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Kickham, Lisbet

2004

Document Version:
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LUND STUDIES IN ENGLISH 106
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LUND
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Illustration and
Jacket design: *Alf Dahlberg*

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LUND STUDIES IN ENGLISH was founded by Eilert Ekwall in 1933. Published by the Department of English at Lund University, the series consists of books on the English language and on literature in English.

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LUND STUDIES IN ENGLISH 106
ISBN 91-974023-5-4
ISSN 0076-1451

Publisher

Department of English, Lund University
Helgonabacken 14
SE-223 62 LUND Sweden

Distribution and sales

Almqvist & Wiksell International
P.O. Box 7634
SE-103 94 STOCKHOLM Sweden

Graphic design and production: *Alf Dahlberg*/Pan Eidos
Printed by Wallin & Dalholm
Lund 2004

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Acknowledgements

The writing of this book would not have been possible without support and advice from a number of people. At the Department of English of Lund University, I am particularly thankful to my supervisor Professor Lars-Håkan Svensson for his constructive comments and suggestions, and to Professor Marianne Thormählen for her unfailing optimism and encouragement. Cecilia Wadsö Lecaros and Gunilla Lindgren from the seminar group provided essential moral support at different stages of my work when most needed. Financial support was gratefully received from the New Society of Letters, Vetenskapssocieteten, at Lund.

A special thanks goes to my husband who was responsible for introducing me to Irish society and literature. His patience and understanding have sustained me during the whole process. The technical support given by my son, Patrick, was also greatly appreciated. I dedicate this study to him and my other six children – Ginna, Karen, Prosper, Hanna, Emma and Nils – who know about divided national loyalties.

Gabhaim buiochas ó chroí díbh go léir as ucht an chabhair agus an chúnamh a thug sibh dom. Mo bheannacht chugaibh go léir.

History is everywhere. It seeps into the soil, the subsoil.
Like rain, or hail, or snow, or blood.
A house remembers. An outhouse remembers. A people ruminate.
The tale differs with the teller.
(Edna O'Brien, *House of Splendid Isolation*, 1994).

Introduction

The ways in which Irish identity has been imagined and defined have changed dramatically over the years, owing to the influence of political, cultural and religious factors. In the late eighteenth century, Protestants only were officially viewed as Irish. The term 'the Irish nation' referred in the main to those who were involved politically, in particular the Anglo-Irish members of the Church of Ireland. Some two hundred years later, in 1991 in an address to the Cultures of Ireland group in Dun Laoghaire, the Irish President, Mary Robinson, felt it was time to call for an inclusive view of Irish history. Now it was the Anglo-Irish tradition – in this particular case the scientific tradition – which was ignored because the Anglo-Irish Protestants were not seen as being part of the Irish nation.

Not unexpectedly, similar disagreements have marred attempts to define Irish literature. It might seem that Irish literature is simply literature written in English or Irish by writers born or resident in Ireland. In practice, most definitions of what constitutes Irish literature have been far more restrictive. John Wilson Foster's claim, that Irishness in certain contexts can be seen as "an honorific title, and as such open for claim, for bestowal (and rejection), and possibly for negotiation", is indicative of the problems encountered.[1] The hyphenated variety, Anglo-Irish literature, raises similar questions and answers. If you limit the query to literature, there are two obvious, broad opinions possible: Irish literature is literature written in the Irish language, and Anglo-Irish literature is Irish writing in English. However, the terms in this sense are rarely dogmatically used. Richard Fallis, for example, prefers to call literature in Irish Gaelic literature "to avoid confusing circumlocutions",[2] while Roger McHugh and Maurice Harmon include the older, Gaelic civilization and its literature in their *Short History of Anglo-Irish Literature*.[3]

The term 'the Anglo-Irish' is equally inconstant. The defeat of the Jacobites in 1689–91 left political power in Ireland in the hands of the Protestant landed

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1 John Wilson Foster, *Colonial Consequences: Essays in Irish Literature and Culture* (Dublin: Lilliput, 1991), p. 248. Foster lists three historical concepts of Irishness (pp. 249–51) and also the obstacles, as he sees them, to an inclusive Irishness (pp. 256–57).

2 Richard Fallis, *The Irish Renaissance: An Introduction to Anglo-Irish Literature* (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1977), p. x.

