orders” rarely addressed them. Some championed their cause, others simply discussed their problems. Occasionally, an article appeared directed to the working or the “industrious poor” on matters of specific practical concern to them such as emigration. But, unfavorable and disparaging articles on Ireland, Catholicism, and the Irish poor were topics commonly chosen.<sup>214</sup>

In late 1855 after a five-year association with *Household Words*, Harriet Martineau published a vehement attack on Dickens in a pamphlet entitled, “The Factory Controversy.” “*Household Words*,” Martineau protested, “not only suppressed the truth about Catholicism, but maligned that religion by publishing dishonourable slanders.”<sup>215</sup> Martineau saw Dickens, like Mrs. Jellyby, as a “humanity-monger,” – only Dickens was dangerous.<sup>216</sup> Although Miss Martineau resigned as a contributor primarily because of the journal’s anti-Catholic imputations, its attitude towards women, its treatment of factory disputes, and its editorial policies also offended her. She found Dickens and Wills “philosophically and morally...inadequate,” “conceited, insolent, and one-sided,” and insufficiently equipped to be the social reformers that they set out to be.<sup>217</sup>

The Irish were frequently discussed in *Household Words*. In “Two Chapters on Bank Note Forgeries” (1850) Dickens and W. H. Willis tell a story about an Irish hoarder who puts bank notes into a sock in his garden for safekeeping. The bills deteriorate into bits of mildew and mushrooms. Fortunately, the bank is able to confirm the full sum and “magically” restores the bills. As Gordon Bigelow has said in his essay, “Dickens,

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<sup>211</sup> Anne Lohrli, *Household Words* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 14.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>214</sup> “The Begging-Letter Writer,” “A Monument of French Folly,” “On Duty with Inspector Field,” “A Small Star in the East,” “On An Amateur Beat,” “Old Lamps For New Ones,” “The Irish Use of the Globe,” “An Irish Peculiarity,” “Two Chapters on Bank Note Forgeries,” “A Crisis in the Affairs of Mr. John Bull,” “Post-Office Money Orders,” “The ‘Irish Difficulty’ Solved by Con McNale,” and “The Irish Union” among many others.

<sup>215</sup> Anne Lohrli, *Household Words* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 358.

<sup>216</sup> Anne Lohrli, *Household Words*, 359.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid. Furious with “Miss Martineau’s vomit of conceit,” Dickens meant to give her pamphlet no notice in *H.W.*, “if only for the mortification”<sup>218</sup> that the ignoring of it would cause her. But, on January 19, 1856, Dickens carefully edited and published a measured denial written by Morley.

Money, and the Irish,” “the largely illiterate and starving Irish... had no sense of the value of money,” but these articles by Dickens imply “some sort of blame-the-victim explanation, offered in the name of comic relief.”<sup>218</sup> Here Irishness suggests ignorance, a position exterior to the money circulation network; backwardness, where exchange is limited to family or community relations; and the primitiveness of magical thinking.<sup>219</sup> Another similar story on “Post-Office Money-Orders” involves an Irish gentleman who believes he can send a postal money order of five pounds for the cost of the postage fees alone.<sup>220</sup>

Articles such as these only compounded English prejudice, similar to illustrations, which demonstrate anti-Irish bias. Dickens depicts the London Irish in “On Duty with Inspector Field,” an account printed in *Household Words* on June 14, 1851 of a nocturnal visit to the St. Giles rookery, the East End, and the Mint lodging-houses in the Borough. “Ten, twenty, thirty—who can count them! Men, women, and children, for the most part naked, heaped upon the floor like maggots in a cheese.”<sup>221</sup> Here, Dickens describes the tramps’ lodging-house. When asked, “ ‘Does any body live there?’ various Irish denizens answer, ‘Me Sir, Irish me’; others are described as ‘coiling’ themselves about the visitors feet.” Further on, other lodging houses are visited and characterized as “none so filthy and so crowded as where Irish are.”<sup>222</sup>

Two essays in the *Uncommercial Traveller* “A Small Star in the East,” Chapter XXXII and “On An Amateur Beat,” Chapter XXXVI shed further light on Dickens’s view of the Irish. In “A Small Star in the East” Dickens describes his visits to the homes of East End slum-dwellers and reports discussions with those living there. Dickens talks with an Irish woman who speaks about the deadly effects of working in the lead-mills. He states she is Irish and represents her with the traditional Irish accent. Although he approves of her stoicism, Dickens shows complacency when he concurs with the woman that little can be done for the poor who contract dreadful diseases at work:

Sure ‘tis the lead-mills, where the women gets took on at eighteen-pence a day, when they makes application early enough and is lucky and wanted, and ‘tis lead-

<sup>218</sup> Gordon Bigelow, “Dickens, Money, and the Irish” University of California, Santa Cruz. File, “Bigelow DWS9409, 4. LISTSERV@UCSBVM.lucsb.edu.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> *Uncollected Writings From Household Words*, 399.

<sup>221</sup> Charles Dickens, *The Uncommercial Traveller and Reprinted Pieces* (London: Oxford University Press, 1987), 517.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., 518.

pisoned she is, sur, and some of them gets lead-pisoned soon, and some of them gets lead-pisoned later, and some, but not many, niver; and 'tis all according to the constitooshun, sur, and some constitooshuns is strong, and some is weak, and her constitooshun is lead-pisoned, bad as can be, sur, and her brain is coming out at her ear, and it hurts her dreadful; and that's what it is, niver no more, and niver no less, sur.<sup>223</sup>

After this speech about the "poor sick craythur," the Irish woman continues,

God knows that my husband has walked the sthreet these four days being a labourer, and is walking them now, and is ready to work, and no work for him, and no fire and no food but the bit in the pot, and no more than ten shillings in a fortnight; God be good to us! And it is poor we are, and dark it is and could it is indeed.<sup>224</sup>

Dickens resolves to give nothing to these people in the course of these visits in order to test them to see if they might ask for money or show resentment at his giving none. He observes that they seemed grateful to be talked to about their miserable affairs, a cruel experiment under the circumstances. Perhaps, Edmund Yates's comment that Dickens "was in no sense an emotional man"<sup>225</sup> explains why Dickens was rarely moved by real places or real people.

In a later essay, "On an Amateur Beat," Dickens decides to investigate the lead-mills for himself. He seems overly impressed by the owners' steps to provide protection against the deadly fumes, even though the precautions do not prevent death.<sup>226</sup> Yet, momentary contact with the "the dull-glowing heat and overpowering smell"<sup>227</sup> causes Dickens to withdraw immediately because the suffocation is too much for him. The only hope he sees is for American inventiveness to find a safe method of making lead wholly by machine. On leaving the mills, Dickens again shows insensitivity and class bias when he chides the "workers for being capricious and irregular in their attendance" and compliments the owners by telling them "they had nothing there to be concealed, and nothing to be blamed for."<sup>228</sup>

It is significant that *Bleak House* (1853) centers on the horrors of poverty and disease in the slums of London where many Irishmen lived, yet there is no direct

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<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 320.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 321.

<sup>225</sup> Dickens, 339.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 351-352.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., 351.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 352.

reference that the Irish lived there. In the fall of 1997, Professor Kerry McSweeney of McGill and I discussed why Dickens might have avoided referring to the Irish in that novel. He suggested that perhaps this is so, since as a group, the Irish were held in such general contempt that any direct mention of them might mitigate the sympathy and compassion for the English poor that Dickens wished *Bleak House* to elicit.

Dickens might also have questioned the novel's saleability if he portrayed the Irish as sympathetic figures, a problem that Anthony Trollope discusses at length in his autobiography. In England at this time, Irish subjects in art or literature were of questionable acceptability. H. Colburn, the publisher of Anthony Trollope's second novel, *The Kellys and the O'Kellys*, (1848) advised the author that "the loss upon the publication is very considerable; and it appears to me that ... with some few exceptions, ... readers do not like novels on Irish subjects as well as on others."<sup>229</sup> Even Trollope himself acknowledged that

It was certainly a blunder to take him [Phineas Finn] from Ireland--into which I was led by the circumstance that I created the scheme of the book during a visit to Ireland. There was nothing to be gained by the peculiarity, and there was an added difficulty in obtaining sympathy and affection for a politician belonging to a nationality whose politics are not respected in England. But in spite of this *Phineas* succeeded, [although] ... it was not a brilliant success.<sup>230</sup>

When asked to produce a novel for the *Cornhill Magazine*, Trollope was asked what he had chosen to submit. Once it was understood that his choice, *Castle Richmond*, was an Irish novel, the editors requested something else. What they did want was an English tale, on English life, preferably on the Church. So Trollope created *Framley Parsonage*. By this time, Trollope had come to the realization that "English readers no longer like Irish stories. I cannot understand," he said, "why it should be so, as the Irish character is peculiarly well fitted for romance. But Irish subjects generally have become distasteful."<sup>231</sup> Critics have noted that Trollope became successful only after he gave up writing Irish melodrama and historical romance for novels depicting English towns and countryside. Of course, *Castle Richmond*, published in 1860, remains Trollope's

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<sup>229</sup> Anthony Trollope, *An Autobiography*, First Published, 1883 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1947), 53.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid., 263.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., 131.

explanation and justification of the events that took place in Ireland during the years of the Irish Famine.

Professor Litvack of Queen's University in Belfast also notes Dickens's astonishment when he visited Ireland on reading tours in 1858, 1867, and in 1869. During his first tour he was "greatly surprised" that his imagined Irish stereotypes were not validated and noted that "Dublin had far fewer spirit shops" than in other "great cities."<sup>232</sup>

#### Dickens and Art Criticism

While Dickens acknowledged that he had no formal training in art,<sup>233</sup> he had no reticence in offering his opinions on the subject. His immersion in the world of art through his friendships, his attendance at exhibitions, his writing and editing for journals, his personal collection, and especially through his intense professional association with artists provided him with an extensive practical and theoretical education in this field. His critical opinions on art provide us a greater insight into the novelist's life, his opinions, his work, and his times. Probably one of the most important insights we can gain is that of Dickens as a general indicator of England's mid-nineteenth century taste in art. Professor Cohen's summary of Dickens's ability in art criticism is generally accepted:

The author had no pretension about his ability as an art critic. Yet it must be recalled that he not only reflected the tastes of his time, but also often helped to shape them. Today, many still share Dickens's assessment of his own illustrators and other artist friends.<sup>234</sup>

Celebrated as a speaker, Dickens spoke at various functions throughout his career where he relayed his views on art, which changed and developed over time. At a Banquet to Literature and Art in Birmingham on January 6, 1853 he stated:

...it is not the province of painting to hold itself in monastic seclusion... It cannot hope to rest on a single foundation for its great temple--on the mere classic pose of a figure, or the folds of a drapery--but...it must be imbued with human passions and action, informed with human right and wrong....<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> See *Letters of Charles Dickens* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), letter dated 23 August 1858.

<sup>233</sup> Lindsay Errington, *Social and Religious Themes in English Art, 1840-1860* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1984), 14.

<sup>234</sup> "Dickens and Art," 116.

Dickens, like many English art lovers at the time, found nobility in painting less in color and composition than in sentiment and story.<sup>236</sup> This was a period when portraits, genre, and anecdotal paintings were most highly prized. The following critique by Dickens on the cartoons and drawings by his friend John Leech is enlightening for its explanation of the general English appreciation of beauty and gentility in art. In this careful criticism of Leech, Dickens compares the works of caricaturists such as Rowlandson or Gillray whose humor was often displayed by personal ugliness to those of Leech:

It serves no purpose but to produce a disagreeable result. There is no reason why the farmer's daughter in the old caricature who is squalling at the harpsichord (to the intense delight, by the by, of her worthy father, whom it is her duty to please) should be squat and hideous. The satire on the manner of her education, if there be any in the thing at all, would be just as good if she were pretty. Mr. Leech would have made her so. The average of farmer's daughters in England are not impossible lumps of fat. One is quite as likely to find a pretty girl in a farmhouse, as to find an ugly one; and we think, with Mr. Leech, that the business of this style of art is with the pretty one. She is not only a pleasanter object in our portfolio, but we have more interest in her. We care more about what does become her, and does not become her.<sup>237</sup>

Dickens is expressing here, not only a commonly felt sentiment, but also a disturbing fact. This aesthetic principle applied not only to caricatures and art in general but to society as well. Sympathy and concern were more apt to be felt for humanity whose circumstances reflected a "picturesque prettiness" measured by some level of cleanliness and pride. Irish living conditions, dirt and rags did not so easily engender this.<sup>238</sup> For example, Irish peasants were considered less "worthy" to receive aid than the poor in Britain, since food imports could not be sent to Ireland in 1846 until supplies had been transported to Scotland first.<sup>239</sup>

In 1855, Dickens saw a new realism unveiled during the Parisian Independent Exhibition in the paintings of Ingres, Corot, Manet, Courbet, and Degas, works that left most contemporary English painting pale by comparison. Even in the work of his own

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<sup>235</sup> Charles Dickens, *The Speeches of Charles Dickens*, ed. K. J. Fielding (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), 158.

<sup>236</sup> Charles Dickens, *His Tragedy and Triumph*, 562.

<sup>237</sup> "Dickens and Art," 109.

<sup>238</sup> See also quotation from *ILN* on December 15, 1849 in Chapter II, Section D. Note comparison of circumstances and implied indifference of the metropolis to the living conditions of the evicted Irish as opposed to the desperate needlewomen in England.

<sup>239</sup> Kinealy, *Calamity*, 357.

friends, Maclise, Leslie, Frith, Ward, Egg, and Stanfield, he saw something was missing. "It is of no use, disguising the fact that what we know is wanting in the men is wanting in their works... There is a horrid respectability about most of the best of them—a little, finite, systematic routine in them, strangely expressive to me of the state of England herself."<sup>240</sup> It was not until 1858 in *Household Words* that Dickens publicly attacked "the failure of polite and conventional painting to deal with the rude diversity of life."<sup>241</sup>

But in 1844, the author understood and experienced art quite differently. In that year, Dickens took his wife and children, his sister-in-law, two servants and his dog for a year's sojourn to Italy. Suffering from restlessness and tension, Dickens planned to rest and to record his experiences in letters for a travel book. The move would also allow him to live inexpensively and to reorganize his finances after the negative critiques of *American Notes* (1842) and the slow sales of *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843). The resulting book entitled, *Pictures from Italy*, (1846) reveals many of the author's opinions on art and on the Catholic Church.

One weakness in Charles Dickens's art criticism in 1844 was his strong prejudice against Roman Catholicism. Dickens detested a lack of originality in art. Because of this, he found most of the religious painting he saw in Italy decidedly wanting. He felt it showed "a double slavishness, to the rule of art and to the requirements of the church."<sup>242</sup>

Dickens was not alone in his assessment of Catholic art. In his *Paris Sketchbook*, (1840) Thackeray, who often acted as an art critic, ridiculed Catholic revivalist art.

They call this Catholic art. There is nothing, my dear friend, more easy in life. Make the costume of your figures as much as possible like the costume of the early part of the fifteenth century. Paint them in the above colours. (bright carmine, bright yellow, bright sienna, bright ultramarine, bright green) Deal in Virgins, and dress them like a burgomaster's wife by Cranach or Van Eyck. Give them all long twisted tails to their gowns, and proper angular draperies. Place all their heads on one side, with the eyes shut and the proper solemn simper... It is Catholic art tout crache as Louis Philippe says.<sup>243</sup>

Initially, Dickens arranged to have his friend Clarkson Stanfield (1793-1867) illustrate *Pictures from Italy*. But Stanfield's religion may have been the reason that Samuel Palmer became the illustrator and not Stanfield. Stanfield, the son of an Irish

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<sup>240</sup> Ibid., 1131.

<sup>241</sup> *Maturity*, 11.

<sup>242</sup> *The Maturity of Dickens*, 24.

actor and writer, was a Catholic and a close friend of Cardinal Wiseman, who in 1846 was involved in planning for the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy in England. It is probable that Stanfield withdrew from the collaboration because he did not wish to be associated with a text with its obvious anti-Catholic emphasis on superstition, ignorance, and dirt.<sup>244</sup>

Dickens detested the Roman Catholic Church, referring to it as “that curse upon the world.”<sup>245</sup> But it was not the religious faith that he scorned as much as the Church’s oppression of the faithful throughout Europe and Ireland. He opposed the vast and powerful social and political organizations of the Roman Catholic Church, and had little respect for mystical religious dogma or its trappings. When traveling in the valley of the Simplon in Switzerland, Dickens noticed a striking difference between “the dirt, disease, ignorance, squalor, and misery” of the Catholic cantons, and the neat, industrious, flourishing Protestant cantons. He labeled this phenomenon “Catholicity Symptoms.”<sup>246</sup> So moved by the importance of his observation, Dickens wrote Forster: “I have so consistently observed the like of this, since I first came abroad, that I have a sad misgiving that the religion of Ireland lies as deep at the root of all its sorrows, even as English misgovernment and Tory villainy.”<sup>247</sup>

Of course, various economic, religious, and political theories underpinned aesthetic responses. Crucially important were ideas of self-help, laissez-faire economic principles, beliefs in moralism and Providentialism (the belief that God directs all things for the human good), and Christian political economy. These themes combined with Manchester-school economics to effect a moralistic explanation for the Famine, which placed the burden on the moral flaws of all Irishmen. This moralistic interpretation was embraced by much of Russell’s Whig-liberal government.

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<sup>243</sup> *Social and Religious Themes*, 22, 23.

<sup>244</sup> Charles Dickens, *Pictures From Italy*, First Published, 1844 (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1974, 248.

<sup>245</sup> *Tragedy and Triumph*, 1133.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>247</sup> Edgar Johnson, *Charles Dickens His Tragedy and Triumph* (New York: Simon And Schuster, Inc., 1952), 604-5. Kathleen Tillotson, *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, Vol. 4 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 611. John Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens*, First Published, 1872-4, Vol. 1 (London: Everyman’s Library, 1966), 405, 406, 407. Richard Cobden, *England, Ireland, and America* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1835. Reprint, 1903. Intro. Richard Ned Lebow. Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1980), xiv. Like Dickens, Richard Cobden also blamed the Catholic Church for Irish economic backwardness. Besides centuries of English civil and religious restrictions, Cobden saw the intense hold of the Catholic Church over its adherents and its abhorrence of change was responsible. But, by 1848, in the midst of the Famine, Cobden fell in line with the predominant stereotype of the period, which had changed to include the Irish landlord.

Although Dickens presumed that religion was a fundamental cause of Irish misery, on the issue of a coercion bill for Ireland he was “appalled by the hesitation and cowardice of the Whigs... Lord John must be helpless among them,”<sup>248</sup> he said. It is probable that Dickens supported both coercion and emigration as solution to Irish troubles.<sup>249</sup> Nonetheless, he concluded that the aversion of all political parties to aid emigration was in fact “a secret belief in the gentle politico-economical principle that a surplus population must and ought to starve,”<sup>250</sup> a principle in which he could see only folly.

In September of 1848 a group of artists formed the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.<sup>251</sup> The fraternity brought youthful idealism, high color, and unidealized figures to subjects deeply serious and often religious in theme. At first, their paintings were politely received; however, before long the P.R.B. was maligned for its Romish tendencies. Millais’s *Christ in the House of His Parents* (Figure 1) incited a stream of criticism. The *Times* spoke of the picture as “revolting” and “disgusting.”<sup>252</sup> Even though Dickens later became a friend of Millais and Hunt, initially, he mocked the Pre-Raphaelite movement and ridiculed the painting in *Household Words* for its ugliness and its return to the past. He reviled the

kneeling woman so horrible in her ugliness, ... as a Monster with a dislocated throat ... Wherever it is possible to express ugliness of feature, limb, or attitude, you have it expressed. Such men as the carpenters might be undressed in any hospital where dirty drunkards, in a high state of varicose veins, are received. Their very toes have walked out of Saint Giles’s.<sup>253</sup>

What he was really attacking was not only Catholic art which exhibited a medieval style of flatness, ugliness, and deformity, but the “Catholic, and especially the monastic, way of life, which so stamps the bodies of its devotees that deformity inevitably ensues if the

<sup>248</sup> Kathleen Tillotson, *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, Vol. 4 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 609, 611. John Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens*, First Published, 1872-4, Vol. 1 (London: Everyman’s Library, 1966), 405, 406, 407.

<sup>249</sup> Peter Ackroyd, *Dickens* (Great Britain: Minerva, 1990), 616-617. Dickens had met both Mrs. Elizabeth Herbert and through her Mrs. Chisholm of the Family Colonisation Loan Society, a body which assisted the passage of needy and worthy families to Australia.

<sup>250</sup> *Letters of Charles Dickens*, 609; *Life of Charles Dickens*, 407.

<sup>251</sup> The Brotherhood consisted of seven young men; the most important of whom were John Everett Millais, Holman Hunt, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

<sup>252</sup> Errington, *Social and Religious Themes*, 29.

<sup>253</sup> Charles Dickens, *H.W.*, “Old Lamps for New Ones,” Vol. I, No. 12, June 15, 1850, 12. London: Office, 16, Wellington Street North, 1850.

painter copies them as they are,"<sup>254</sup> a abhorrence he revealed in *Pictures from Italy*.