3 Roger McHugh and Maurice Harmon, *Short History of Anglo-Irish Literature: From Its Origins to the Present Day* (Dublin: Wolfhound, 1982).

class, amounting to no more than some 5,000 families. When Catholics were debarred from partaking in government and the anti-Catholic Penal Laws were imposed, these Protestants constituted what became known as 'the Ascendancy' – a generic term for them which was to continue to be applied long after they had ceased to be ascendant. With full Catholic Emancipation in 1829, Protestant power began to erode. This process continued when landlord power was weakened by the introduction of the secret ballot in 1872. Landownership itself, the key element for social and political authority, was undermined by a number of Land Acts introduced between 1870 and 1903. Nineteenth-century historians applied the term 'Anglo-Irish' to the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland to emphasize growing awareness of the complexity of the circumstances adherent to the cultural, social and political situation of the British settlers and their descendants. In fact, as Otto Rauchbauer among others has pointed out, 'Anglo-Irish' seemed to become a synonym for 'Ascendancy'.[4]

There can be no doubt that the two meanings of 'Anglo-Irish' – as a social term referring to the almost entirely Protestant landed gentry, the old Ascendancy, and as an academic term which is sometimes applied to all Irish writing in English – have many overlaps and will continue to be confused forever. It could be argued that a number of the novelists of my study are far from being Anglo-Irish in the Ascendancy sense as they were Dissenters who were discriminated against during the penal times together with Catholics, albeit not to the same extent. Neither did they all come from landed families; but, as L. P. Curtis Jr has pointed out, numerous Protestants who belonged to the business and professional classes in towns and cities regarded themselves as 'Anglo-Irish', too.[5] Anthony Cronin, on the other hand, does not want to lump the members of the Protestant gentry and the Protestant bourgeoisie together in his biography of Samuel Beckett and call them all Anglo-Irish. Though the loyalty of the middle classes to the Crown was usually unquestioning, their sources of income had not been threatened by the land legislation and so, Cronin claims, their interest in British politics was less fevered and personal.[6] When J. C. Beckett discusses the 'Anglo-Irish' in *The Anglo-Irish Tradition*, the term generally "denotes the Protestant community that dominated Ireland in the eighteenth century and those who inherited and maintained its tradition in the changing and changed circumstances of a later age".[7] However, Beckett does not include the Protestants of Northern Ireland, or Ulster as it was then usually called, who were generally of Scottish origin and Presbyterians.

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4 Otto Rauchbauer, "The Big House and Irish History: An Introductory Sketch" in Otto Rauchbauer, ed., *Ancestral Voices: The Big House in Anglo-Irish Literature* (Dublin: Lilliput, 1992), p. 4.

5 L. P. Curtis Jr, "The Anglo-Irish Predicament", in *20th Century Studies*, November issue, ed. by G. Almansi (Canterbury: University of Kent, 1970), p. 37.

6 Anthony Cronin, *Samuel Beckett: The Last Modernist* (London: Flamingo, 1997 [1996]), p. 10.

7 J. C. Beckett, *The Anglo-Irish Tradition* (London: Faber and Faber, 1976), p. 11.

Acknowledging the validity of the different definitions of the term, it would, perhaps, be interesting to differentiate between the strands of Anglo-Irishness and try to establish whether a novelist's way of dealing with the new Ireland was affected by it. These issues are, however, outside the scope of this study. I have chosen not to make any distinction between non-Catholics, terming them all Protestant as well as Anglo-Irish, regardless of whether they came from a landed background or not and irrespective of geographical origin. For my purpose an exact definition of what constitutes Anglo-Irish and/or Irish in literature or otherwise is less relevant than the confusion itself, which I see as indicative of the confusion in society as a whole.

The period 1879–1922 was an eventful one in Ireland and crucial to the changed circumstances for those who lived in the country. Ultimately at stake during these decades in Irish history were the nature and identity of Ireland. In 1879, the Irish National Land League was founded and history was implacably catching up with the Anglo-Irish. Their hegemony had been under threat and increasingly undermined in a number of areas for several decades before the predominantly Catholic Irish Free State in the south was finally established in December 1922, excluding the predominantly Protestant six counties in the north. The country, which had been in union with Britain from 1800, had transformed its power structure completely. Those in power were now generally mere Irish Catholics and Nationalists. The term 'mere Irish' is commonly used to refer to Catholic Irish people of native stock descended from Gaelic speakers, and it is the one I will use when applicable. According to *OED*, the adjective "mere" is, among other things, used of a people or their language to indicate "pure" or "unmixed", and the term should not be misunderstood as a term of disparagement.[8]

The sense of dislocation experienced by the formerly dominant Anglo-Irish, forced to the margins of society, underlies the concern with questions of identity as seen in the writings of many Anglo-Irish writers of the period. The stereotypings of the Irish, ascribed to them by the colonizer from the twelfth century onwards, included many unfavourable characteristics.[9] W. B. Yeats, among others,

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[8] The term "mere Irish" was used already by Edmund Spenser in *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, ed. by W. L. Renwick (London: Eric Partridge, 1934. Spenser wrote it 1596; it was published posthumously in 1633). The New English arrivals to Ireland of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, such as Spenser, felt that they were threatened by cultural pollution from the native Irish and were at risk of becoming as Irish as the Old English who had "degenerated and grown almost mere Irish, yea and more malicious to the English than the very Irish themselves" (p. 62). "[M]eere Englishe" was used in a similar context by "a late Elizabethan ideologue, probably a cleric" in "A Supplication of the blood of the English most lamentably murdered in Ireland, Cryeng out of the yearth for revenge": "They were in the former tymes, as wee are now, meere Englishe in habitate, in name, in nature [...]. "A Supplication" was deposited among the State Papers in November or December 1598 and is quoted in Andrew Hadfield, *Spenser's Irish Experiences* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), p. 48.