Every fourth or fifth man in the streets is a Priest or a Monk; and there is pretty sure to be at least one itinerant ecclesiastic inside or outside every hackney carriage on the neighbouring roads. I have no knowledge, elsewhere, of more repulsive countenances than are to be found among these gentry. If Nature's handwriting be at all legible, greater varieties of sloth, deceit and intellectual torpor, could hardly be observed among any class of men in the world.<sup>255</sup>

As Errington suggests, "it is loathing of Roman Catholicism which lurks under Dickens's attack."<sup>256</sup> Dickens was not alone in his aversion to the painting. Mulready mentioned that the "Carpenter's Shop" "had few admirers inside the Royal Academy Council," and that "he and Maclise alone supported its claims to a favorable consideration."<sup>257</sup>

At this time in England, the Catholic apologist and architect, Pugin noted that ideas of Catholicism were most closely associated "with faggots, racks, inquisitions, tortures, daggers, poisoning."<sup>258</sup> Any judgment that placed Italian art at the summit of beauty, inspired as it was by a despised theology, would have created a significant barrier for the Protestant art lover. In actuality, most people were able to rationalize the worthiness of Italian art, especially works like those of Raphael and Michaelangelo. Works such as theirs could be deemed universal with nothing intrinsically "Romist" about them.

A few months after Dickens' fierce assault on the Pre-Raphaelites, the disturbance over the "Papal Aggression" erupted. In another article in *Household Words*, much like a sequel to the one on the Pre-Raphaelites, Dickens attacked and aligned the Puseyites, Young England, retrogression, ugliness, and disease. He conceived a fable in which Mr. and Mrs. Bull, their children, C. J. London, and Little John (Lord John Russell), deal with the incident by means of numerous puns. Mrs. Bull scolds her children:

What did you mean by playing with Young England at all? ...Hadh't you had warning enough, about playing with candles and candlesticks? And when Young England and his companions began to put their shirts on, over their clothes, and to play all sorts of fantastic tricks in them, why didn't you come and tell your poor father and me? ...Other people knew... when they got to candlesticks, they'd get to candles; and that when they got to candles, they'd get

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<sup>254</sup> *Social and Religious Themes*, 27.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, 27. Quoted from *Pictures from Italy*.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, 426.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

to lighting 'em; and that when they began to put their shirts on outside, and to play at monks and friars, it was as natural that Master Wiseman should be encouraged to put on a pair of red stockings, and a red hat, and to commit I don't know what other Tom-fooleries...

In the days of your great, great, great, grandfather, said Mrs. Bull...the Bulls of Rome were not so utterly hateful to our family as they are at present. We didn't know them so well, and our family was very ignorant and low in the world. But, we have gone on advancing in every generation since then; and now we are taught, by all our family history and experience, and by the most limited exercise of our rational faculties, that our knowledge, liberty, progress, social welfare and happiness, are wholly irreconcilable and inconsistent with them. That the Bulls of Rome are not only the enemies of our family, but of the whole human race. That wherever they go they perpetuate misery, oppression, darkness and ignorance.

Little John...looked hard at his aunt, Miss Eringobragh, Mr. Bull's sister, who was grovelling on the ground, with her head in the ashes. This unfortunate lady had been, for a length of time, in a horrible condition of mind and body, and presented a most lamentable spectacle of disease, dirt, rags, superstition, and degradation.

Ah! You may well look at the poor thing, John! Said Mrs. Bull; for the Bulls of Rome have had far too much to do with her present state. ... and, depend upon it, wherever you see a condition at all resembling hers, you will find on inquiry, that the sufferer has allowed herself to be dealt with by the Bulls of Rome.<sup>259</sup>

Yet Dickens was in no way adverse to specific Catholics, for many of them were among his closest friends. Clarkson Stanfield, Maclise, and Percy Fitzgerald were all members of the Catholic Church, "and he had even hoped his daughter Mary would marry Fitzgerald."<sup>260</sup> However, although Dickens acknowledged the exceptional talent of his friend Maclise, one finds in Dickens's letters veiled references to the Irishman's laziness, a man whom his daughter called "incorrigibly idle," even though he knew Maclise to be given to severe seizures of depression.<sup>261</sup> Publicly, Dickens described Stanfield upon his death as a "great marine painter, with "wonderful gifts," only in a letter to Forster did he say that Stanfield's painting at the Royal Academy was too much like a set scene."<sup>262</sup> Although Dickens had many Catholic friends, perhaps he was more anti-Catholic than he realized.

Dickens hoped to reform society through his portrayal of the callousness and indifference of industry, government, and progress, and pointed up the moral failings of

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<sup>259</sup> Ibid., 51-52. *Household Words*, November 23, 1850.

<sup>260</sup> *Tragedy and Triumph*, 1133.

<sup>261</sup> "Dickens and Art," 114.

all classes. Yet, when Dickens became prosperous and celebrated, even though he despised the New Poor Law and had no illusions about “the blessings of poverty,” “the poor often seemed disgusting to him, especially if they happened not to be the English poor.”<sup>263</sup> The strong national pride and compassion that Dickens and so many of his countrymen expressed for the English poor — “the hardest worked people on whom the sun shines”<sup>264</sup> — were not transferred to other nationalities. He despised beggars and begging, a subject taken up by Punch and angrily by Dickens in “The Begging-Letter Writer,” as well as in *Pictures from Italy*.<sup>265</sup> He “came on so strong” against the begging-letter department that the “patterers” or street literature sellers struck him off their list of favorites. In “On Duty with Inspector Field,” Dickens found no objection to incarcerating a woman for begging with a child at her breast.<sup>266</sup> In the same story, he sneered at an Irish family who is “not on their bit of sacking in the corner” because the family was out late that evening, “a-cadging in the streets!”<sup>267</sup>

Dickens may have sympathized with the causes of Irish poverty since he tended to look for the underlying causes of social problems, but like Leech, Thackeray, and Trollope, Dickens exhibited a cultural, racial, and national prejudice. Improved conditions for the lower classes, Dickens declared, must come through thoughtful government intervention, education, and charity. Most importantly, however, Dickens believed that the poor could only better themselves as he himself had done, through self-help, hard work, and determination. The Irish stereotype failed on all these levels. Ultimately, Dickens and his and his circle of elite opinion-makers distinguished between the “deserving” English working classes and the “undeserving poor,” into which category the Irish generally fell.

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<sup>262</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>263</sup> Monroe Engel, *The Maturity of Dickens* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1959), 50.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>265</sup> Charles Dickens, *Pictures From Italy* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1974), 218, 219. See “The Begging-Letter Writer,” in *H.W.*, May 18, 1850. The only patterer that Dickens specifically describes by nationality is Irish. “The Irish gentleman, a member of the same fraternity...positively refused to leave my door for less than a sovereign, and resolved to besiege me into compliance, and literally “sat down” before it for ten mortal hours.” The house being fully stocked, Dickens waits for the man to leave. Prior to this article, Dickens had been included among thirty persons known to be charitable on a list of one professional begging-letter writer.

<sup>266</sup> *The Uncommercial Traveller and Reprinted Pieces*, 514.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid., 517.



## Chapter IV-- Section A

### Moral Didacticism and the Rise of the Illustrated Press

Shortly after the passage of the Great Reform Bill, advances in printing technology and reductions in newspaper and paper taxes brought forth a tide of inexpensive literature. Between 1830 and 1860, the burgeoning of the popular publishing industry led to the transformation of the popular cultural experience so that in essence by 1840 a modern mass culture had begun to evolve. A significant feature of this cultural transformation was the mass dissemination of pictorial images.

With the establishment of the illustrated newspapers, all sorts of images were widely available and affordable to the masses. Illustrations of fine art and theatre, foreign cultures and places, industry and science, the fashionable elite and the abject poor were disseminated. Newspapers and magazines were widely accessible through individual subscriptions, news stands, coffeehouses, newspaper societies, clubs, and subscription reading rooms.<sup>268</sup> In this manner the new inexpensive printed image wholly outstripped earlier newspaper circulations to develop into the first regular, ongoing form of mass communication.<sup>269</sup>

The earliest mass-circulation magazines consistently set forth a distinct set of moral and cultural values promoting "civilized" behavior conducive to social stability. While there is little evidence that these magazines were bids for social control,<sup>270</sup> they were significant as vehicles by which the political and economic elite transferred their social, moral, and intellectual leadership and may have gained in appeal as much from the readers as they did from the publishers, editors, writers, and artists.<sup>271</sup>

The *Penny Magazine*, published and edited by Charles Knight, was founded in 1832 under the auspices of the Society for the Useful Diffusion of Knowledge (SUDK) with the specific intention to educate and uplift the general public.<sup>272</sup> Knight believed that the exposure of the public to high models of art would bring forth a greater

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<sup>268</sup> R. D. Altick, *The English Common Reader* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 322. By 1840, London had between 1,600 and 1,800 coffeehouses. And in some establishments, as many as 1,500 customers a day could read dozens of dailies, provincial and foreign papers, magazines, quarterlies, and weeklies.<sup>268</sup> The appeal of the illustrated publications was particularly broad since they demanded neither a formal education nor basic literacy, yet they had the capacity to entertain, amuse, and inform the widest audience.

<sup>269</sup> Patricia Anderson, *The Printed Image and the Transformation of Popular Culture, 1790-1860* (England: Oxford, 1991), 3.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid., 4.

understanding of the power of God.<sup>273</sup> It was the first attempt made to supply not only a liberal use of wood engravings, news, and useful information to a mass readership of the ordinary and the poor, but also the first to operate steam-driven presses.

Both the practical process of printing illustrations and various pre-urban artistic conventions worked to undermine immediacy in publication, although early newspapers often utilized a collection of stock blocks to save time and money. Previously engraved images of buildings, cities, harbors, or exotic locales could easily be altered to fit to meet a deadline. It was also common for artists or engravers to copy or modify successful compositions of artists from either the past or present. The use of this convention underscores the influence that artists had upon others within their own profession. In the initial stages of periodical illustration, there was no guarantee of either on the spot illustration or of accurate graphic reporting of social conditions. Technical or administrative limitations like weekly publication deadlines, the use of stock drawings, the transfer of sketches by engravers to wood blocks, and the need to engage multiple engravers for large designs all affected the quality and accuracy of the finished product. In general, however, the public accepted engravings as presented, except in obvious cases of distortion.<sup>274</sup> Since publishers were more concerned with the success of a publication and the enlargement of circulation than issues of accuracy, editorial policy hinged on catering to middle class readers with anodyne and elevated sentiments.

*The Penny Magazine* and magazines like it promoted and reinforced the 'English' virtues of temperance, self-help, industriousness, frugality, and duty to family and employers.<sup>275</sup> For example, works of art such as an engraving of a third-century BC statue, *The Dying Gladiator*, through text, image, and context, presented in Anderson's words, "an unwritten exhortation to the reader to work hard, exercise restraint, and value what you have--in short, be civilized."<sup>276</sup> Many other works, like *The Last Supper*, *The Laocoon* (Figure 1), and Murillo's *Young Beggar* (Figure 2) served socially to uplift or morally to edify the nineteenth century reader. Artists such as Leonardo Da Vinci, Raphael, and Peter Paul Rubens were often praised as exemplary models of hard work

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<sup>273</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>275</sup> Fox, "Social Reportage," 90.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid., 60.

and perseverance. Such engravings were to lend a stark contrast to the Famine illustrations from the *Illustrated London News*. Engravings like *Funeral at Skibbereen* (3) and *The Village of Tullig* (Figure 4) were disturbing to contemplate for a public used to viewing elevated subjects and engravings of great art. Yet at the same time, the images were confounding, for the messages were not always easy to interpret.

Works of art were often used to civilize by a negative example as well. William Hogarth's works were especially well suited to *The Penny Magazine's* concept of improvement through art. The series, *Industry and Idleness*, of which eight plates were reprinted, depicted both good and bad examples of behavior for the betterment of the reading public. And by the mid-nineteenth century, in a general sense, Hogarth's Protestant morality, literary and biblical references, creativity, humor, and chauvinism perfectly exemplified Victorian taste and sensibility.<sup>277</sup> In spite of the improprieties and vulgarity of Hogarth's work, which were deplored by nineteenth-century critics, Hogarth had become the quintessential English artist and came to symbolize British middle-class morality and common sense. In 1866, George Augustus Sala declared that "this philosopher ever preached the sturdy English virtues that have made us what we are. He taught us to fear God and honour the King; to shun idleness, extravagance and dissipation; to go to church, help the poor, and treat dumb animals with kindness."<sup>278</sup> Editors anticipated and deflected any moral objections to Hogarth's indelicacy by a careful selection of plates and by quotations from Charles Lamb's well-known essay, *On the Genius and Character of Hogarth* (1811).

Those who are acquainted with the works of Hogarth will be aware that in this selection we have not introduced a single print that can offend the most fastidious taste. In many of them there will be found representations of human nature in its degradations of vice and imprudence; but such representations are redeemed from the possibility of exciting disgust by the exquisite skill of the artist.<sup>279</sup>

The *Penny Magazine's* popularity encouraged many imitators. One of the most successful was John Parker's *Saturday Magazine* (1832-1844.) By copying the *Penny Magazine's* illustrated format and by using steam powered presses and the process of stereotyping, the *Saturday Magazine* spread evangelicalism and the interests of the Church of England. It published stories from the Bible, portraits of religious men,

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<sup>277</sup> Kenneth Bendiner, *An Introduction To Victorian Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 32.  
<sup>278</sup> George Augustus Sala, *William Hogarth* (London, 1866), 7-8.

illustrations of scenes from the Holy Land, and pictures of churches and cathedrals, further inculcating religion from a Protestant point of view.

The success of the penny press encouraged a variety of other penny "Journals," "Storytellers," and "Gazettes," weekly "Visitors" and "Miscellanies" to join the established market. Despite its demise in 1845, the *Penny Magazine* had produced, as Knight himself stated, "a revolution in popular art."<sup>280</sup> Not only had it changed the appearance of popular publishing and illustration, it had introduced artistic theories and images into everyday life. It had endeavored to reform public behavior through art; and it had brought high culture and the Academy Exhibition room to the average reader. It had also accustomed the reader-viewer to an abundance of illustrations with moral messages sometimes overtly drawn and stated, such as the engravings by Hogarth, but oftentimes so subtly depicted that the moral message was almost subliminal, and could only be understood through a general literary or artistic context.

The second generation of magazines (1845–1860) differed considerably from their prototypes and came upon the scene concurrently with the Famine in Ireland. Publications such as the *London Journal*, *Reynolds' Miscellany*, the *London Illustrated News*, the *Pictorial Times*, and *Punch* were independent from the start. They were free to make business or editorial decisions without interference. Although commercial expediency and a personal conception of the public taste now guided editors more, a standard of public morality had already been achieved. Typical fare consisted of informative articles, anecdotes, aphorisms, illustrated stories, poems, and in some cases, serialized novels. Though the readers of the penny press differed in station and class from those of the more expensive illustrated papers, the moral instruction and intent of both were similar and representative of the times.

By 1845 the illustrated press was well established. The most sustained successes were the weekly magazines. Despite large circulations, the artistic standard of these papers was not high. Figure drawing was often weak, character expression stilted and often unsophisticated. Nor were there many successful attempts to engage the sympathy of the reader. Primary to the process were concerns of speed and topicality, to which artistry and originality were routinely lost. The use of stock engravings simplified the

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<sup>280</sup> Celina Fox, *Social Reportage*, 103.

process somewhat, but detracted from authenticity and credibility. Nonetheless, through the lines of art the subtle and often not so subtle expression of prejudice, intolerance, and resentment continued and expanded. The next three sections of this chapter will focus on engravings from the three primary illustrated papers, *Punch*, the *Pictorial Times*, and the *Illustrated London News*.

# THE PENNY MAGAZINE

OF THE  
**Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.**

127.1

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY.

[March 29, 1834,

**MURKIN.**



[ 'The Young Heggar,' in *u. Mante* ]

After coming to the United States, Moré was placed in the hands of the "gentle" slaveholder, John H. Smith, of Norfolk, in the year 1848. Having been educated only in religion by the ant, he was placed under the instruction of his uncle, Joseph del Castillo. He became a devoted Christian, and a true and modest worker in the cause of his race. His religious and moral excellences were greatly appreciated, and several persons in this department were excited by Moré's piety in their separation, which took place in 1852, when he was removed to the United States.

Vol. III.

*The Young Beggar, Penny Magazine, 1834*

# THE PENNY MAGAZINE

**Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.**

39.]

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY.

(NOVEMBER 10, 1892,

THE LAOCOON.



[The Group of the Ladies, at Home.]

The story of Loozon is told by Virgil, and will form the best introduction to our notice of the celebrated group known by that name. The terrible fate of the unfortunate man and his children was brought upon them, according to the poet, by the father's disobedience to the will of Minerva.

[illegible]

Vol. 1.

[illegible]

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*Laocoon, Penny Magazine, 1832*



THE FAMINE IN IRELAND.—FUNERAL AT BRIDGES —FROM A SKETCH BY MR. H. SMITH, COHR.—(SEE NEXT PAGE.)



THE VILLAGE OF TOLLE

## Chapter IV – Section B

### Punch

The first issue of *Punch* reached the public on July 17, 1841 four years before the blight appeared in Ireland. Sold for three pence, *Punch* was not terribly successful at first since 10,000 copies were necessary to make the venture worthwhile, and its circulation only ranged between five and six thousand copies.<sup>281</sup> As *Punch* gained in popularity, however, and became a favorite of the public, its circulation grew to a weekly average of over 30,000 issues.<sup>282</sup> Within a short time, *Punch* grew famous for its satiric humor, caricatures, and cartoons and evolved into the most influential illustrated periodical published during the famine years. Although *Punch* was primarily a London paper, it was read throughout the country by the middle and upper classes and routinely by politicians and cabinet ministers and middle-class policy makers.<sup>283</sup> The political elite that was regularly lampooned by *Punch* took note of its jibes and cuts. They socialized, exchanged views and favors with the *Punch* men and on occasion even tried to deflect attacks.<sup>284</sup>

Except for an early and rare pro-Irish stance, from the start *Punch* adopted a moralistic agenda and an anti-Irish bias. The first editors, Mark Lemon, Henry Mayhew, and J. Sterling Coyne intended *Punch* to educate “without pretension but with pleasant instruction.”<sup>285</sup> Coyne, who was Irish, did not last long at *Punch*. Contemptuously dubbed “Paddy” Coyne by Mark Lemon and “Filthy Lucre” by Douglas Jerrold, referring to his rather dirty appearance, Coyne was forced out of the co-editorship for allegedly plagiarizing from an Irish paper.<sup>286</sup> *Punch* expressed the popular voice as well as the voice of the *Punch* staff whose anti-Irish leanings were clearly reflected in its pages. Ruskin described *Punch*’s politics:

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<sup>281</sup> M. H. Spielmann, *The History of Punch* (New York: The Cassell Publishing Co., 1895), 31.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>283</sup> Peter Gray, “Punch and The Great Famine,” *History Ireland* (Summer 1993): 26.

<sup>284</sup> M. H. Spielmann, *The History of Punch* (New York: The Cassell Publishing Co., 1895), 197-199. One such incident occurred in 1845 at the Printers’ Pension Society Annual Dinner held at the Albion. Disraeli asked to meet the famous *Punch* caricaturist, John Leech, hoping to improve his caricatured image by charming the artist, as well as Lemon and a Beckett. But, within a few months the attacks continued. For all the criticism, Lord Beaconsfield acknowledged his respect for and the influence of *Punch* in his book, *Endymion*, and like Napoleon III, kept many of the cuts that centered around him. Leech, forever congenial, held a pension given to him by his political adversaries, but it would have died with him, if Disraeli had not preserved it for the family.

<sup>285</sup> M. H. Spielmann, *The History of Punch* (New York: The Cassell Publishing Co., 1895), 2.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

He is a polite Whig, with a sentimental respect for the Crown, and a practical respect for property. He steadily flatters Lord Palmerston, from his heart adores Mr. Gladstone; steadily, but not virulently, caricatures Mr. Disraeli; violently and virulently castigates assault upon property, in any kind, and holds up for the general ideal of perfection, to be aimed at by all the children of heaven and earth, the British Hunting Squire, the British Colonel, and the British sailor.<sup>287</sup>

This was a political philosophy generally antithetical to Irish poverty, economics, politics, and politicians. While *Punch* ridiculed sham gentility, vulgar ostentation, crazes and fads, affectations of fashion, and the social, political, and artistic behavior of the day, he also expressed abundant prejudice towards Irishmen, Frenchmen, Jews, and foreigners of all sorts. When *Punch* could not understand why the Irish would come to England in droves if they wanted the repeal of Union so badly, Foster explains, "Economic realities were never the magazine's strong suit."<sup>288</sup>

As for the poor, Ruskin described *Punch*'s attitude in the *Art of England*:

*Punch* has never in a single instance, endeavored to represent the beauty of the poor. On the contrary, his witness to their degradation, as inevitable in the circumstances of their London life, is constant and, for the most part, contemptuous... I cannot say how far with didactic purpose, or how far in carelessly inevitable satire, *Punch* contrasts with the disgrace of street poverty the beauties of the London drawing room, the wives and daughters of the great upper middle class, exalted by the wealth of the capital, and of the larger manufacturing towns.<sup>289</sup>

*Punch*'s gaiety and success turned on the intelligence, personalities, and the sociability of the staff. A unique feature of the organization was the use of the Punch Dinner. The Dinners were instituted to promote group cohesiveness, expand staff views, and discuss the public mood.<sup>290</sup> Somewhat later, the dinners were used to discuss and determine the "big cut," or full-page cartoon, the formal statement and considered opinion of the staff. Although the dinners were noted for their conviviality, brilliant company, and wit, they "became as exclusive and esoteric as a Masonic initiation."<sup>291</sup> Only the most distinguished and refined members of the staff were appointed to the

<sup>287</sup> John Ruskin, *The Art of England, Lectures Given in Oxford* (Kent: George Allen, 1884), 180.

<sup>288</sup> R. F. Foster, *Paddy & Mr. Punch. Connections in Irish and English History* (London: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1993), 176.

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*, 181, 182.

<sup>290</sup> M. H. Spielmann, *The History of Punch* (New York: The Cassell Publishing Co., 1895), 59.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

Punch Table.<sup>292</sup>

A typical evening might find Douglas Jerrold, Horace Mayhew, Shirley Brooks, Percival Leigh, Thackeray, Kenny Meadows, John Leech, Richard Doyle, Gilbert a Beckett, Mark Lemon, and the publishers at the table. After dinner, the presiding editor would take suggestions and ideas for the "big cut" which would often be decided with the aid of the latest editions of the evening papers. Shirley Brooks and John Leech were considered exceptionally gifted in choosing the most appropriate subject. Tradition and prestige strengthened every jibe, and consequently the exclusiveness of the *Punch* Table. Occasional guests were invited to the Punch Table.<sup>293</sup> The *Punch* Club was established as a separate institution and included the regular staff, friends, well-wishers, and a variety of celebrities.

The paper embodied the superiority that *Punch* contributors believed to be innate to their position and nationality. Its depiction of the poor, particularly, the Irish poor, was born of class-consciousness and snobbery, racial and religious discrimination, and a resentment towards Irish nationalism. If the exclusiveness and intimacy of the *Punch* Dinners and the *Punch* Club contributed significantly to the cleverness, intelligence, and success of the paper, they also reinforced an elitism, arrogance, and prejudice elemental to its pages.

Marion Spielmann, the famed historian of *Punch*, chronicled the well-known prejudice of the artist John Leech (1817-1864) against Irishmen, Frenchmen, and Jews. Dickens and Thackeray, close friends of Leech, held similar prejudices, although Leech's were colored with a nationalistic fervor.<sup>294</sup> Leech's heightened sensitivities and his feelings of self-importance derived in part from his background and the celebrity he gained from *Punch* played a significant role in *Punch*'s public denunciation of Irish character. As *Punch*'s leading cartoonist during the years of the Great Famine, Leech's political drawings provoked a great deal of attention. Anthony Trollope and Thackeray

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<sup>292</sup> Ibid., 413. William Newman, a talented artist known for his little silhouettes called "blackies," produced a prodigious amount of work for *Punch*, drawing well over 500 cuts between 1846 and 1849. Yet Newman was never invited either to the Dinner or to associate with the other members of the staff because he lacked the appropriate sophistication and manners necessary to fit in with the group.

<sup>293</sup> Among them were Charles Dickens, a close friend of Douglas Jerrold, Thackeray, and Leech; Sir Joseph Paxton, the architect of the Crystal Palace; Peter Rackham, financier of the *Daily News* and friend of Dickens and Thackeray both; Samuel Lucas, editor of *Once a Week*, as well as Sir W. H. Russell, Sir John Millais, and William Gladstone.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid., 437. Of far greater concern to Leech was his prejudice against and intolerance of organ grinders. "Morbidly timid of all noise, he writhed most under the sound of the organ, and loved to stay at some quiet English seaside place where door-knockers were dictated to three rap a day."

both agreed that *Punch's* popularity was due “more to Leech, than to any other single person.”<sup>295</sup> But it was true also that Leech owed much to *Punch*.

The son of an Irish coffeehouse proprietor of much artistic and intellectual ability, (he was a Shakespearean scholar), young Leech was sent off at seven to Charterhouse where he excelled more in games than in his studies. His Charterhouse days are remembered most for the lifetime friendship he formed with William Thackeray. At sixteen, Leech attended St. Bartholomew's Hospital to study medicine where his anatomical drawings were commended for their excellence. It was there that Leech met Albert Smith, Percival Leigh, and Gilbert a Beckett, all of whom later worked for *Punch*. When a disastrous reversal in family finances prevented Leech from continuing his education in medicine, Leech found work as an artist.

Leech's relatively privileged life is portrayed in William Powell Frith's two-volume biography. As a fellow artist, member of the Royal Academy, and friend, Frith knew Leech both professionally and socially for many years. Frith describes Leech as a talented, cultured, delicate, kind-hearted, and generous man, whose “mental condition was deeply tinged with sadness so common to men who possess wit and humor to a high degree.”<sup>296</sup>

Although Frith says Leech wished to be a painter rather than an illustrator, Leech “ridiculed the care spent on the details in pictures. Finish in his opinion, was so much waste of time.”<sup>297</sup> So Leech never used models. His drawings were creations of his own imagination and a melding of sketches he made of backgrounds and foregrounds, details of dresses, landscapes, and bits of character taken from unsuspecting sitters.<sup>298</sup> But the artist excelled in rendering facial expressions and in capturing movement and was praised highly by Ruskin and others for these abilities.<sup>299</sup>

One common link to the artists who drew the simianized Irishman in cartoons was the fact that many of them were not part of the dominant ethnic group, and were in some way of marginal English heritage. Many most constant in caricaturing the Irish were of Scottish extraction. James Gillray (1756-1815) (whose first caricature was “Paddy on

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<sup>295</sup> Rev. Gordon Tidy, *A Little About Leech*, (London: Constable and Co., Ltd., 1931), 9.

<sup>296</sup> *John Leech*, 9.

<sup>297</sup> William Powell Frith, R. A., *John Leech, His Life and Works* (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1891), 6.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>299</sup> *A Little About Leech*, 47.

Horseback," 1779), George Cruikshank, John Proctor, and Harry Furniss were either born in Scotland or were sons of parents of Scottish descent. John Leech's father was of Irish extraction, and J. Kenny Meadows was born in South Wales.<sup>300</sup> How important marginality was to the work of these cartoonists one can only guess, but the desire to gain acceptance by a repudiation of others or of one's own background was not an uncommon phenomenon. Both William Mulready and Daniel Maclise repudiated their Irish background. Irish parliamentarians, Irish artists, and Irish writers commonly left Ireland for England and routinely followed this pattern. In *Punch's* series on Irish Snobs, Thackeray wrote that the shams of Ireland were "more outrageous than those of any country."<sup>301</sup>

*Punch* was especially virulent in its sustained negative bias towards the Irish. Apart from the beautiful icon "Hibernia" who symbolized a romantic ideal of Ireland, "Paddy" and his female counterpart, "Biddy," were the common representations of the peasantry and targets of unremitting derision. Continually mocked and ridiculed, the Irish were depicted living in places like "Ballymuckandfilth,"<sup>302</sup> in broken-down cottages, sleeping with a litter of children alongside the ubiquitous family pig. With tongue in cheek, *Punch's* "own Commissioner," "corroborates" the accounts of Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, whose series of travel books on Ireland *Punch* happily ridiculed.<sup>303</sup>

Next to being the loveliest women in the world, the Irish are certainly the cleanest. [Irish dungheaps] positively steam with [the] sweetest odours; to which circumstance may ... be attributed the lovely complexion and seraphic looks of the swarms of children that abound in every village. They are all, too, so scrupulously clean—and so comfortably clothed. In almost every cottage, they keep one or two pigs...[normally] such a custom cannot conduce...cleanliness of the homestead...but Irish pigs—with the quick genius of their country—know what is due to the courtesies of life, and behave accordingly.<sup>304</sup>

<sup>300</sup> *Apes and Angels*, 96.

<sup>301</sup> *Punch*, Vol. XI, July-December, 1846, 63. Hotels abounded, but there were no inns. Families with a hundred a year all became gentlemen, kept a nag, rode to the hounds, and swaggered about in the "Phaynix." Irishmen aped Englishmen and forgot their country. In the broadest of brogues, O'Dowd of O'Dowdstown would say, "Come dine with me, my boy, you'll find us all English there." And just about everyone lived in a castle and was descended from Brian Boroo.

<sup>302</sup> *Punch*, (London: Bradbury & Evans, Vol. IX, December - July, 1845), 176.

<sup>303</sup> Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, *Ireland, Its Scenery, Character, and History*, Vol. IV (Boston: Francis A. Niccolls & Company, 1911), 269. In six lengthy volumes, the Halls present a sympathetic and unprejudiced view of Ireland's scenery, people, and history. They acknowledge the beauty of the women, the rudest of conditions, and the wildest of inhabitants in many parts of Ireland. But the Halls generally extol the virtues of the people, giving realistic reasons for the miseries they endure with suggestions for their improvement.

<sup>304</sup> *Punch*, (London: Bradbury & Evans, Vol. IX, December - July, 1845), 176.

Hence, Leech was not alone in his anti-Irish depictions. *Punch's* displeasure toward O'Connell and Repeal was prodigious. In 1843, J. Kenny Meadows drew the feature cartoon *The Irish Frankenstein* (November 4, 1843) in which Daniel O'Connell creates a fiendish giant meant to represent the repeal movement with horns, enormous arms and legs, and flaring nostrils. Between 1842 and 1848, R. J. Hamerton (Shallaballa) contributed ten cartoons or "big-cuts"—"striking for their handling and finish" according to Spielmann. The majority of his subjects were Irish, and as one of the few Irishmen that worked on the paper, Hamerton was harsh as only an Irishman could be on Daniel O'Connell and Lord Brougham. He produced *The Irish Ogre Fattening on the 'Finest Pisintry, King O'Connell at Tara, Bagging the Wild Irish Goose*, and so forth. *King O'Connell at Tara* (Figure 1) published on August 26, 1843 attacks Daniel O'Connell for using the Repeal Assistance Fund for his personal expenses and the peasantry for their subservience and blind obedience to O'Connell. O'Connell is portrayed as a buffoon wearing a crown of corn-cob pipes, seated next to a scale of justice hanging off balance, while a pig and buttermilk are offered as tribute. Hamerton depicts both O'Connell and the peasants with upturned noses, clown-like features, and prognathous jaws. Favorable and unfavorable images of the great "Liberator" profoundly affected audiences on both sides of the Irish Sea. By comparison, see Chapter II - B (Figures 15, 15-a, 15-b) for several portraits of O'Connell by Irish artists.

From an examination of *The Home of the Rick-Burner* (Figure 2) (July 6, 1844), we can contrast the political and iconographic differences that Leech expresses in his English and Irish subjects. In this cartoon, Leech depicts an English agricultural laborer who lives in abject misery. Note especially the countenance of the rick-burner, whose patrician profile displays a straight nose and the ideal 90-degree facial angle described by Camper. In contrast to the Irishman in *Rint v. Potatoes. – The Irish Jeremy Diddler* (Figure 3), the English rick-burner is depicted sympathetically. Clearly, Leech sympathizes with the rick-burner's courage and determination in the face of authority and forgives his desperation, evinced by the devil. His attitude is not one of hopelessness and self-pity like that of the Irishman as depicted in the "Diddler" cartoon. Leech's use of Camper's facial angle to depict the moral high road as well as to distinguish the upper classes from those below is almost consistent throughout his work. Occasionally, he makes exceptions to this rule.

In the *Punch* calendar for January of 1845, entitled *Bubbles of the Year—The O'Connell Rent*, (Figure 4) Leech depicts O'Connell as King of the Irish, leading the Repeal of Union. Note the crowd of peasants with bare feet and rags, ape-like, prognathous features, low foreheads, and bestial jaws.

*Punch* continues the attack. In Volume XIII, (1845) Leech sneers at O'Connell in the cartoon, mentioned above, *Rint v. Potatoes. – The Irish Jeremy Diddler* for asking for monetary contributions from the starving in Ireland. Here Leech portrays the suffering of the peasantry, although the woman and her children are unattractive and unsympathetically drawn, the man, his head in his hands, in abject despair. O'Connell is again given the "Irish" upturned nose and prognathous jaw. William Newman's *The Real Potato Blight of Ireland* (1845) (Figure 5) cleverly depicts O'Connell in another form. In the spirit of *Punch*, Newman conceives O'Connell as a potato, seated on his throne with a collection plate below. The idea of O'Connell pictured as a potato, however, is not new. Note the earlier anonymous 1829 rendition, published by McLean, March 8, 1829, entitled a *Sketch of the Great Agi-Tater* (Figure 6). Although both jibs are harsh, the 1829 engraving attacks the Catholic Church as well.

Leech's Irish cartoons plainly exhibit prejudice, except for his romantic and idealized conception of Hibernia. In the 1846 cartoon *The Irish Cinderella and Her Haughty Sisters, Britannia and Caledonia* (Figure 7) Leech depicts Hibernia as Cinderella. Hibernia's graces include Camper's flawless facial angle, her features and figure meant to impart classical Greek proportion. In this cartoon, Hibernia is exploited by her ugly sisters, Britannia and Caledonia. But as Foster notes in *Paddy and Mr. Punch*, Leech has no interest in carrying out the implication of the metaphor. He never denounces Britannia and Caledonia for their exploitation or for the injustice they inflict upon Hibernia.<sup>305</sup>

Consider the following seven cartoons. Paddy is variously depicted as a wild, melancholic, indolent, unstable, and prognathous Caliban, with a facial angle in the low sixties, his temperament determined by "the blood and bile of his race." *Justice to Ireland* (Figure 8) April 18, 1846 pictures the disturbed state of affairs after the failure of the potato crop and the passage of a Coercion Bill. Leech depicts the implied violence of

<sup>305</sup>

R. F. Foster, *Paddy & Mr. Punch*, 194.

shillelagh-wielding prognathous Irishmen. Although Leech favors some young women by giving them fair countenances, others are portrayed as hags. If *Punch* disagreed with the passage of the Coercion Bill in this instance, Leech's artistic interpretation lacks sympathy for the Irish distress. Another 1846 cartoon *Young Ireland in Business For Himself* (Introduction, Figure 1) represents the secession of William Smith O'Brien and the "physical force" party from the Repeal Association. Leech mocks both groups as he depicts the split with two ape-like figures and an assortment of arms. *Height of Impudence* (Figure 9) published on December 12, 1846 finds Leech satirizing the current agrarian murders in Ireland. Despite the horrific suffering occurring in Ireland through 1847, *Punch and Paddy* (Figure 10) December 25, 1847 again centers on violence in Ireland. *Punch* urges an Irish puppet ape to put away his arms and "have a Merry Christmas."

For *Punch*, the battle of Limerick in 1848 defined the Irish as revolutionaries and insurgents, but it was the hand of John Leech who assigned the Irish ape-like bestiality with consistency. Both *Alfred the Small* (Figure 11) and "My Lord Assassin" *Clarendon Murdering the Irish* (Figure 12) show well fed, unreasonable, militant, ape-like Paddys. In Leech's 1848 "big-cut," *The Battle of Limerick* (Figure 13), the United Irishmen are drawn in retreat, as the opposition triumphs and William O'Brien, cast as a hyena, Mitchell, a monkey on O'Brien's back, and Meager flee the scene. See also *The British Lion and the Irish Monkey* (Figure 14). Despite government consternation and ridicule by *Punch* and the press in general, Irish nationalists in London mobilized thousands of workers into Repeal Wards and Confederate Clubs in response to Mitchell's transportation in June and July of 1848.

In another 1848 cartoon *Here and There* (Figure 14) emigration was encouraged as a remedy. In this cartoon, a starving family is symbolically backed against a wall on which are posted notices cautioning against the loitering of vagrants and proclaiming the illegality of chartist and socialist meetings. This severely destitute family is probably meant to be Irish, although they are not depicted with the usual low profiles or prognathous jaws. Perhaps Leech saw the impropriety in debasing people who are being asked to emigrate. Clearly the purpose of this cartoon was to entice a surplus population to leave England for the balmy shores of Australia where hard work and diligence produced lavish meals laid under beams laden with hams and bacon.

*Punch's Phrenological Almanack* for January of 1849 paralleled the importance of Christmas bills and the odious task of accounting for the means of meeting them to an accounting in Parliament of the cost to relieve Irish distress. A proposal for a grant of 50,000 was hotly debated and was unfavorably received by many of the Irish members as being inadequate. The English point of view was expressed in *Punch* adamantly, twice. Within the same month, January of 1849, two cartoons picture this subject—*The English Labourer's Burden; or The Irish Old Man of the Mountain* (Figure 15) and *The Modern Sinbad and the Old Man of the Sea; or John Bull and Paddy* (Figure 16). Both express England's desire to cast off its overwhelming Irish burden, featured in Figure 15 as a deranged Irish banshee and in Figure 16 as a crazed Irish beggar, both carrying 50,000 English pounds. Clearly *Punch* opposed any further Irish expenditures.

Another 1849 cartoon *The Marvellous Cure* (Figure 17) pictures Russell, the Prime Minister and Clarendon, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, standing at the bedside of the patient, a proverbial ape-like Paddy, looking now far less the man than the beast. Essentially, Clarendon tells Russell that since the patient is murderous and insane, only coercion will cause matters to improve.

In contrast, anti-Irish prejudice is not found in the work of Richard Doyle, who worked on *Punch* from the age of eighteen until he was twenty-six. A glance at Doyle's life illuminates not only his attitude toward Irish issues but the ethos of the era and that of *Punch* as well. Richard Doyle was born in London three years after the arrival of his family in the city. Since Doyle was the second eldest in a large close-knit Irish Catholic family, it is not remarkable that his cartoons expressed a greater compassion and understanding for Ireland than the work of other artists. His father, John Doyle, was the well-known Dublin-born political caricaturist, "H.B." Although Richard Doyle became the most famous of the offspring, all of the children inherited some artistic talent. Charles Altamont Doyle, the father of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, is particularly interesting for his drawings and watercolors sympathetic to Irish nationalism, and Sylvia Doyle is known for her caricatures of Irish life.

Educated at home by tutors, Richard was taught drawing by his father and showed extraordinary talent at a young age. The elder Doyle was said to have led satiric art onto a path of restraint and civility. Certainly the household in which Richard Doyle grew up

was one of culture and refinement. Doyle's extraordinary journal begun at age fifteen records in words and drawings a pleasant family life lived in reasonable comfort with outings to the opera, concerts, Regent's Park Zoo, the Royal Academy, and the Tower of London.

Doyle's *Punch* cartoons expressed the same civility, love of beauty, and style earlier exhibited in his journal. On Irish subjects, Doyle's style regularly displayed a balanced and sympathetic approach; his Irish characters are genially portrayed and not ridiculed. On March 16, 1844, Doyle contributed his first "big-cut" *The Modern Sisyphus* (Figure 18). In this cartoon, Sir Robert Peel attempts to roll a great stone representing the insoluble Irish question in the form of Daniel O'Connell to the top of a mountain, as the "Furies" led by Lord John Russell look on. Although the cartoon's sentiment underscores the difficulty of solving the Irish question, Doyle suggests the "Furies" might have some input. On October 17, 1846 *Union Is Strength* (Figure 19) is published. This optimistic sketch upholds the importance of Union and symbolizes England's resolve to assist Ireland. John Bull offers food to an Irish family suffering from starvation and a spade to encourage Irish enterprise. But within two months, the militant activities of Young Ireland and the constant requests for relief convinced *Punch* of Irish ingratitude. Already discussed, Leech's *Height of Impudence* followed.

Eighteen forty-nine brought news of a further potato failure in Ireland. If the sustained hostility of the magazine caused some embarrassment to *Punch*, in August of 1849 Doyle contributed two cartoons *The Landing of Queen Victoria in Ireland* (Figure 20) (August 4, 1849) and *The New Irish Still* (Figure 21) (August 18, 1849) which took a different tack and exhibited some optimism. Both Doyle's drawing of the Queen's visit Figure 20 and his vision of a new era of industry in Ireland Figure 21 express hope for change in Ireland. Stylistically, Doyle continues his characterization of Irish subjects with pleasant facial angles and features. The figures are idealized, their limbs rounded, and their clothes although unfashionable, are not ragged. *The New Irish Still* may have been inspirational to some individuals. On April 17, 1852 the *Illustrated London News* announced the establishment of a Beet-Root Sugar Factory at Mountmellick, Queens

County, Ireland.<sup>306</sup> The *Illustrated London News* saw the distinct possibility for success of this industry in Ireland. *Punch*, on the other hand, ridiculed the notion.

Why, beet-root shall be to Ireland the root of all goodness. Sweets found in Ireland! Think of that, contemplative men, who tread the wharf of Liverpool—the quay of Bristol,—and see vomited from hundreds of ships, to crawl like wingless vermin over the country, tens of thousands of Irish; the sons and daughters of beggary; the blight of their own land, and the curse of the Saxon.<sup>307</sup>

A related story involved Paddy as a new “capitalist” whose savings allowed him the opportunity for investment. The impression was reversed when it was found that the savings had come from the Irishman’s wife who he had sent out to beg on the street.<sup>308</sup>

Apart from Doyle’s cover design, which endured until 1954, from 1843 until his resignation in 1850, Doyle contributed just 62 cartoons as a regular staff member, well under the 720 attributed solely to Leech, *Punch*’s principal illustrator.<sup>309</sup> These figures do not include other pictures incorporated into the magazine by both men. Leech was known to have contributed to *Punch* no less than three thousand pictures over his career.

<sup>310</sup> Consequently, Doyle’s philosophical input was far less influential than the large body of work dispensed by Leech. Doyle’s resignation resulted from the furor over the “Papal Aggression,” a decision by Rome to re-establish the ecclesiastical hierarchy, eliminated since Henry VIII’s Act of Supremacy. The artist could tolerate the magazine’s numerous and virulent attacks on the issue, but as a devout Roman Catholic, he could not abide Leech’s attacks on the doctrine of his religion or insults to the Pope.<sup>311</sup>

The effects of the resignation were significant to the future of *Punch*. Spielmann maintains that when Doyle departed, he left work unfinished, deliberately leaving the magazine in the lurch in order to retaliate against Jerrold and the proprietors who were at the bottom of the “*Punch* Aggression.” Although Doyle may have tasted revenge, Spielmann explains that

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<sup>306</sup> *ILLN.* April 17, 1852, 299-301. The market was favorable for Ireland since the price at which beet-root sugar could be produced in 1847 was now in competition with the slave labour market in the East Indies, Cuba, and Brazil without protecting duties. Factories in France, Belgium, Germany, and Russia including the Zollverein supplied only one seventh of the sugar for the Continent leaving a market share available for Irish sugar.

<sup>307</sup> *Punch*, Vol. XXIII, July – December, 1852, 202.

<sup>308</sup> *Punch*, Vol. XXIII, July – December, 1852, 23.

<sup>309</sup> Cartoons From “*Punch*.” (London: Bradbury, 1906), xi-xii.

<sup>310</sup> Graham Everett, *English Caricaturists and Graphic Humourists of the Nineteenth Century* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1893), 286.

<sup>311</sup> M. H. Spielmann, *The History of Punch* (New York: The Cassell Publishing Co., 1895), 456.

while no Catholic member of the Staff has ever raised his voice in its justification. Doyle's conduct served but to increase the bitterness of the anti-Catholic feeling in *Punch's* Cabinet, and perhaps to produce attacks more intemperate than any that had gone before. And, moreover, it rendered more difficult the position of others of the same faith, who became members of the Staff.<sup>312</sup>

Following *Punch*, Doyle continued to illustrate for Dickens, Thackeray, and others for nearly thirty years. Although his popularity waned, his style, which was best suited to non-political caricature, became more noticeably limited.<sup>313</sup> In his later years, Doyle devoted himself to painting fanciful subjects in watercolor of wild country places, inhabited by elves and fairies.

Religious controversies over the "Papal Aggression" and the quasi-Roman doctrines of Tractarianism inflamed *Punch* to attack the Puseyites, the Pope, the Irish Catholic Bishops, and the Irish in general. Simultaneously, anti-Catholic demonstrations and calls for "No Popery," roused Catholics to hold meetings, write letters, and circulate petitions against the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill.<sup>314</sup> In December of 1850, Leech simianized the Pope in *The Cat's Paw; or, Poor Pus(s)sey* (Figure 22). In 1851, the Irish are personified in the form of a monkey in *The Irish Nuisance* (Figure 23). Again in 1852, Leech depicts the Irish Cardinal Cullen in *The Fiery Cross* (Figure 24) with ape-like features, closely resembling the earlier cartoon, *Poor Pus(s)sey*.

Another facet of English intolerance is exhibited in three 1849 *Punch* drawings: an image of *Mendicus* (Figure 25), *A Shower of Beggars* (Figure 26) (probably drawn by William Newman), and *The Begging Profession* (Figure 27). *Punch* quotes from the diary of Mendicus, a begging-letter writer who is "shocked" upon entering a local soup kitchen "at the squalid and clamorous herds of low Irish, who intercept the charities of England."<sup>315</sup> The association of beggary and crime with the Irish remained constant and presented in the press a visual and verbal reinforcement of this insidious stereotype. Dublin's cartoonists doubtlessly resented the portrayal of their leaders as Calibans and ape-men, although the images were not reversed in Ireland until Parnell began to rally the Irish cause about 1870.<sup>316</sup>

<sup>312</sup> Spielmann, *Punch*, 457.

<sup>313</sup> Christopher Wheeler, ed., *Richard Doyle's Journal, 1840* (London: British Museum Publications, Ltd., 1980), xv.

<sup>314</sup> *Exiles of Erin*, 231.

<sup>315</sup> *Punch*, 1849, Vol. XVI, January-June, 25. "The Beggars," 36.

<sup>316</sup> *Apes & Angels*, 69.



# KING O'CONNELL, AT TARA.

At a meeting held at Tara by O'Connell and the National Repeal Association, exceedingly violent language was used against the Union, and the proceedings generally were very treasonable. As a consequence, the Government decided to stop the agitation.



### THE HOME OF THE RICK-BURNER.

\*.\* The distress existing among the agricultural labourers had given rise to many cases of arson, and one or two trials had disclosed the abject misery of some of the offenders.



**"RINT" v. POTATOES.—THE IRISH JEREMY DIDDLE.**

"You haven't got such a thing as Twelve-pence about you?—A Farthing a week—a Penny a month—  
a Shilling a year?"



The Irish

JANUARY.

State Trials.

- 1 W Light Sovereigns called in, and, after a terrible meeting, arrived at the Bank.
- 2 Th Lord Mayo complains of heavy state of the City. Alderman Gibbs objects to put down the dead. Very dirty.
- 3 F Mr. Hollomon presents to the Queen eight round-bellied Bantams, which he describes "take their place" at Windsor.
- 4 S Zealand at peace with all the world. Wonderful! that's a peace we don't owe to the French.
- 5 S Sunday.
- 6 M Qui tam actions for perjury brought against noble turpitudes.
- 7 W The Grasshopper places on the Royal Exchange. Poor Grasshopper! he won't find many more blades there.
- 8 Th Chaffin's statue of George IV. placed in Trafalgar Square.—A fine statue of a bad cause.
- 9 Th 300 Grasshoppers sent to the pictures in N.Y. Gall. None of the two sent. (Reader, see!) Oh! Joe Miller and his men.
- 10 F Lord Brough's return to England a few weeks. Lord Campbell returns from the "Dionysian" the noble art of self-defence.
- 11 S A possible 20,000, without notice at Auderby.—So large, that all the children of the village outside take it.
- 12 S Sunday.
- 13 M Extraordinary.—During the whole of the month the upper Bridge at the Burlington Arcade was never open out of temper.
- 14 Th A prisoner taken from the Millbank Penitentiary, all dressed in M.C. as he was in the former, who always has an M.C. of his head.
- 15 W Wonderful Proximity.—There is a cat, a very big one, 6 years old, who understands the whole of the machinery of the Division (read mail).
- 16 Th 25,000 rifles of war were imported into England. 25,000 rifles of "peace." What a hum!
- 17 F Mr. H. Phillips' first lecture on Hebrew Music. The post of Moses & 2nd provided at the Jews' day.
- 18 S Charles May arrives in town for the last rehearsal of Richard III.—The last! Ah! so much like my boy!
- 19 S Sunday.
- 20 M Louis Norton. At Coventry. At week, a kitten was born with the head of a red heron.
- 21 Th An attorney struck off the rolls to follow philosophical pursuits. He opens a dairy, to serve out the milk of human kind.
- 22 W Westminster Bridge reported to be unsafe—having what the Parkers of Wallbrook long for—a silliness.
- 23 Th Sir G. Macleay sends £200 to the British and Foreign Society. "So much for Buckingham."
- 24 F The Irish petition for an extended trade with England in soap—being desirous of taking the soap.
- 25 S Conversion of St. Paul.
- 26 S Sunday.
- 27 M Scotch Farmers determined to destroy looms—won't let them across the gate a Scotland.
- 28 Th Trial of Custom House Fraud. "They're late their duty, and they're late no more."—Few items.
- 29 W Great March against Time. William's means a new wig, and gives Time forty years behind.
- 30 Th Arrangement at Charles the First.
- 31 F Strike of artists, makers at Sheffield. The masters having trampled down the price, the workmen strike in defence.—(Readers—Eh?)



Bubbles of the Year.—The O'Connell Rent.

SOLOQUY OF A SHERIFF'S OFFICER.

Military Term: Pahaw! There's nothing hilarious about our terms now. This is a precious land of liberty, this is! ven a sheriff's officer can't find a shoulder to turn his hand to. Time was, ven I took my two bottles and my six bodies a-day. But now I think brandy and water a luxury, and hasn't as much as a diamond ring to my finger. I wonder ven they'll gladden my heart with a "execution" for the sheriff's officer who wouldn't serve a fellow-craft in a distress, isn't worthy of the name of Levy! So I may as well sell Madame Tussaud my top-boots to stand by them figures of Wellington's and Blucher's.

CLIMATE OF LONDON.

Professor Howard, in analysing the climate of London, took some fog home in a basin, and found it to contain nine parts smoke to one part porter. He undertook to extract a pint of stout from the atmosphere of Oxford-street on a very foggy day, if the fog only lasted till he had completed the operation.

EXTRAORDINARY STATISTICAL FACT.

A lady in Fitzroy-square has a cat which in the course of last year broke fifty plates, six cream-jugs, two brass candlesticks, three

soup-tureens, fifteen tea-cups, and one poker; and has eaten no less than thirty chickens, two sweetbreads, seven turkeys, three legs of lamb, ten gooseberry-pies, and three pots of preserved apricots. Nevertheless, this extraordinary cat is the greatest favourite with the cook and all the servants.

WORTHY OF ATTENTION.

ADVICE TO PERSONS ABOUT TO MARRY.—Don't.

THE ART OF PACKING.

A carpet bag should be packed by placing the clean linen in first, including the frilled shirt. After which stuff in the coats and boots; garnish with shaving-tackle, and ram down with hair-brush. If the packing is not then successful, insert your foot into the bag, and pull fiercely at the handles. It does not matter about the carpet bag being wide open at both sides, so as it is closed with a padlock in the middle.

REMARK.

The lodging-house variety is very scarce. It may sometimes, however, be raised in about a week from the kitchen, by ringing for it regularly every morning.





THE REAL POTATO BLIGHT OF IRELAND.

(FROM A SKETCH TAKEN IN CONCILIATION HALL.)



**A SKETCH OF THE GREAT AGITATER**

See March 1859  
L. J. M. 26  
H. 26



THE IRISH CINDERELLA AND HER HAUGHTY SISTERS,  
BRITANNIA AND CALEDONIA.



## JUSTICE TO IRELAND.

"SHE GAVE THEM SOME BROTH WITHOUT ANY BREAD.  
THEN WHIPP'D THEM ALL ROUND, AND SENT THEM TO BED."

"... Owing to the disturbed state of Ireland—the potato crop having failed throughout the country—an Irish Arms (or Coercion) Bill was brought in by the Peel Ministry.



### HEIGHT OF IMPUDENCE.

IRISHMAN TO JOHN BULL.—"SPARE A THRIFLE, YER HONOUR, FOR A POOR IRISH LAD TO BUY A BIT OF——  
A BLUNDERBUS WITH."

\*. The state of Ireland became more unsatisfactory towards the end of 1846, and more than one agrarian murder was committed.



## PUNCH AND PADDY.

"PUT AWAY THAT NASTY THING, AND LET'S HAVE A MERRY CHRISTMAS."

\*.\* The distress in Ireland had made the peasant much too familiar with the blunderbuss and other firearms.



## ALFRED THE SMALL.

DISGUISED AS A LITTLE WARBLER, VISITING THE IRISH CAMP.  
 (A CLANDESTINE HISTORY OF THE IRISH REVOLUTION, AND THE PART PLAYED BY THE LITTLE  
 ALFRED THE SMALL, IN THE REPEAL MOVEMENT.)



"MY LORD ASSASSIN" CLARENDON MURDERING THE IRISH.

Cartoon by John Brown, No. 1



THE BATTLE OF LIMERICK.



THE BRITISH LION AND THE IRISH MONKEY.

Monkey (Mr. Mitchell). "One of us MUST be 'Put Down.'"



HERE



THERE

OR EMIGRATION A REPLY.



**THE ENGLISH LABOURER'S BURDEN;**

OR, THE IRISH OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN.

*[See Sinbad the Sailor.]*

THE PUPPET-SHOW.



THE MODERN SINBAD AND THE OLD MAN OF THE  
SEA;  
OR,  
JOHN BULL AND PADDY.

## A MARVELLOUS CURE.



*Nurse Charvot.*—"ALL OF A SUDDEN, SIR, HE BROKE OUT, RASH LIES, ALL OVER, AND WENT ON IN A SHOOKING MANNER—IT WAS QUITE AWFUL TO HEAR HIM. HE SAID HE'D MURDER ME, AND YOU, AND I DON'T KNOW WHO ELSE; BUT HE'S BEEN MUCH BETTER SINCE I PUT ON THE STRAIT-JACKET, AS YOU TOLD ME."

*Doctor Rumbold.*—"AH! I KNEW THAT WOULD QUIET HIM."



### THE MODERN SISYPHUS.

"SISYPHUS IS SAID TO BE DOOMED FOR EVER TO ROLL TO THE TOP OF A GREAT MOUNTAIN A STONE, WHICH CONTINUALLY FALLS  
DOWN AGAIN."

SISYPHUS . . . SIR R. P. L. . . . THE STONE . . . D. O'CONNELL . . . THE FURBER . . . LORD J. RUSSELL, ESQ.  
.. The Irish question, at this time as for so many years after, was regarded as an eternal and insoluble problem.



## UNION IS STRENGTH.

*John Bull.*—“HERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO GO ON WITH, BROTHER, AND I’LL SOON PUT YOU IN A WAY TO EARN YOUR OWN LIVING.”



### LANDING OF QUEEN VICTORIA IN IRELAND.

SIR PATRICK BALEGHI. — "MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY TO TREAD ON THE TAIL OF MY COAT."

•• Her Majesty the Queen visited Ireland and was received with great enthusiasm by her loyal Irish people.



### THE NEW IRISH STILL.

SHOWING HOW ALL SORTS OF GOOD THINGS MAY BE OBTAINED (BY INDUSTRY) OUT OF PEAT.

\*.\* Some remarkable discoveries as to the useful properties of Irish bog were made known at this time.



THE CAT'S PAW; OR, POOR PU(S)SEY.



## THE IRISH NUISANCE.

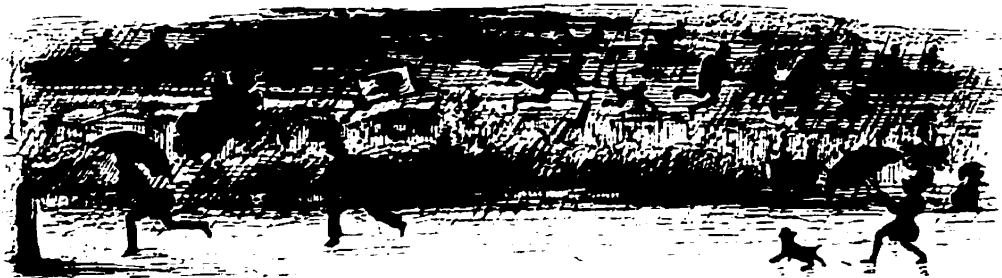
*Mr. Bull.* "CONFOUND THE BOY! HE'S MORE TROUBLE THAN ALL MY MONEY."



THE FIERY CROSS!



## A SHOWER OF BEGGARS.

[illegible]

of the plant. The leaves are small, narrow, and pointed, and are arranged in opposite pairs along the stem. The flowers are small, white, and are arranged in a terminal panicle. The fruit is a small, round, green capsule, which is covered with a waxy coating. The plant is a good source of food for many insects, and is also used as a source of medicine in some parts of the world.

[illegible]

## THE BEGGING PROFESSION.



### MEMBERS OF THE BEGGING PROFESSION.

## Chapter IV – Section C

### The Pictorial Times

Founded in March of 1843 by Henry Vizetelly and Andrew Spottiswoode, *The Pictorial Times* was the chief rival of the *Illustrated London News* throughout the 1840's. Vizetelly, who had helped Ingram found the *ILN* in 1842, was tired of "dancing attendance on Ingram" and with the assistance of a talented crew mostly from *Punch* set up his own paper.<sup>317</sup> While the two papers may not have held large political differences, their general approach to subject matter varied considerably, affected to a degree by a controversy which developed over sham mine illustrations in 1842. If the controversy induced the *PT* to cover social issues more accurately and in greater depth than other illustrated papers,<sup>318</sup> that same controversy may also have encouraged the *ILN* to take a more conservative approach, especially in light of the newspaper's doctrine of moral instruction through the "elevated neutrality of art."<sup>319</sup> As Celina Fox points out, newspapers that flirted with subject matter of questionable taste or political bias "not only ran the risk of being charged with sensationalism but also of offending some part of their readership,"<sup>320</sup> ultimately risking their commercial viability. When analyzing the manner in which the *ILN* and the *PT* covered social issues, especially the reports of the *[London] Times* special correspondents during the 1840's, it is important to recognize the influence of these factors on editorial policy and decisions.

Like the *Illustrated London News*, the editorial line of the *Pictorial Times* tended to follow the lead of articles in the *[London] Times*. Clearly, the paper did not like O'Connell. Questions of taste and political bias seemed to play a small role editorially. On the whole, the *PT* blamed Irish nationalist politicians, Irish landlords, and the Irish peasantry for the crisis in Ireland and saw the British as ill-used by the Irish rather than vice-versa.

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<sup>317</sup> Celina Fox, "The Development of Social Reportage in English Periodical Illustration During the 1840's and Early 1850's," *Past and Present* (74): 92, 98.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid., 94-99. Both Bell's *Penny Dispatch* and Douglas Jerrold's *Illuminated Magazine* published illustrations from the government's 1842 Report of the Inquiry into the Employment and Conditions of Children in the Mines and Manufactures. The illustrations, which were provided by the Commissioners and were submitted as on-the-spot evidence, later turned out to be falsified.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid.

In August of 1845, T. C. Foster, a special correspondent for the *[London] Times* was sent to Ireland to report on the condition of the people. During the fall of that year, Foster sent back a series of reports detailing the dreadful state of Ireland. In November and December, his reports focused on the appalling circumstances of the peasantry on O'Connell's own lands in Kerry. These articles set off a fierce controversy, taken up later by both the *Illustrated London News* and the *Pictorial Times*. Foster wrote that in Kerry the people were no better off than the half-naked potato-fed people he met in other parts of the country

Here their nakedness is not less, and they know no other food. In filthiness and squalid poverty, starving on a rood of land with miles of waste land, which the application of knowledge and industry would make teem with plenty, the poor Kerryman exists in contented wretchedness. Neglected by his landlord, he knows nothing beyond the growing of potatoes; oppressed by the hard-fisted middleman In a hovel like a pigstye...without chimney and without window, with but one room, an iron pot, and a rude bedstead, with some straw litter, as the only furniture, bed, or bedclothes, the labourer, in the midst of half a dozen nearly naked children, with his barefooted wife, sits squatted on the mud floor round the peat fire <sup>321</sup>

Fundamentally, Foster blamed Irish landlordism for the sad state of Irish affairs. Moreover, he castigated Irish middlemen, which O'Connell was also, and the inherent ignorance and indolence of the Irish peasantry. <sup>322</sup> His abusive and disparaging articles followed the lines of the traditional Irish stereotype.

The neglected and untaught Irishman, full of impulse, has his sympathies and his passions easily excited... The natural bent of his mind is not to ingenuity, but to cunning. He is as helpless as a child at a contrivance or a plan which shall drain his land, or aid him in fishing, or improving his cottage, or save his diseased potatoes; but he is great at a contrivance which will palm a bad sixpence upon you; and the trouble he will take, and the roundabout way he will go to overreach you, are more amusing than effective. <sup>323</sup>

Foster related stories of the "utter ignorance" of the poor: in Galway people "pawn... bank notes" and in Kerry, fishermen "spread nets and wait for the fish to come into them," although he was not entirely sure if the stories were manufactured for his benefit. <sup>324</sup> But, predictably, the Irish agitator was the newspaper's principal target. The

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<sup>321</sup> T. C. Foster, *The Times*, November 18, 1845, 8.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid. Dickens may have used Foster's letter as the basis of his article, "Two Chapters on Bank Note Forgeries."

*Times* condemned O'Connell as

the braggard leader and mouthpiece of discontent...the man who boasts to have greater power than priest or monarch ever had before...the King of Tara...How fearful must be the responsibility of that man who, having great influence over a people's mind, never used it for their good; and who when they suffered, jested; when they starved, extorted; at once the cutpurse and buffoon of a hideous tragedy.<sup>325</sup>

Foster's scathing reports to the *Times* in the fall of 1845 described extreme squalor and destitution on the O'Connell estates. In November, Foster wrote:

He permits subdivision to any extent. This wins a certain degree of popularity; but the land under lease by him is in consequence in the most frightful state of overpopulation...the distress of the people was horrible...In future...it will be remembered that amongst the most neglectful landlords who are a curse to Ireland, Daniel O'Connell ranks first--that on the estate of Daniel O'Connell are to be found the most wretched tenants that are to be seen in all of Ireland.<sup>326</sup>

Even though O'Connell did spend large sums on improvements and on food for the peasantry, the *Times'* articles were literally true. O'Connell angrily attacked Foster calling him a "gutter commissioner," "that scoundrel" and "a liar."<sup>327</sup> The contemptuous tone of the *Times* commissioner and his offensive criticism of Irish life and Irish habits prompted even the Dublin Tory newspapers to back O'Connell. "The management of O'Connell's property is excellent," said the *Evening Mail* of Dublin, "his tenants are comfortable and happy."<sup>328</sup> O'Connell's friends and his son, Maurice, wrote the *Times*<sup>329</sup> to defend him. William Howitt, a favorite English writer of the period, who was at Derrynane a few months before the visit of the *Times* commissioner wrote

My opinion is that the people are much better off about Darrynane than in many other parts of Ireland; and I observed that a great number of people were employed on improvements on the Darrynane estate. People with whom I spoke of O'Connell in the neighbourhood evinced a general enthusiasm regarding him, and it seemed to be a source of great pride that he always conversed with them in their native Irish.<sup>330</sup>

<sup>325</sup> *The Times*, October 30, 1845.

<sup>326</sup> *The Times*, November 18, 1845, 8.

<sup>327</sup> Michael MacDonagh, *Daniel O'Connell* (Dublin and Cork: The Talbot Press, Ltd., 1929), 336.

<sup>328</sup> Michael MacDonagh, *Daniel O'Connell* (Dublin and Cork: The Talbot Press, Ltd., 1929), 342.

<sup>329</sup> December 20, 1845, *The Times*, 3.

<sup>330</sup> Michael MacDonagh, *Daniel O'Connell*, 342.

Foster's letters and O'Connell's fiery and abusive responses were reprinted in nearly every newspaper. When O'Connell ignored Foster's suggestion to let a jury decide the issue, the *Times* sent another staff member, a young Irishman named Howard Russell, to furnish an independent report. He accepted Maurice O'Connell's hospitality, but sided with Foster.

By January, the affair prompted the *Illustrated London News* to send an artist to sketch Cahirciveen with "its dirty unpaved streets, and old hat-mended windows," "Darrynane Beg," and the "swarming, poverty-stricken tenantry"<sup>331</sup> located on the O'Connell lands. Excluding the interior scene of "Cluvane's hut," the coverage by the *ILN*, entitled "Views of the O'Connell Property in Ireland," consisted of two pages of small scenes, which explained little and fell into the class of topographical sketches of scenery. The paper warned "our Artist's report is almost exclusively graphic,"<sup>332</sup> which was entirely true, since almost all of the text was quoted verbatim from Foster's reports to the *Times*. While the illustrations did not bear out the text, except for the wretchedness of the peasant's hut, the article's scenic views safely sold papers and supported the accusations of the *Times*. The ineptitude of the *ILN*'s expose on the O'Connell estates induced the *Pictorial Times* to send their own artist, Frederick N. Sheppard to Ireland that same month.

*The Pictorial Times* stated in January that Sheppard was to direct his first efforts towards Derrynane, so "That justice may be done to Ireland—Ireland must be known as she really is in 1846."<sup>333</sup> A five-part series, encompassing eighteen pages and about twenty-six engravings commenced, entitled "The condition of the People of Ireland, Illustrated by Sketches made from the Farms and Tenantry of Daniel O'Connell, Esq." Overall, the engravings fit Foster's descriptions. They document abject destitution, which as the correspondent notes, would appear especially severe to English eyes because of the substantial difference in the standard of living between the Irish and English labourer. Besides the commentary provided by the *Pictorial Times*, the illustrations were captioned with various disparaging observations attributed to Foster and Russell of the *London Times*.

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<sup>331</sup> *The Illustrated London News*, January 10, 1846, 24 quoted from the *Times* Commissioner.

<sup>332</sup> *The Illustrated London News*, January 10, 1846, 24, 25.

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

Compare *Ardcara – Cabin of J. Donoghue* (Figure 1) (February 7, 1846) with *Derrynane Beg - Cabin of Pat Brennan* (Figure 2) (February 7, 1846) a small farmer on Daniel O’Connell’s estate at Derrynane, Co. Kerry. The tiny hovel of J. Donoghue is designated as an example of poverty at its worst on the O’Connell estate. Donoghue’s cabin has holes for a chimney, a door, and a window, and a sod bed as its only furniture. The cabin houses Donoghue’s wife, his three children, a dog, a pig, and sundry fowls. He is depicted as brutish and savage, the others stunned and hopeless. In contrast to Donoghue’s cabin is Pat Brennan’s, considered one of the best on the estate. The difference between the two is simply a little more space, a few pieces of furniture, a potato store over the fire, and a slight improvement in the personal condition of the occupants. In this particular picture, the store of potatoes might lead the observer to believe that this peasant family was not in danger of starving.

Compare *A Scene in Tarmons – A Widow and Children of the O’Connell Estates on their Way to Beg Potatoes* (Figure 3) (February 14, 1846) with *A Potato Dinner, Cahirciveen* (Figure 4) (February 28, 1846). In both pictures, the peasants are depicted with food. Again this may be misleading for the reader-viewer. The text associated with Figure 3 discusses beggary. In Ireland the beggar is not an outcast since charity is a duty, but in England, a beggar is considered a “degradation even to the humblest labourer and...is relieved, not so much to satisfy his wants, as to get rid of his presence.”<sup>334</sup> Although this particular artist does not depict prognathism in the peasants, the countenances pictured are not particularly appealing.

Consider two further engravings: *Cabin at Ardcarra* (Figure 5)(January 31, 1846) and *A Group of Cabins at Ardcarra* (Figure 6) (January 31, 1846). Both sketches attest to the foul and fetid living conditions found on O’Connell’s lands. The *PT* noted that “Here beyond all question, we must look for “deeds not words.”<sup>335</sup>

The next two engravings to be examined are *Scene in Derrynane Beg* (Figure 7) (February 7, 1846) and *Daniel O’Connell’s “Study” in Derrynane Abbey* (Figure 8) (February 7, 1846) follow. Printed on the same page, the disparity of comfort between these two engravings is awkward and embarrassing.

<sup>334</sup> *Pictorial Times*, February 14, 1846, 108.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, January 31, 1846, 69.

*Derrynane Abbey* (Figure 9) (January 31, 1846), the home of Daniel O'Connell, and *Peasantry of the O'Connell Farms* (Figure 10) (January 31, 1846) were again published together. The text implies character deficiencies on the part of tenants and landlords in a discussion of the exaction of high rents and the visibility of improvements. The contrast between O'Connell's stately home, which he inherited in 1825, and the circumstances of the peasantry below make a harsh comparison. The *Pictorial Times* blamed O'Connell for allowing such misery, for insufficient improvements, for exacting exorbitant rents as a middleman, for permitting unchecked subdivision, and boldly stated that if the peasantry on the O'Connell lands did not pay their rents, eviction would follow. Maurice O'Connell, Daniel O'Connell's son and agent for the family estate categorically denied these charges. He replied that they had never evicted. They had provided schools and a dispensary including food, medicine, and supplies, whenever asked; but in a continuation of this article, the *Times* swiftly rebutted each claim.<sup>336</sup>

Throughout this series, the newspaper stressed that its sketches were authentic and were executed on the spot. However, a comparison of Sheppard's depiction (Figure 9) of Derrynane Abbey with two other old engravings suggests the possibility of misrepresentation or inaccuracy in the *Pictorial Times* series. Both engravings (Figure 11) (1833) and (Figure 12) show Derrynane House from the same aspect but differ with the sketch from the *Pictorial Times*. In actuality, the drawing by Sheppard is authentic.<sup>337</sup> Figure 11 turns out to be an idealized and exaggerated painting undertaken by John Fogerty on a visit to Derrynane and later presented by him to O'Connell.<sup>338</sup> Figure 12 seems to be a stylized copy of the Fogerty painting, a common practise of the period. Hence, the castellated tower and south wing addition, which are depicted in the *PT* article and are still standing, confirm the artist's presence at Derrynane House, the veracity of the *PT* sketch, and establishes the presumption of artistic accuracy in the *PT* drawings.

In all of the engravings several features stand out. First, the artist consistently

<sup>336</sup> December 20, 1845. *The Times*, 3.

<sup>337</sup> Helen Blair of the Office of Public Works, Dublin, Ireland, architect in charge of Derrynane House and Professor Rolf Loeber, an expert in nineteenth-century Irish architecture in Pittsburg, both concur that the house drawn in the *PT* article is accurate.

<sup>338</sup> Documentation from the Office of Public Works, Dublin regarding Derrynane House, August 14, 1998. "The above picture of my residence Derrynane Abbey and its surrounding scenery, is a facsimile of the original in my \*\*\*\*\* by Mr. John Fogarty whilst at Derrynane and presented by him to me on my return to London in M\*\*\* (May or March), 1831. The artist presented the completed picture to O'Connell in London in 1831. The house on which Fogarty based his painting was probably the three-story Georgian farmhouse constructed sometime before 1756, which extended or replaced the original two-story house built in 1702. Fogarty's painting was engraved by Robert Havell and published in 1833. See also 1839 engraving (Figure 11-a).

represents the physiognomies of the Irish peasantry in a coarse manner and portrays destitution at its most extreme. Certainly, hardships of the peasantry could be fairly depicted by unkempt hair, dirt, tattered clothing and hardened faces. Another explanation might be that the artist unconsciously conveyed a negative and stereotypical iconographic identity to the Irish peasantry through the portrayal of coarse features and the depiction of barbaric living conditions. Further difficulties lie in the depiction of starving people with healthy bodies. Also, considering the existence of famine conditions one might ask why pigs, potatoes, and chickens were pictured so close at hand? Still, in the early stages of the Famine, some food was available and the ravaging effects of famine and disease may not have been widespread. And as Margaret Crawford and Catherine Marshall have both noted, classical artistic training may have led artists to depict healthy limbs on starving peasants; however, if this was true, shouldn't one expect classically depicted physiognomies also?

Certainly, the peasantry depicted on the Irish leader's lands was impoverished, although Daniel O'Connell's correspondence documents his concern and generosity towards his tenants<sup>339</sup>. But the political bias in this series and in the controversy as a whole was so flagrant that it seems likely that the *Times*, Foster, the *Illustrated London News*, the *Pictorial Times*, and Sheppard had every intention of discrediting O'Connell and denigrating the peasantry, first by proving his neglect as a landlord and second by showing the extreme backwardness of Irish country life. At the same time, the depiction of pigs, cows, chickens, and potatoes in the pictures is misleading. Their inclusion, however, was probably not intended to undermine O'Connell's creditability regarding the need for relief, but was simply intended to impart the Irish lifestyle iconographically, rather than to convey the availability of food.

*Destitution in Ireland - Failure of the Potato* (Figure 13) (August 22, 1846) is artistically pleasing in its composition and typical in its iconographic depiction of the Irish peasantry. All the appropriate elements are included, barren lands, a one-room hovel, pigs and fowls, potatoes, and a family of peasants. While the pathos of the scene is imparted by the family's despondency and forlorn contemplation of what seems to be last

of their food supply, at the same time, the squalid lifestyle, and the passivity of the peasantry is also portrayed. Although the family is pictured in a sympathetic fashion, no signs of imminent starvation are depicted. Surprisingly, the main point of the accompanying text is not Irish destitution, but English dismay over the political split at Conciliation Hall, Irish agitation, and concern over possible insurrection by the Young Ireland faction.

On October 10, 1846, the *Pictorial Times* published an article entitled, "Food Riots in Ireland, Conduct of the Liberator." Accompanying the piece is the engraving *Food Riot in Dungarvan* (Figure 14). This engraving is probably an artist's conception of the Dungarvan riot since there is no indication that either an artist or a journalist was in Dungarvan at the time of the riot. The depictions of the people in this engraving, however, are highly negative and disturbing. Although the bodies of the rioters are drawn without signs of starvation, their physiognomies are brutish. After upbraiding the Irish for blaming England for Ireland's own "crimes or follies," the journalist expresses some understanding for the behavior of the rioters and urges English aid, but ends by attacking Irish agitators as "cruel, unnatural leaders, who cannot meet ... without mutual smiling at the unsuspecting gullibility upon which they prey."<sup>340</sup>

*The Present State of Ireland* (Figure 15) (January 16, 1847) accompanies the lead article of the day's paper entitled "Night Attack." The article contrasts the safety of a night in the country in England to a night raid during a friend's recent visit to Ireland. While the journalist sympathizes with the family under attack as well as the "poor wretches" that attack from hunger, blame is placed on the great question of "Currency," and the underpayment of labour. The artist, however, has not depicted the narrative as described. The family attacked is far wealthier than the one shown. The article mentions servants, a servants' staircase, windows to be shuttered, a house with several floors, a battery of arms, and a number of overnight guests for whom guest rooms must have been available. The barefoot individuals drawn by this artist are certainly peasants, whose

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<sup>339</sup> MacDonagh, *Daniel O'Connell*, 341. Letter to John O'Connell from Daniel O'Connell, March 3, 1834 on the occasion of the outbreak of cholera. "My dear John. As far as I am concerned, spare no expense that can possibly alleviate the suffering of the people. Do not delay...everybody should live as full as possible, eating meat twice a day. Get meat for the poor as much as possible. I wish my good people about Darrynane should begin a meat diet before the disorder arrives amongst them."

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.*, October 10, 1846.

brutish and threatening looks would more likely engender antipathy rather than sympathy.

The engraving entitled *Relief For Ireland* (Figure 16) pictured in the January 30, 1847 issue of the *Pictorial Times* calls to mind the use of stock engravings. *Relief For Ireland* may have been designed from a stock block, especially since the image completely contradicts the text. The engraving seems to express sympathy towards Irish misery and distress, while the accompanying article chastises the supplicants. The reasonably well-clothed people pray and cheer for the safe and swift arrival of ships delivering food. Although the engraving's composition and figures impart a pleasant and hopeful scene, the plainly biased message is evident upon reading the article.

To help them now, indeed is our immediate duty; to teach them better habits, a wiser social economy, and a less selfish nationality, must be reserved for more fortunate times, when perchance, our readiness to assist them in adversity will have prepared even the most prejudiced against us, to receive our advice without questioning our sincerity...<sup>341</sup>

Comparisons abounded, oftentimes with the past. On March 20, 1847 an article, entitled *The Irish Peasantry* was published. The engraving associated with it (Figure 17) depicts the Irish peasantry as the artist imagined they used to be. This engraving displays a picturesque rusticity, happiness, and contentment quite unlike the reality. But again the text conflicts and censures the Irish. In this case, the elder O'Connell and his countrymen are faulted for their part in idling

their time in polemical or political discussions. This moral dissipation, for which the constitution of the Irish character too readily adopted the people, [O'Connell] ...fostered and encouraged. In listening to speeches on grievances, real or imaginary, they were taught to believe all they wished on earth could be accomplished. How miserably deceived—how woefully corrected! Time misspent, exertions misdirected, delusive hopes engendered, until a trying period of man's real duty having been fulfilled comes in the shape of famine, and proves to all but the infatuated victims, that...they have...wasted opportunities which have left them...victims without any hope, but from the charity and Christian forbearance of that very people who have suffered so much in feeling at home...and abroad, from the calumnious misrepresentations of the false prophets, who have thus led Ireland to the verge of ruin.<sup>342</sup>

<sup>341</sup> *Pictorial Times*, January, 30, 1847, 73.

<sup>342</sup> *Pictorial Times*, March 20, 1847, 180.

The lead story for the *Pictorial Times* on September 11, 1847 was an article on famine in the Highlands of Scotland. The distinctions that the writer makes between the “Scotch” and Irish who are both stalked by famine underscores the stereotype as well as the artist’s bias and his choice to show the Scottish women at work in the engraving *Turf Carriers of Lochaber* (Figure 18). The text expresses the writer’s disdain for the Irish...

The clamorous Hibernian has awakened the sympathies of the world; the unobtrusive Caledonian is scarcely supposed to need assistance. Yet, if the relative conditions of the poor of the two nations were fairly examined, it would be found that the chill penury has not exercised its freezing influence less extensively in the barren hills of Scotland, than on the rich, but neglected, soil of the Emerald Isle... It is worth observing that in times of comparative abundance the lives of the latter are marked by an indolence which even the lazzaroni of Naples cannot approach; whereas the former pursue an undeviating course of industry, seizing upon every conceivable means of rendering the spontaneous gifts of Nature applicable to purposes of livelihood. The engraving... drawn by Mr. Ackerman... remarkably illustrates the fact. It represents Highland peasants carrying home peat fuel for winter consumption, demonstrating at once the excessive poverty of the people, and their singularly provident habits.<sup>343</sup>

The veracity of this particular engraving is doubtful, not because the Scottish women are shown at work with clean and untattered clothing, but again because the depiction of their limbs suggests an overabundance of food rather than famine.

Perhaps the Irish stereotype had produced a reluctance to depict the Irish at work. Twenty-two years later, with the advent of social realism, there was at least some change in the artistic climate. In March of 1869, the *Graphic* ran an engraving displaying *Irish Turf Carriers* (Introduction, Figure 2) similar to the earlier *Turf Carriers of Lochaber* in 1847.<sup>344</sup> The *Graphic* had been founded by W. L. Thomas in 1869 as a weekly illustrated news journal dedicated to quality illustrations. The new journal staffed its paper primarily with artists, in addition to wood engravers, and instituted high artistic standards. *Irish Turf Carriers* accompanied an article on the great and frustrating question of how to render Ireland contented and happy. This particular engraving is far more realistic than earlier depictions of Irish people and is a distinct contrast to the earlier engraving of Scottish turf carriers. Although the features of the Irish women do not display the type of

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<sup>343</sup> *Pictorial Times*, September 11, 1847, 162.  
<sup>344</sup> *The Graphic*, Saturday, March 26, 1869.

beauty reserved for English women, there is an intelligence and humanity formerly unseen depicted in their faces. The realism is continued throughout the depiction.

On September 11, 1847 the *Pictorial Times* printed an article on the Donnybrook Fair together with an engraving captioned *An Irish Reaper* (Figure 19). The *Irish Reaper* represents a typical visitor to the Donnybrook Fair who is portrayed with ape-like features, a keg and a scythe. The article laments the end of the Donnybrook Fair's "ancient spirit of good humoured discord and brutal friendliness...The shrines at which the rude and violent worshipped...before which the inebriate insensibly prostrated themselves."<sup>345</sup> Toward the end of the article, the journalist reminds the reader that the needs of Ireland should be remembered as well as those of the Highlanders and ends by stating that "a great change had come over the social character of the Irish."<sup>346</sup> If the social character of the Irish had changed significantly, the next story called that premise into question. The following article reported news from Limerick, Cork, and Sligo regarding the occurrence of three murders and a knifing.

T. C. Foster, the "Times Commissioner," whose previous letters on Ireland in the Times attracted so much notice wrote yet another letter defaming the Irish character. The Irish labourer, Foster said, prefers "poverty, wretchedness, and dependence, with a very little labour to comfort and independence and wealth with hard work."<sup>347</sup> On October 16, 1847, the *Pictorial Times* took issue with Foster and argued that the preference of idleness to industry was universal and not inborn in the Milesian. Industry, the newspaper said, is stimulated by necessity, the growth of artificial wants, and by the example of the industrious, ideas propounded by Adam Smith and other Scottish Enlightenment political economists on economic development. The article then takes an interesting twist by suggesting that in the tradition of the great painter and social critic, William Hogarth, the paper could philanthropically teach the Irish through pictorial example. It was hoped that the attempts of the artist, F. W. Nicholson, to exhibit the industrious Irish poor as they were found in England would have its healthy influence. Unfortunately, the engraving *Condition of the Industrious Irish Poor in England* (Figure 20) is quite uncomplimentary.

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<sup>345</sup> *Pictorial Times*, September 11, 1847, 164.

<sup>346</sup> *Pictorial Times*, September 11, 1847, 164.

<sup>347</sup> *Pictorial Times*, October 16, 1847, 244.

On October 30, 1847 an article entitled "Famine in Ireland" was accompanied by two engravings *Meal Cart, Under Military Escort, Proceeding to a Relief Station, Clonmel* (Figure 21) and *Irish Armed Peasants Waiting For the Approach of a Meal Cart* (Figure 22). The newspaper noted that the engravings illustrated Irish violence and ingratitude. These depictions are most likely images designed in England to describe reports of attacks by armed peasants upon Government meal transports. The journalist compliments the "arrangements of a wise and humane Government for supplying a destitute and famine-stricken population," but warns that "lawless ruffians, ... who would rather spill human blood to purchase a meal, than till the generous earth... almost serves to justify the penuriousness that would deny assistance to one-half of Ireland, on the ground of the crimes and indolence of the other half."<sup>348</sup> The men in the group of peasants observing the procession of the meal cart are quite similarly drawn to the armed peasants in the companion engraving. One wonders if the artist wished to suggest that the robbers and the men in the group are the same individuals, or if the necessity to differentiate between individual Irishman was not important. *Irish Armed Peasants Waiting For the Approach of a Meal Cart* portrays three desperados whose closely set eyes and long slitty nostrils imply low birth, cunning, and criminality. The third outlaw's physiognomy, his upturned nose and receding forehead recalls the more typical Irish stereotype.

For the time, the *Pictorial Times* was more radical in spectrum than most illustrated papers. Appalled by the conditions under which the Irish would allow themselves to exist, artists and writers imparted repugnance of what they considered Irish passivity, ignorance, and torpor. The paper's five-part illustrated series on the condition of Ireland in 1846 provided a devastating and one-sided attack on Irish landlordism, O'Connell, and on the peasantry itself. Coverage of Irish affairs continued in this vein until the paper's demise in 1848 and revealed a way of seeing predetermined by the editors and artists. Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of the social commentary in the *Pictorial Times* was its blatant prejudice and stereotypical treatment of Irish life, similar in its fixity to the treatment of buildings in a topographical tradition.

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<sup>348</sup> Ibid. October 30, 1847, 281-2.



THE MAN AND THE WOMAN



THE MAN AND THE WOMAN



THE CHILDREN OF THE POOR, WHO ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN AFFORD TO BE BAREFOOT, ON THEIR WAY TO THE POTATOES.



THE CHILDREN OF THE POOR, WHO ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN AFFORD TO BE BAREFOOT, ON THEIR WAY TO THE POTATOES.



CHATEAU DE S. ANTOINE.



CHATEAU DE S. ANTOINE.



THE HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND



THE STUDY OF A SCOTCHMAN



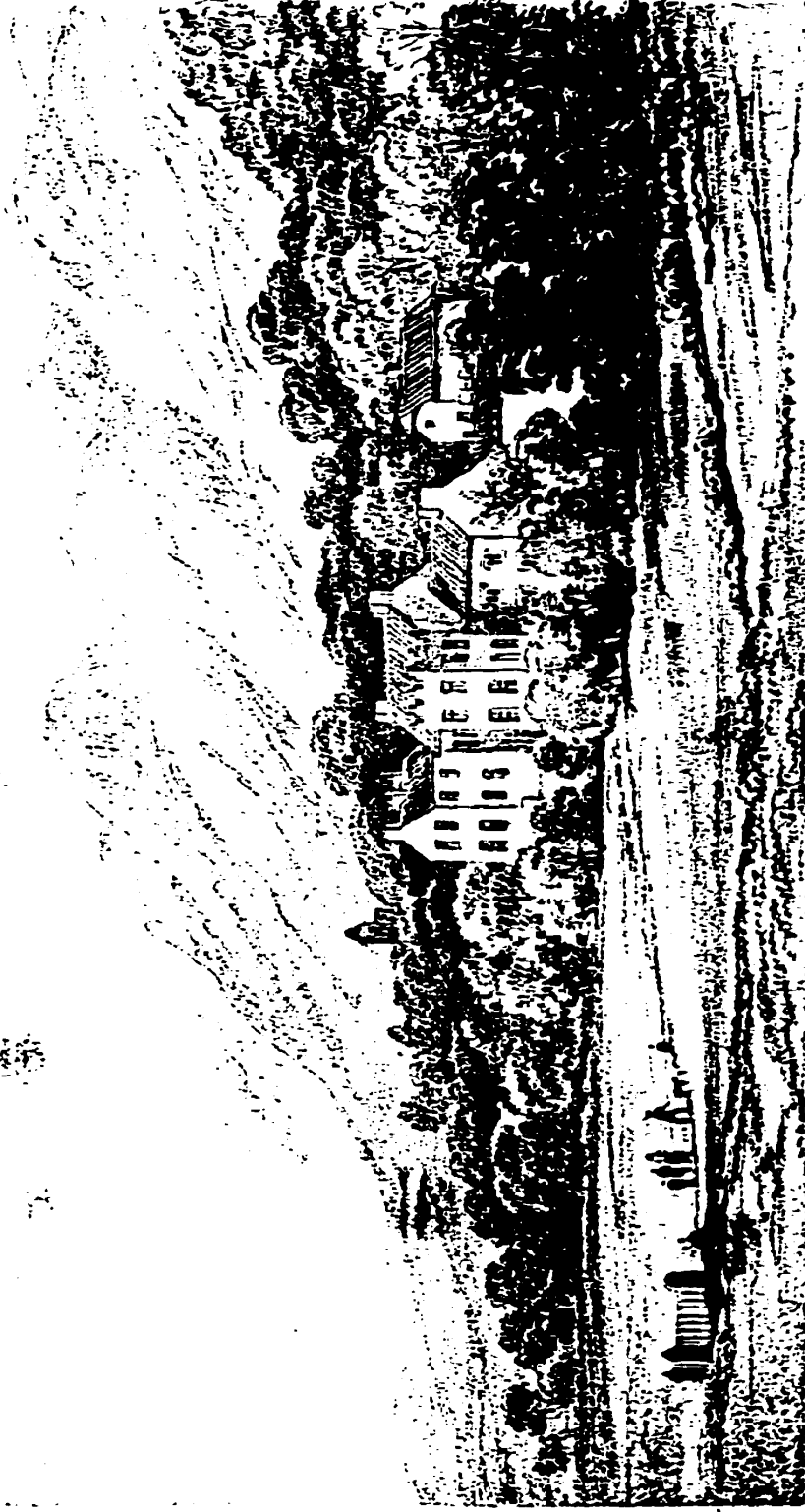
IF ANY NAME, ADAPT



FEASANTRY OF THE O'CONNELL FARM



O'CONNELL'S HOME AT DERRYNANE ABBEY  
*From a lithograph in the National Gallery, Dublin.*



DARRYNANE ABBEY.—C<sup>o</sup> OF KERRY  
The Seat of D O Connell, Esq<sup>r</sup> M P.  
*London, Saunders & Otley, 1839*



DARRYNNE ABBEY



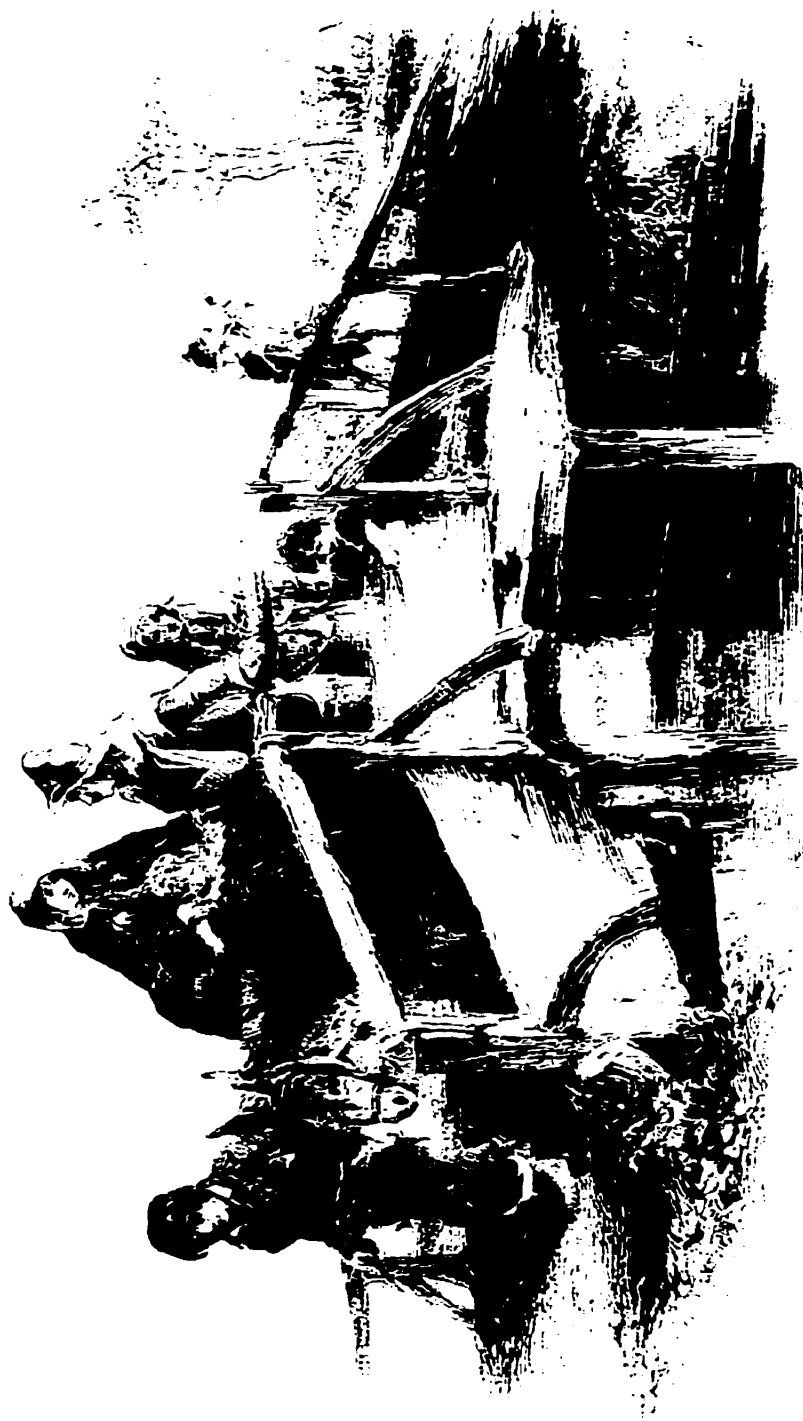




THE PICTORIAL TIMES.



RELIEF FOR IRELAND



THE PEASANTS OF THE WORLD

# Pictorial Times

Vol. X.—No. 435

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1847.

[PRICE SIXPENCE.]



THE PICTORIAL TIMES.



THE PICTORIAL TIMES.

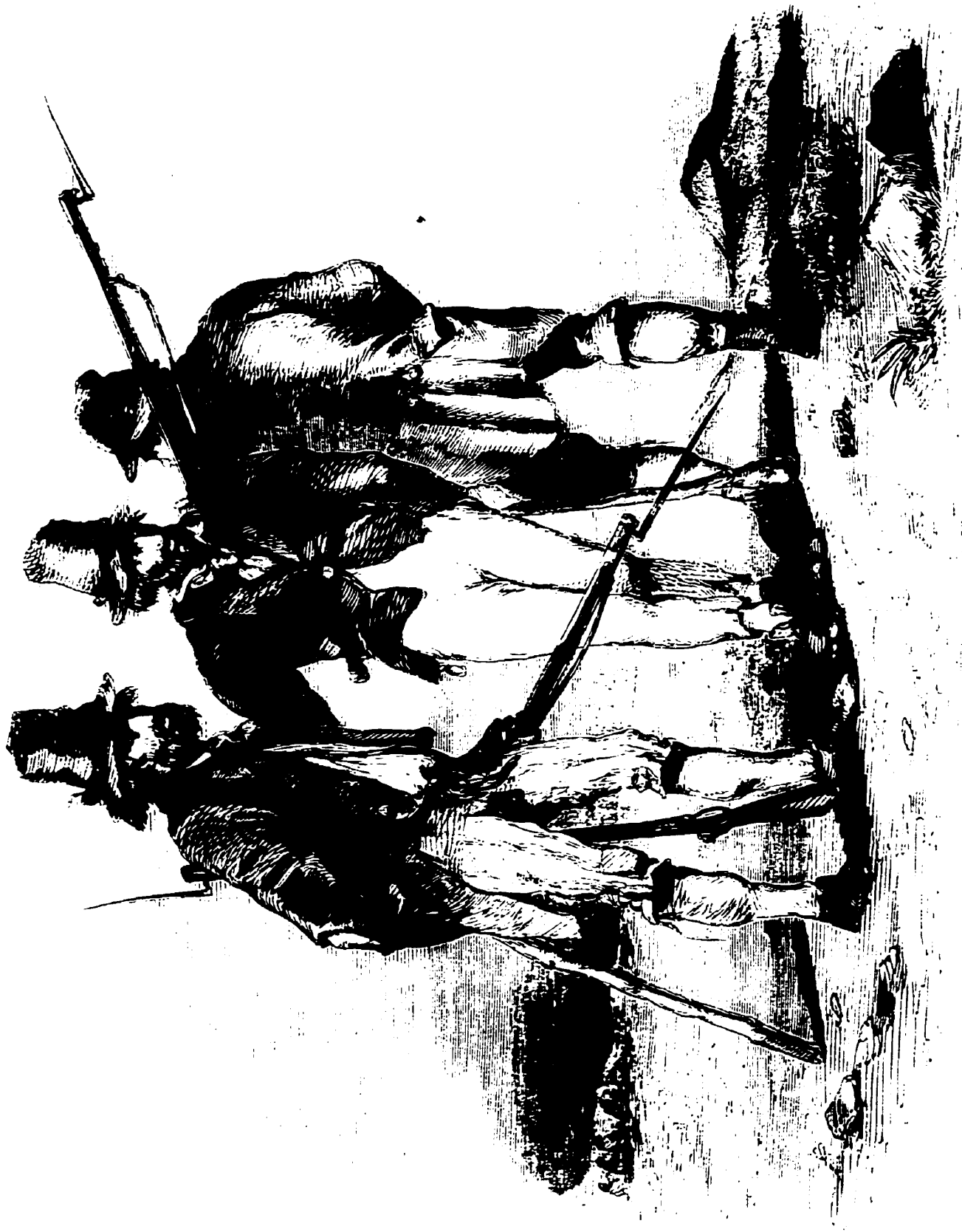
THE PICTORIAL TIMES.



OFFICE OF THE PICTORIAL TIMES, 100, FLEET STREET, LONDON.



MEAL CART, UNDER MILITARY ESCORT, PROCEEDING TO A RELIEF STATION, CLONMEL.



IRISH ARMED PEASANTS WAITING FOR THE APPROACH OF A MEAL CART.

## Chapter IV - Section D

### The Illustrated London News

If the *Pictorial Times* displayed more daring in its coverage of social issues, the *Illustrated London News* kept more safely within tradition. Founded as a weekly by Herbert Ingram in 1842, the *Illustrated London News* was the first periodical to rely primarily on its woodcuts and engravings for its success. Ingram's paper prospered because it catered to a middle-class clientele whose taste for higher things did not include the privations or distress of the lower classes. The paper won the approval of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the clergy, and the church-going public, which was perhaps influenced by the distribution of eleven thousand free copies.<sup>349</sup> In its ambition to educate and morally uplift its audience, it limited its view of the world, however.<sup>350</sup> For the *ILN*, the times were always prosperous and the City healthy. Rarely were the urban poor taken up as subject matter, and when they were, they were distanced in some manner. Although its drawing-room reflections of society, politics, and foreign events were presented to its audience in a palatable way, the main effect was to protect its reader from unpleasantness. On the whole, journalistic commentary and pictorial coverage of Irish subjects were variable and periodic. Thus, it is not surprising that even during the height of the Irish Famine, illustrated articles were sparse in appearance and ambiguous in their point of view.

The illustrations often belied the text in design and composition. It was not unusual that an article on Irish affairs would be introduced by an *ILN* writer in England or a correspondent from Ireland or both and would be followed by a lengthy excerpt from an Irish newspaper. At other times, the paper's "own artist" functioned both as the paper's "own correspondent" and the artist, as he did in the large two-page spread on January 10, 1846, entitled "Views of the O'Connell Property in Ireland" (previously discussed in the section on the *Pictorial Times*.) Not surprisingly, since Irish reporters were more apt to be eyewitnesses to ongoing events, excerpts from Irish papers communicated a more graphic and detailed perspective than that of the *ILN*. Also, their observations were consistently

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<sup>349</sup> Fox, "Social Reportage," 92-93.

<sup>350</sup> Fox, "Social Reportage," 92-93. Altick, *English Common Reader*, 394. Its circulation rose from 26,000 to 66,000 its first year, and by 1850, it averaged 67,000, and reached 120,000 between 1854 and 1855.

more sympathetic in tone. Another problem encountered in this analysis is that of attribution. Rarely is the identity of an artist or writer revealed, although on occasion contributors are designated.

The *Illustrated London News* hired various artists and engravers to provide illustrations for the paper. Strickland confirms that the *ILN* engaged James Mahony,<sup>351</sup> an artist from Cork, as their principal artist on Irish affairs in the mid-1840's. Strickland also notes that another Cork artist, Robert Lowe Stopford (1813-1898), was known to have worked as an art correspondent for the *Illustrated London News* for many years in the south of Ireland. He may have been commissioned to cover subjects in Ireland unrelated to the Famine. Of course, there may have been others also.

James Mahony was born in Cork, Ireland in 1810, the son of a carpenter. His name suggests that he was Catholic, although we can only surmise this. He is known to have travelled widely in Europe and to have spent a number of years in Rome before returning to Cork in 1842 where he settled down to become a watercolorist. The paper identifies Mahony as the artist for the article on "Indian Corn in Cork" that appeared April 4, 1846 and as the artist and correspondent for "Sketches in the West of Ireland" begun on February 13, 1847 and completed on February 20, 1847. I also believe that we can attribute to Mahony the earlier article on January 10, 1846 on "Views of the O'Connell Property – By our own Artist)." As the paper's "own" artist and at times its "correspondent" from Cork, Mahony provided special coverage and dozens of sketches on famine-related subjects, although during the latter 1840's he was reported to have returned to the Continent again, spending time chiefly in Spain. We do know he returned to Dublin in 1853 to paint the Queen's visit to the Dublin exhibition. But it is reasonable to surmise that Mahony revisited Ireland periodically to see his family in Cork and perhaps recoup his finances. During those times, he may have provided the *ILN* with sketches and commentary for various articles. It is my belief that Mahony provided the sketches and much of the commentary in the series on the New Poor Law published over the Christmas holidays (December 15, 1849, December 22, 1849, December 29, 1849,

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<sup>351</sup> James Mahony (also spelled Mahoney) (1810-1879) of Cork is sometimes confused with another illustrator and engraver from Cork also named James Mahoney (1847- 1879). Although Strickland notes that the elder James Mahoney was responsible for the "Household Edition" of Dickens' works: twenty-eight drawings for "Oliver Twist," fifty-eight for "Little Dorrit," and fifty-eight for "Our Mutual Friend," these and other attributions remain unresolved. The cause of the confusion lies in the similarity in work and signature of the two artists.

and January 5, 1850.) Stopford is less likely the artist responsible for this series since he was known not to have travelled in Europe, and thus would not have noticed the differences between the Catholic and Protestant Cantons in Switzerland. Mahony could easily have made this comment since the Simplon Pass near to the Swiss cantons cited was the traditional gateway to Italy and to Rome. I would also suggest that Mahony is likely to be the correspondent and artist for the article published on May 10, 1851 on the "Depopulation of Ireland." As in the series on the New Poor Law, the *ILN*'s "Correspondent at Cork" seems to be the same person as the artist. Both the correspondent's attitude, writing and drawing style, sense of composition and design seem to echo the earlier articles and sketches attributed to Mahony.

In 1846, government depots were set up throughout Ireland to distribute Indian corn at inexpensive prices. The opening of the depot in Cork was reported in the *Illustrated London News* on April 4, 1846. James Mahony's engraving *Government Sales of India Corn at Cork* (Figure 1), sketched immediately on the opening of the store, only partially expresses the turbulence and frustration which the article implies. According to the report, the police were summoned immediately due to the extreme agitation of the crowds. Yet the sketch does not portray large violent crowds as indicated by the text, nor can it show the disappointment and frustration resulting from paltry sales to those most in need. Furthermore, the people are depicted without any signs of emaciation or starvation. Mahony's sketch depicts the class of the crowd as much by their clothing, bare feet, and rags, as by its composition. People wrangle with the authorities with raised fists. But even though Mahony pictures the agitation and belligerence of a small group rather than that of large crowds patrolled by police, an English reader could easily interpret the scene as another example of the negative Irish stereotype. Despite the ambiguity of the sketch, the overall tone of the article is sympathetic.<sup>352</sup>

Several months later, the paper covered another disturbance over food. *The Mall and Mall-House, Youghal, A Scene of the Late Food Riots* (Figure 2) was published on November 7, 1846. This engraving was executed by Smyth and could have been sketched by Mahony whose topographical style is similar. Although the artist had "refrained from

heightening the picturesqueness of these scenes.” presumably so the sketches would present the “stern and striking realities of the sufferings of the people,”<sup>353</sup> suffering is not expressed in this depiction of Youghal or the associated engraving *Old Chapel Road, Dungarvan, A Scene of the Late Food Riots*. The “miserable spectacle of haggard looks, crouching attitudes, sunken eyes, and colorless lips and cheeks,”<sup>354</sup> which the paper declared was so unmistakable is not transferred to either engraving. The scenes are both tranquil, and neither imparts any sign of famine or distress. Most of the people’s faces are either turned away or are at too great a distance to interpret any indication of affliction or anxiety.

On January 16, 1847, an article ran entitled “Famine and Starvation in the Country of Cork.” Most of this article was reprinted from the *Cork Examiner*. The news was clearly dire. Dr. Donovan reported that people are “dropping in dozens about them.”<sup>355</sup> One hundred and forty were reported to have died in the Skibbereen workhouse in one month, eight in one day. Further details of the Famine’s progress were quoted from the *Galway Mercury* and letters from Tipperary. But the illustration associated with the gruesome lists of mounting deaths is an engraving depicting the *Cork Society of Friends’ Soup House* (Figure 3). The engraving illustrates the building, the vats used in making soup, a few workers, and several ladies and gentlemen who are observing the operation. The article noted that the establishment was in a position to supply 1500 gallons of soup daily, and that there were many similar establishments in operation throughout the country.

A similar engraving was published on April 17, 1847 to mark the opening of Ireland’s first soup depot erected on the plan devised by M. Soyer, the French chef at the Reform Club in London. Located at the Royal Barracks in Dublin, Soyer’s model soup kitchen provided 8,750 rations a day and was passed on to the relief committee of the South Dublin Union for operation. The illustration *M. Soyer’s Model Soup Kitchen* (Figure 4) depicts the kitchen’s gala opening where a large and brilliant assemblage of

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<sup>353</sup> Mahony’s drawing, however, is less negative in its presentation than the violent depiction of food riots in Dungarvan, an engraving published on October 10, 1846 by the *Pictorial Times*, entitled “Food Riot in Dungarvan.” See *Pictorial Times*, Figure 10. Concern was displayed by some of the commercial men in Cork who calculated that the government could afford to sell the Indian corn at a much cheaper rate.

<sup>354</sup> *ILN*, November 7, 1846, 293.

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>356</sup> *ILN*, January 16, 1847, 44.

distinguished guests gather to inspect the facilities and taste the soups of the famed chef. What is not depicted is the hungry lining up for food. Engravings of this type and their associated statistics would have reassured the English reader that the government and English charities were at work and may also have provided a sense that the situation was nearing or under control.

In February of 1847, the *Illustrated London News* commissioned Mahony to visit the distressed district of Skibbereen to determine the severity of the suffering in the area. "Sketches in the West of Ireland. --By James Mahony," published in a two-part series on February 13 and February 20 of 1847, was intended to direct public sympathy to the distressed localities. The text in both issues related various horrifying reports of famine conditions, fever, and death. Mahony's sketches do not present the same picture. Without the text, the poignancy of most of these engravings is lost. Out of a total of twelve sketches, only two convey suffering, *Woman Begging at Clonakilty* (Figure 5) (February 13, 1847) and *Boy and Girl at Cahera* (Figure 6) (February 20, 1847). *Mullins's "Hut" At Scull* (Figure 7) (February 20, 1847) depicts destitution or perhaps sickness. The other nine are primarily topographical in nature. *Skull, From the Ballidichob* (Figure 8) (February 13, 1847) and *Ballydehob, From the Skibbereen Road* (Figure 9) (February 20, 1847) are typical of the topographical sketches. While *Woman Begging at Clonakilty* and *Boy and Girl at Cahera* portray some measure of affliction, I find both engravings fail artistically to convey the expression of humanity. As symbolic drawings after the style of Daumier, the engravings could have been effective; although placed among topographical drawings, and given the English taste of the period for sentimentalized and prettified drawings of the poor, it is unlikely that they were particularly appealing to the sensitivity of the viewer. The exaggerated features and the anatomically healthy limbs of the boy and girl at Cahera make the protagonists look more like well-fed human scarecrows than starving young people, although Mahony has tried to impart hair loss, a sign of severe starvation. Moreover, the technique of depicting starvation by drawing ragged clothing could imply hunger only to a point since ragged clothes on Irish people were commonplace. Perhaps the choice of depicting a woman begging was a poor one also, since begging in general was despised by the English middle classes.

A year later on December 16, 1848, an article entitled "The Irish People and the Irish Landlords" led the news. This article contradicts the sympathetic response of the previous reports on Irish misery. By 1848, English patience for Irish difficulties was wearing thin. Irish misery was so pervasive and inescapable and the solutions so hopeless and incomprehensible, the paper declared, that many people who normally read the newspapers thoroughly "would turn away instinctively" from articles on Ireland.<sup>356</sup> The article expressed what so many believed at the time.

Safe from the convulsions of the continent, we have unhappily the perpetual sore of Ireland to harass and to trouble us... The evil is not only on our side; it is tied to us... Irish vagrancy overflows into England and Scotland, deteriorates our own people, competes with them in the labour-markets, and brings along with it dirt, disease, and demoralization. Irish pauperism eats up our hard earned millions of pounds sterling, and is none the better for them; ...the introduction of Poor-Laws... can do but little for the present generation, and which, in doing that little, will, in all probability, ruin the existing race of Irish landed proprietors. So glaring has been the ingratitude with which the profuse liberality of Great Britain has been received by the bulk of those who clamour for it, that the very name of Ireland has been received with a shrug of melancholy impatience.<sup>357</sup>

The paper went on to say that since a Poor-Law had been introduced into Ireland, English journals had

no right how great soever the apparent or real hardship may be, to find fault with the landlord, or cry out against his cruelty for dispossessing and ejecting the miserable swarms who encumber his land, and drag him into a pauperism as bad as their own. They can neither cultivate land, nor pay the rent they have undertaken to pay; and ejectment, which was horrible before the Poor-law came into operation, has now become harmless. The ejecting landlord merely shifts... [his] burden; and gains ...a chance of such improved cultivation as will enable him to pay his share of poor rate for the support of the people ejected. They should remember the difficulties of the landlords' position, and point attention to the real means of elevating the social condition of the bulk of the people, ...to bring their estates into a better cultivation, and to free the land of a useless and unproductive population.<sup>358</sup>

According to the *ILN*'s December 16, 1848 lead article, the solution to Irish misery involved two great aids which the landlords required in order that the Poor Law not break down--systematic emigration, and the cultivation of waste lands. The paper advised that

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<sup>356</sup> *ILN*, December 16, 1848, 369.

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*, 369-370.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.*, 370.

the state purchase the bogs from the present proprietors at their present value, and allow the peasantry, at a small fixed rental, payable in perpetuity, to cultivate them.

Further on in the December 16, 1848 issue, we come to two relatively familiar illustrations *The Ejectment* (Figure 10) signed by Fitzpatrick and *The Day After the Ejectment* (Figure 11) probably by Fitzpatrick also. Both engravings are signed by (Ebenezer) Landells, (1808-1860) a successful English wood engraver who had a large staff of assistants and pupils. Throughout the 1840's and 1850's the *ILN* assigned a number of special projects to Landells, although the appearance of his name did not mean he was the engraver. Engravings done under his direction would customarily carry his name. Fitzpatrick's work<sup>359</sup> is more delicate and detailed than Mahony's, and his designs more elegant and graceful. Although most of the physiognomies in *The Ejectment* are not particularly flattering, in *The Day After Ejectment*, the physiognomies are quite sympathetically drawn. While we cannot see the husband's face, the features of the wife and child combine an elegance and refinement not seen before and the depiction of the mother's facial angle conforms to the ideal. Margaret Crawford has suggested that the beauty of these engravings detracts from the power of the message. I would submit that these engravings were more apt to engage the English taste, since at this time a picturesque version of the poor was more appealing to the Victorian than one of ugliness.

The article associated with these two engravings is particularly interesting since it presents opposing and commonly held English and Irish attitudes. "Evictions of the Peasantry in Ireland" began by noting that the increase of emigration and the wholesale ejectment of cottiers were bringing about a vast social revolution in Ireland. Although the paper admitted the amount of human misery was appalling, like the lead article, it conceded ejectment to be necessary. The article continued with excerpts from the *Tipperary Indicator*, which denied that a conspiracy existed to root out the "mere Irish," but declared that evictions were undermining the population "stealthily" and "steadily" as whole districts were cleared. It further stated that the

fearful system of wholesale ejectment, of which we daily hear, and which we daily behold, is a mockery of the eternal laws of God and a flagrant outrage on the principles of nature... The torpor and apathy which have seized on the masses are

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<sup>359</sup> Another engraving signed by Fitzpatrick and Landells entitled *The Causes of Emigration in Ireland* and published in the *Lady's Newspaper* (the continuation of the defunct *Pictorial Times*) on January 13, 1849 confirms the artist's sympathy and style.

only surpassed by the atrocities perpetrated by those who set the dictates of humanity and the decrees of the Almighty at equal defiance.<sup>360</sup>

A year later, on December 15, 1849 the *Illustrated London News* began a lengthy seven-part series entitled, the "Condition of Ireland. Illustrations of the New Poor-Law," written by their "own correspondent" and illustrated with eighteen engravings by their "own artist." The correspondent writes in the first person, notes sending on sketches, and never mentions being in the company of an artist, giving the impression that the correspondent and the artist are one in the same. As the reporter traveled onward, he is progressively alarmed and then horrified by the extreme misery and death that the evictions have caused. Of the seven installments, only the first four were accompanied by engravings.

The first article focused on the extreme state of poverty in the nine districts of Kilrush Union. Without hesitation, the reporter blamed the condition of the Irish on ignorant and vicious legislation. The paper rebuked the Poor-law system that levied rates on encumbered estates, causing wholesale eviction. It castigated the "false theory of political economy" which led landlords and the legislature to believe that the Famine was a favorable occurrence for removing excess population and for changing land use from the cultivation of potatoes to corn at a time when more food and more employment was needed, rather than fewer hands and less cultivation. And it denounced the Quarter Acre or Gregory Clause, which forced a tenant to give up his holdings in order to receive relief and allowed for the eviction of people from their homes at the time of their greatest distress.

The article continued by quoting from the *Times* on the "Deplorable State of the Kilrush Union"

Money and credit are all gone, and starvation has literally set in among the paupers in the workhouse... The Board ...agreed to petition the Poor-law Commissioners on the state of the Union, and said that the guardians would not be morally responsible for the deaths that may occur through starvation.<sup>361</sup>

The paper stated that in 1849 more than fifty percent in the union were receiving outdoor relief, but present conditions were prohibiting the able-bodied from the relief lists.

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<sup>360</sup> *ILLN*, December 16, 1848, 380

<sup>361</sup> *ILLN*, December 15, 1849, 393

In Kilrush Union in 1849, before the months of June 16,000 persons had been unhoused out of 82,308. Twelve hundred were unhoused within one fortnight of May 7, in all one fifth or twenty per cent of the whole population were turned out of their houses and the houses pulled down. Twenty eight hundred houses were levelled in the Union of Kilrush in 1848-1849. . . A conqueror would not have had the time and security to do the mischief which is perpetrated in safety under the guardianship of the laws by the Irish themselves.<sup>362</sup>

The correspondent explained that many of those on outdoor relief were houseless, living in scalpeens or scalps. A scalp is a hole dug in the earth two or three feet deep and roofed over with thatch. Inferior to a mud hut, a scalpeen is also a hole, but was often constructed within the walls of an unroofed house, although the roof above was higher and the space larger. Captain Kennedy, the Poor-law inspector of the Kilrush Union commented, “ ‘None of the homeless class can now find admittance save into some over-crowded cabin, whose inmates seldom survive a month.’ A month’s agencies - hunger, dirt, and disease suffice to destroy life.”<sup>363</sup> The correspondent stated that when half of the Irish live on 6 dimes per week and are thankful for being allowed to burrow in scalps, the lives of savages in New South Wales or Brazil must be more hopeful than those who have been flattered as the “finest peasantry in the world” (O’Connell’s phrase). He continued:

The mud cabins and turf huts that the peasantry lived in before 1846 were denounced by every traveler as the scandal of civilised Europe; and it was supposed that worse habitations were not on the earth; but the Irish have proved that in their lowest deep there is still a lower deep—that a Scalpeen is worse than a mud-hut, and a Scalp worse than a Scalpeen....

A great and just sympathy is just now excited by the sufferings of the needlewomen of the metropolis and by the hard labour and poor pay of females in various branches of town industry. But they at least find shelter; most of them have clothing; they manage to get food, though the supply is scanty; and the most crowded lodging-house of the metropolis is a palace compared with the Scalp, or burrowing hole, of the Irish peasant.<sup>364</sup> See Chapter II, *The Sempstress* (11).

Three engravings accompany the first installment of the series. The first engraving, *The Town of Kilrush*, depicts a pleasant topographical scene of the town of Kilrush. The second, entitled *Scalpeen* (Figure 12), depicts a peasant in front of his

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<sup>362</sup> Ibid., 394.

<sup>363</sup> *ILLN*, December 15, 1849, 394.

<sup>364</sup> Ibid.

tumbled abode. Although the rendering of the scalpeen is convincing and disheartening, the portrayal of the peasant himself is troublesome. His limbs look strong and healthy, but he is portrayed more like a dangerous Neanderthal with a muscular physique and long dirty hair than a helpless and starving cottier. The last drawing depicts the desolation and dilapidation of the unroofed and “destroyed,” *Village of Tullig*.

Three days before Christmas the series resumed. On December 22, 1849 the correspondent explains how upon passage of the Poor-law, rates were instituted so that property was made responsible for poverty. Thus, for many landowners, it was cheaper to evict the poor from their homes rather than pay the Poor-law tax now that they had a legal home to go to. The artist again illustrates the effects of the wholesale destruction of Irish villages in the desolate and depressing engraving *Village of Moveen* (Figure 13). Moveen was located three miles south west of Kilkee in the notorious Kilrush Union where record numbers of people were unhoused. Additional engravings for this issue include the *Scalpeen of Tim Downs, at Dunmore; Miss Kennedy Distributing Clothing at Kilrush; Searching For Potatoes in a Stubble Field* (Figure 14); *Scalp of Brian Connor, Near Kilrush Union House*; and *Bridget O'Donnell and Her Children* (Figure 15). Except for the two dejected figures collapsed in the background, *Searching For Potatoes* could easily represent a farming scene since the figures in the foreground show no signs of deprivation besides ragged clothing. *Bridget O'Donnell and Her Children* is more successful in depicting suffering. The tattered clothing, worried expressions, and the thin legs of the children should have been convincing.

The illustrated series on the condition of Ireland resumed on December 29, 1849. *Scalp at Cahuermore* (Figure 16) and *Judy O'Donnell's Habitation Under the Bridge at Doonbeg* (Figure 17) depicts some of the most dire conditions possibly experienced by evicted tenants. Nothing could be have been more wretched than the scalp on the bog at Cahuermore, placed in a hole and surrounded by pools. On three sides water dripped and ran in small streams, over the floor and out the entrance. Suffering from fever, the women were quoted as saying “they would be thankful and content if the landlord would leave them there, and the Almighty would spare their lives.”<sup>365</sup> However, in both of these

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<sup>365</sup> *ILLN*, December 29, 1849, 444.

engravings, the physiognomies and the physical stance of the peasants are depicted harshly: they seem little more than animals.

The third engraving, *Driving Cattle for Rent between Oughterard and Galway* (Figure 18) was introduced “to vary a little the miseries...portrayed.”<sup>366</sup> The variation that *Driving Cattle for Rent* provides is little consolation. In this engraving, peasants are being forced by the landlord’s armed guards to take their cattle to market in lieu of rent in arrears knowing that their last source of food and income is being taken from them. While the physiognomies of the peasantry are more pleasant in this depiction, the bowed heads and resigned expressions depict the passivity and helplessness regularly experienced by these country people, so-called Irish traits routinely ridiculed by English critics. Standing next to her demeaned husband and her crying child, one lone woman seems angered by the situation.

Within a short distance of all this wretchedness, the face of the countryside changed. The reporter commented, “it was like passing from the Catholic to the Protestant cantons of Switzerland, or rather like a dream.”<sup>367</sup> The artist came upon neat whitewashed houses and tidy gardens. He had entered the domain of Colonel Windham, who did not seek to exterminate his tenantry and whose unencumbered estate, ample funds, and good will had promoted their happiness.

The last illustrated installment in the series, published on January 5, 1850, brought the artist to the areas around Clifden, Kylemore, Galway, Clear, and Ennis where the artist sketched several miserable scalpeens: *Keillines, Near General Thompson’s Property; the Cabin of Pat. Macnamara, Village of Clear; Sketch in a House At Fahey’s Quay, Ennis. —The Widow Connor and Her Dying Child*. In this area, climate and soil were relatively unfavourable, so consequently in 1848 out of 189,504 acres, only 3,714 were under potatoes. After the patronage of the late Viscount Clifton ended, the fortunes of the area declined, and Poor-law obligations nearly destroyed them. Extreme poverty and an insolvent workhouse left the poor without refuge. We are told that the peasants did not emigrate, but simply wandered away, died, or both. *Workhouse at Clifden* (Figure 19) was submitted to the *ILN* as both a “memorial of this pet place of the late Viscount

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<sup>366</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>367</sup> Ibid.

Clifden,”<sup>368</sup> and as an example of the type of facilities available to the poor. Upon viewing the building, it must have been difficult to understand why the peasantry could not be maintained in such an impressive edifice, if only as a shelter. The coverage of the “Condition of Ireland. Illustrations of the New Poor-law” was far more forceful an expose than Mahony’s earlier submissions on famine conditions in his 1847 articles, “Sketches in the West of Ireland.”

On returning to Galway, the reporter noted that “hulking men lounging about were numerous, and appeared to have every other capacity to work, but the will. You are not annoyed, however, by the mendicants in Galway, as in other Irish towns, though there is a universal complaint of distress...”<sup>369</sup> After sketching and reporting on such hardships and misery, the artist’s sympathies seem conflicted even though his comment may well have had merit.

The *Illustrated London News* also published articles with engravings on the flow of Irish emigrants. “The Tide of Emigration to the United States and to the Colonies,” appeared on July 6, 1850. It described the advantages and costs of emigration to various British colonies and noted that in 1849, out of 299,498 emigrants, half departed from the port of Liverpool. For the town of Liverpool, the infestation of “swarms of Irish beggars,” waiting for passage<sup>370</sup> was a continual source of anger and frustration. It was emigrants such as these who were depicted in *The Embarkation, Waterloo Docks Liverpool* (Figure 20) published July 6, 1850.

Nearly a year later, on May 10, 1851, the *ILN* published another article on emigration entitled “Depopulation of Ireland.” The engravings and the accompanying letter from “our Correspondent in Cork” gave the latest information on what the *ILN* deemed to be “this interesting subject.” The five engravings that accompanied this article portrayed some of the difficulties of emigration and passage to the New World. Quite contrary to the Liverpool point of view, the correspondent writes:

The constant appearance of the heading “Emigration from Ireland,” and the no less constant stream of well-clad, healthy, and comfortable-looking peasantry in our streets, induces me to send you the accompanying sketches and communications on that subject.<sup>371</sup>

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<sup>368</sup> *ILN*, January 5, 1849, 4.

<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>370</sup> Noel Kissane, *The Irish Famine* (Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 1995), 159.

<sup>371</sup> *ILN*, May 10, 1851, 387.

The immigrants in these engravings were not the wretched and miserable human beings that were sketched in the previous article, but robust individuals who apparently could afford to emigrate. Although the artist tells us that he intends to show “what was picturesque” through the engravings in this issue,<sup>372</sup> one wonders then if these pictures are more complimentary than realistic. *Irish Emigrants Leaving Home—The Priest’s Blessing* (Figure 21) portrays the centrality of the Roman Catholic priest to the process of emigration.

How empathetically received were these engravings on the Irish crisis? This question is difficult to answer. As I have shown, English and Irish writers who contributed articles on the Famine expressed complicated and varying points of view. The point of view of the articles written by the artist/correspondent in Ireland is clearly pro-peasant, and is probably Mahony’s. Yet in spite of his journalistic and artistic investigations, even his perspective is conflicted at times. Mahony’s own lifestyle as an Irish artist and a gentleman would have accentuated the divisions between himself and the peasantry. If Mahony wished to present the English public with favorable views of Ireland, his artistically conceived topographical views of villages and country areas were reasonable choices. However, the engravings which grapple with the problem of suffering integrate simplicity and boldness, which was perhaps his way of interpreting severe distress. Some elements of the artist’s style can be attributed to his preference for the picturesque, others to a taste for an avant-garde style of Daumieresque realism. That is to say, in some respects, Mahony’s sketches of suffering echo the style of Honore Daumier’s (1808-1879) political caricatures (see *Rue Transnonian*, April 15, 1834 (Figure 22) with which Mahony was probably familiar. Yet that same simplicity was a two-edged sword. Mahony’s topographical sketches were often picturesque in nature, but his drawings of people rarely were. Many of these drawings lack sufficient detail to portray the peasantry as people; and in others, his bold and forthright style of illustration, especially in the more extreme examples of suffering and degradation, could have offended English sensibilities.

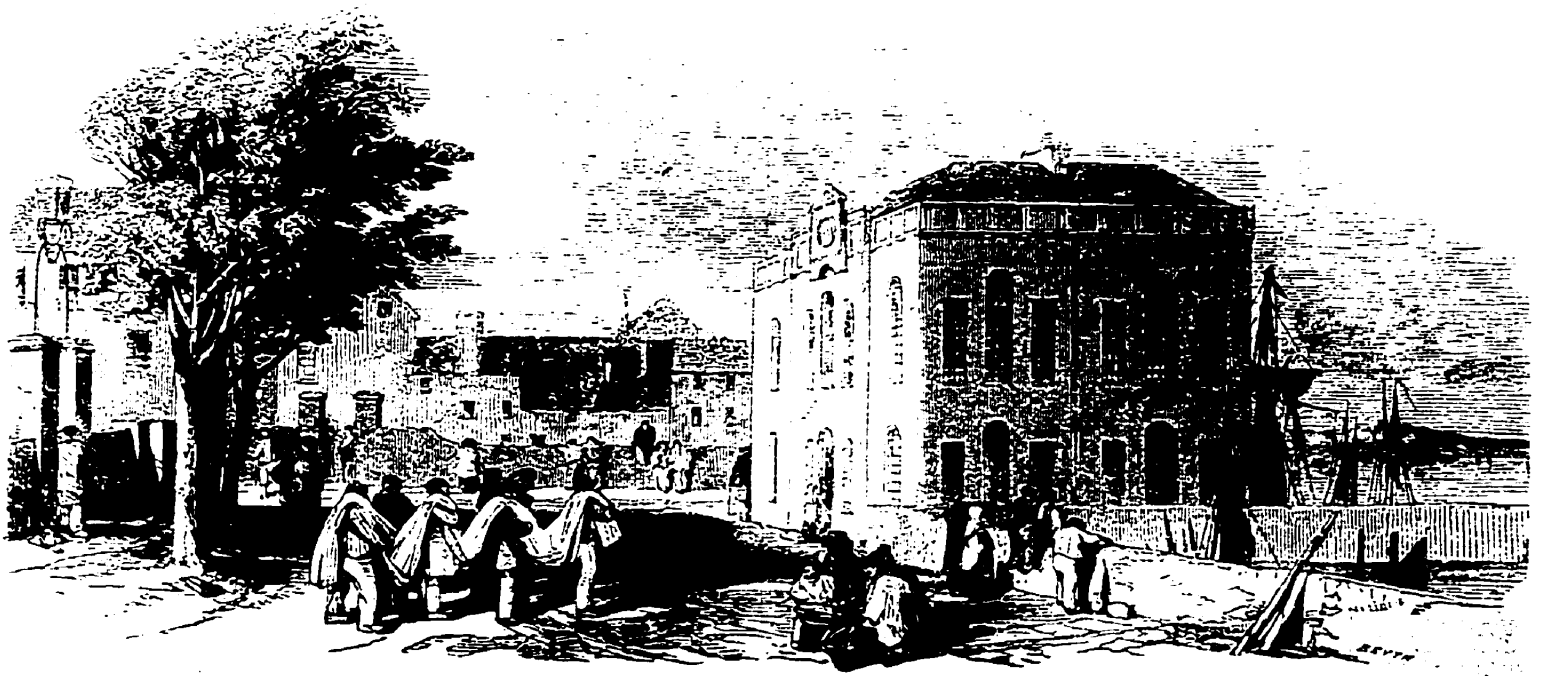
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<sup>372</sup> Ibid., 388.

Indeed, the ambiguities of attribution could also have diminished the message of the pictures. It is likely that English readers, especially those who had no other contact with the Irish than those they saw in England, were less apt to believe Irish accounts or anonymous authors over English observations about them. On the other hand, perhaps the prevailing English political, economic, or racial attitudes were just too pervasive to bring about any strong reaction. Taken together, the images and text of the articles on the New Poor-law should have formed an exceptionally impressive and stirring argument against the vicious Poor-law policies and practises. It should perhaps have marshaled some additional aid for the victims. However, evictions increased in the following years.

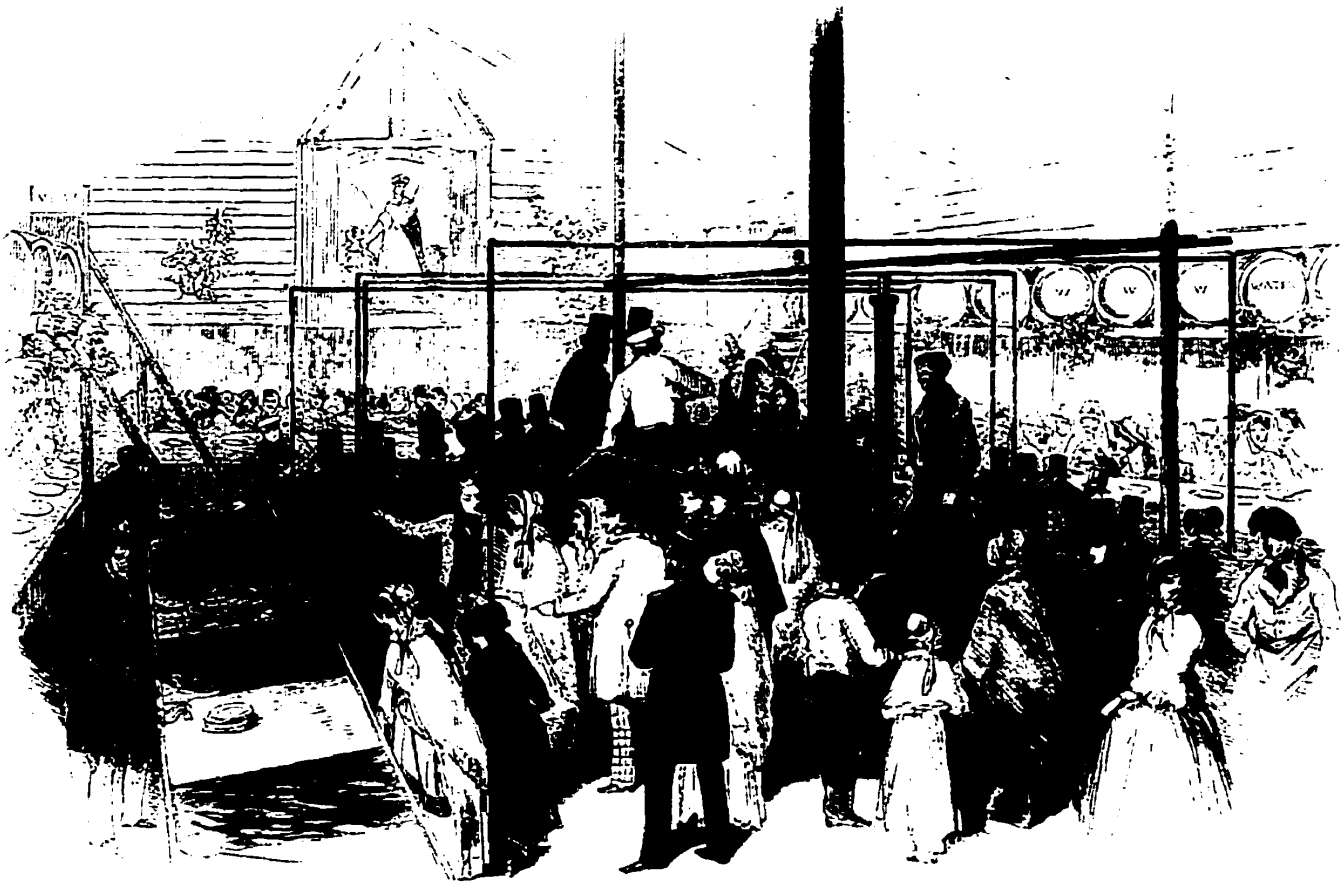
From an artistic standpoint, however, in his views of suffering, Mahony's drawings defied the preferred picturesque depiction of poverty, which at this time was quite prescribed. In contrast, note in a contemporary lithograph (Figure 23) how A.S.G. Stopford's delicate style tends to portray the humanity of the figures far more clearly than Mahony's does, even though the drawing is weaker artistically in composition and force. Any artist's representation of poverty was not likely to rouse the English mind to action unless its picturesque aspects were heightened to a level of refined sentimentality which could strike the heartstrings of the Victorian public. Mahony's drawings did not do this





THE MALL AND MALL-HOUSE, YOUGHAL, A SCENE OF THE LATE FOOD RIOT.







WOMAN BEGGING AT CLONAKILTY.



BOY AND GIRL AT CAMERA.





L. CASTLEBROOK, FROM THE SOUTHERN DOCK.



## EJECTMENT OF IRISH TENANTRY.

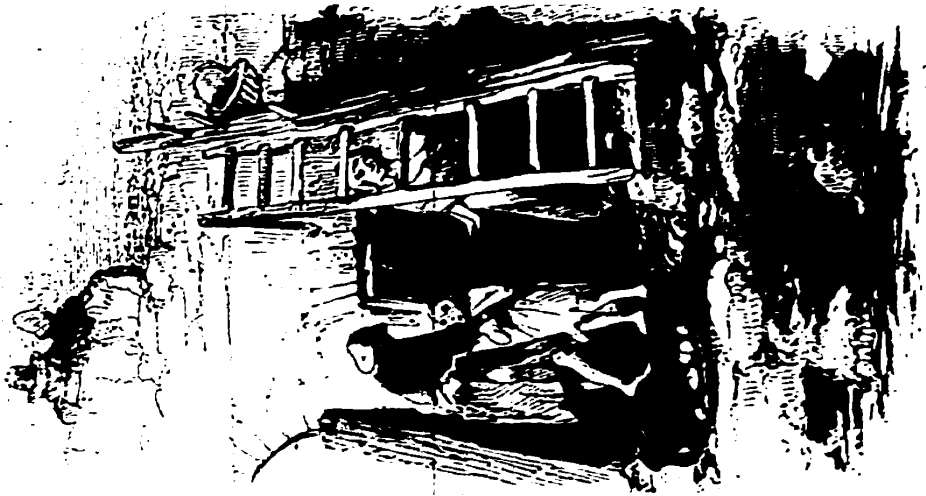










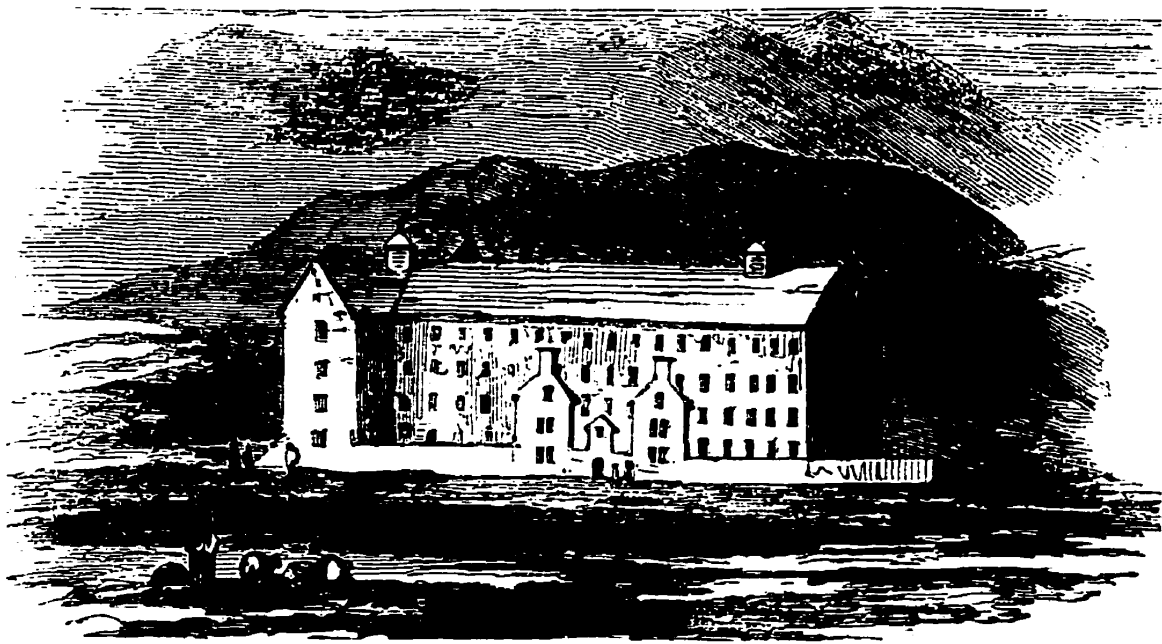


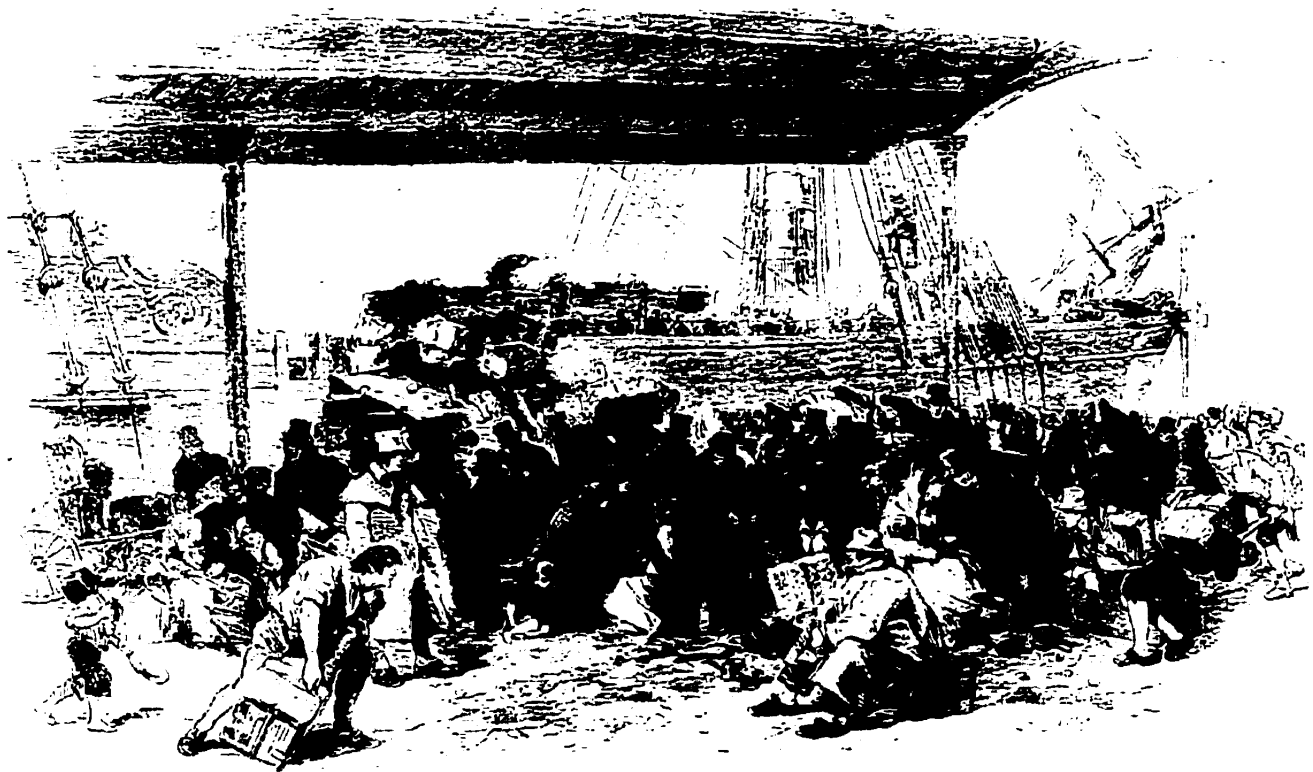
JOHN J. HARRIS' STATION FROM THE BUILDING AT INDIAN.



BOAT AT CANNON.













## Conclusion

In the Victorian era, art and illustration played an essential part in the public alteration of ideas and assumptions about human types. They provided concrete images and visual reinforcement of these ideas, which invariably structured the Victorian perception of various groups and nationalities, particularly the Irish. The conventions of physiognomy, purportedly scientific, not only provided a system of determining types, but an unavoidable cultural conditioning of the mass reading public.

The general reluctance of Victorian artists to portray ugliness was a manifestation of their feelings about morality, truth, and beauty. Fine art had the potential to impart a historical and more lasting statement than the illustrated press, but at mid-century, comparatively speaking, the "condition of England question" was seldom addressed in the fine arts; and when it was, diplomacy, tempered by the "pleasure of the picturesque," blended into distortion. The depiction of the condition of Ireland, especially during the Great Famine, contained within it political overtones of criticism and as such was generally unacceptable to the establishment. Although once taken up, the subject was made more admissible if treated by English or Scottish artists, rather than Irish ones.

To my knowledge, there are only five pictures extant painted during the famine period specifically on this theme. Of the artists responsible for these paintings, only two were born in Ireland. Watts and Goodall were English; Nicol, a Scotsman, and the Cork artist, MacDonald, was of Scottish extraction. Kelly, who was from Dublin, was harshly criticized for his work and was the object of discussion in Parliament. The artist avoided political pictures thereafter. Watts's picture was not exhibited until 1881. How Goodall's, MacDonald's, and Nicol's pictures were received, I am unaware, but except for Kelly, it seems that artists who painted the Famine were either English, Scottish or marginally so, young, and perhaps a bit incautious.

Inasmuch as the illustrations of the Victorian press directly expressed the political aspects of art, caricature and the illustrated newspapers, more than painting, played a central role in the formation of prejudice. By its very nature as a form of mass communication and social commentary, the illustrated press contributed significantly to the racialization of the Irish. Brutal and simianized stereotypes of the Irish were spewed

out on a weekly basis in a variety of journals and on a daily basis in the *London Times*, which after *Punch* was perhaps the most virulent source of Irish prejudice. The *Illustrated London News* focused on appealing to its conservative middle-class public, protecting it from the more unseemly side of life, and elevating it through the forms and neutrality of art. The *Pictorial Times* was far more interested in investigating the “condition of England” problem than the condition of Ireland, and seemed to vacillate between castigating the Irish and sympathizing with them.

In addition, at mid-century, the prevailing attitudes about race and culture led to the assumption that there was a great difference between Englishmen and Irishmen. The growing importance of race and the racialization of the Irish were causing shifts in the way the Irish were seen. Cultural nationalism and ethnocentrism exacerbated the differences that scientists interested in discovering the origins of man were finding. Beddoe’s “Index of Nigrescence” and his category of Africanoid Celts confirmed for many that the Irish were inferior. Physiognomists and phrenologists conducted elaborate research to document that Celts were a sub-race. At the same time, Victorian notions of civilization and the ideology of “home,” which the Irish failed to meet, provided a rational basis, or so it was reasoned, for the assumption that the Irish were alien in race and culture. Irish squalor, ignorance, and sloth tended to confirm these differences, while problems of political and social unrest solidified the stereotype. Beliefs in self-help, moralism and Providentialism, as well as Christian political economy and laissez-faire principles complicated the mix, so that when the blight struck, many believed it had been sent by God for the purpose of Divine vengeance against Irish Catholicism. Blame for the state of Irish problems was placed directly on the moral failings of all classes.

As much as Dickens championed the cause of the English poor in print, he was ambivalent about them on an individual basis, and was not immune to the influence of the prevailing Irish stereotype. He was in fact highly prejudiced against the Irish, and significantly contributed to the influence of the stereotype through his books and his association with artists.

If leading mid-century historians believed in ethnic and racial interpretations of the Irish, environmentalists and numerous others opposed these views and did not subscribe to the stereotype. The sincere compassion and sympathy that many did feel for

the plight of the Irish were exemplified in the generosity of the Quakers and the British Relief Association. Yet, Irish racial prejudice<sup>373</sup> was extremely widespread and the stereotype became in some ways self-fulfilling. After nearly 700 years of character assassination and economic and religious persecution, the image began to approach reality. Even the conclusions of the Devon Commission were disregarded. British colonialism functioned in Ireland and India in similar ways. It served to reap economic gain and political power through exploitation, and it produced a false sense of cultural homogeneity in Britain by blurring the lines of social division and hardening the concept of the lower classes as inferior. What was specifically missing in Ireland, but not in India, was the feeling of British paternalism.

Ashis Nandy has suggested that a possible explanation for this was the backlash sustained by the de-civilization of the colonizers, when victors, like their victims, became dehumanized by a stage of advanced psychological and moral decay.<sup>374</sup> This concept can also be applied to the discriminatory representation of the Irish in images. The satirization and ridicule of the poor and downtrodden should have registered in some way within the inner depths of the middle-class British evangelical spirit. Yet issues of property, political economy, and religious discrimination seem to have taken precedence over the welfare of individuals, especially in light of Irish property's irresponsibility, Irish rebelliousness, and the indolence of its peasantry.

British artists working during the Great Famine era were profoundly affected by the above sentiments. Most subscribed to the basic inferiority of the Irish... Those who did not were influenced by the very practical constraints of saleability of their works, and acceptance in the proper English social circles. To illustrate evocative Irish scenes that

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<sup>373</sup> So stereotypically abused were the Irish poor, that in the early years of the nineteenth-century, "the Irish were frequently referred to as 'niggers turned inside out.' Negroes, for their part, were sometimes called 'smoked Irish.'" During the decade of the Famine, the Irish stereotype intensified when immigrants arrived at their various destinations poorer than those who had come before. And in America, the Scotch-Irish identification developed as a distinction to avoid the Irish label. "No Irish need apply," was a sign commonly posted. Harvard historian, Noel Ignatiev, concluded that the Irish in America had to learn to "subordinate county, religious or national animosities, not to mention any natural sympathies for their fellow creatures, to a new solidarity based on color—a bond... contradicted by their experience in Ireland." From Noel Ignatiev, *How The Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 41, 39, 96 respectively.

<sup>374</sup> On May 13, 1848, the *Spectator* published a letter by Thomas Carlyle in which he decries and documents the British hostility, neglect, and indifference of which O'Connell spoke. Carlyle wrote: "Remedial measures are very needful: for Ireland's sake, and indeed for Britain's, which is indissolubly chained to her... Our co-partnership being indissoluble, and the 'Warner Operation' lately spoken of as impossible, (a project to 'unanchor' the Island of Ireland, -- with all its population and possessions, and anchor them—at a distance of 3,000 from us.)" From *The Examiner*, April 29, 1848) it is to ourselves also of the last importance that the depths of Irish wretchedness be sounded... purified that hideous mass must be, or we ourselves cannot live!" From William Beach Thomas, *The Story of the Spectator, 1828-1928*, (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1928), 174-178.

truly would depict the tragic plight of the Irish, with the sole intent of engendering English public sympathy, would have almost required a financially independent artist whose ego was strong enough to withstand possible withering British criticism. Unfortunately we have seen that, with rare exceptions, most were not able to fulfill those criteria.

Due to the constraints of space, I have confined this thesis to a discussion of images of Ireland found in the English public domain primarily during the Great Famine era. Nonetheless, the study of Irish prejudice in art is fertile ground. Future research might lead to an investigation of the Irish illustrated press in addition to the relationships and interconnections between Irish art and portraiture, Irish poetry, and Irish literature. Indeed, the connections between nineteenth-century art, famine, and gender might also be an avenue for prospective inquiry. The nature of this study has required a large number of illustrations, which were essential for the clarification of the central issues. I can only hope that this research will be of some use to others interested in the further exploration of this topic.

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<sup>171</sup> Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy* (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1983), 30-32.

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