[9] See chapter 3, "Race", p. 141.

dreamt of an opportunity to create a new and better image of Ireland. According to him "[a] moment comes in every country when its character expresses itself through some group of writers, painters, or musicians, and it is this moment [...] which fixes the finer elements of national character for generations [...]".[10] This was the moment for Ireland. In Yeats's view the new image of Ireland was to be built on a glorious Celtic past.

In 1888, with this in mind, *Poems and Ballads of Young Ireland* was published with contributions from Yeats himself as well as from some of his Anglo-Irish friends, such as Douglas Hyde, founder of the Gaelic League. The writers of the Irish Literary Revival, the name under which the movement became known, were of different religious and political persuasions, although Protestants were dominant. Ten years later, with a view to attracting people who read little but were fond of oratory, Yeats and Lady Gregory, another Anglo-Irish Protestant, secured financial and literary help for the first productions of their Irish Literary Theatre, the Abbey, where the subject matter was to be Irish in a self-respecting sense. The stage-Irishman was banished.[11] Yeats, who contributed plays to the new theatre, and two other dramatists for the Abbey, J. M. Synge and Sean O'Casey, are among the most prominent writers of the period together with a novelist, James Joyce. Joyce, however, disagreed with the revivalist leaders on many issues and was isolated from the movement. In *Irish Identity and the Literary Revival: Synge, Yeats, Joyce and O'Casey*, G. J. Watson argues that these four writers taken together "cover and represent the whole spectrum of political, social and religious pressure moulding Ireland during the most dramatic years of her transition from an inert and – in Joyce's word – 'paralysed' colony to a new and frequently violent nation."[12] As the Irish Literary Revival encouraged the writing of poetry and drama at the expense of other literary forms, fiction and prose narrative have come to be considered the weak point of the Revival period. In 1916, in *Ireland's Literary Renaissance*, Ernest Boyd stated his view that "[of] novelists in the proper sense of the word we have very few, and they do not appear so intimately related to the literary movement in Ireland itself as the poets and dramatists. A vast quantity of purely 'circulationist' fiction must be laid to the charge of Irish writers".[13] Sixty years later Richard Fallis published a study with a similar title to Boyd's, *The Irish Renaissance,* where he comes to much

[10] W. B. Yeats, *Explorations*/W. B. Yeats chosen by Mrs W. B. Yeats (London: Macmillan, 1962), pp. 236–37. Quoted in Ronald Schleifer, ed., *The Genres of the Literary Revival* (Dublin: Wolfhound, 1980), p. 3.

[11] It is interesting to note that to some extent he was replaced by an equally spurious stereotype, the "Stage Gael", the long-suffering mystical peasantry of the west favoured by Yeats and de Valera, as pointed out by Declan Kiberd in "The Fall of the Stage Irishman" in Schleifer, ed., *The Genres of the Irish Literary Revival*, p. 51.

[12] G. J. Watson, *Irish Identity and the Literary Revival: Synge, Yeats, Joyce and O'Casey* (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1994 [1979]), p. 13.

[13] Ernest Boyd, *Ireland's Literary Renaissance* (London: Grant Richards, 1928 [1916]), pp. 374–75. Chapter XV, "Fiction and Narrative Prose", is the last chapter of the book and comprises some fifty pages only.

the same conclusion as regards the fiction of the period: "there was little worthwhile fiction" (p. 133). The popular fiction, referred to by Boyd, continued to be written independently of the Revival.

There is of course no denying the importance and the influence of W. B. Yeats, James Joyce, J. M. Synge and Sean O'Casey, but neither should the existence of other writers, including women writers, and the validity of their voices be denied. They lived through the same times in the same society and therefore grappled with the same or similar problems as their more famous contemporaries. The tales written by novelists of the 1879–1922 period have been shamefully neglected. James H. Murphy has made an excellent contribution towards making up for some lost ground in his survey of Catholic fiction.[14] However, Catholics and Protestants were of course generally on opposite sides in the struggle for control in the country. In *Fictions of the Irish Revival*, John Wilson Foster points to the fact that the majority of novelists at the time were women, especially Protestant women of middle-class or upper-middle-class (or even noble) background. He notes the predominance of historical fiction and romances and claims that "[t]here is a high incidence of a quaint or picturesque kind that can betray its class or racial origins". He terms this "Anglo-Irish fiction of the first type; a self-consciously Irish form written mainly but not exclusively by Southern Protestants but for English readers".[15] While acknowledging that these novels would make a fascinating study in their own right, Foster concentrates his study on other fiction. The aim of my thesis is to study the neglected area of Anglo-Irish literature that Foster leaves aside. By looking at views and attitudes expressed by the characters and narrators in a number of these novels, it should be possible to obtain an indication of how the Anglo-Irish women novelists dealt with the new identity imposed on them by the strikingly different nation which had developed around them. It would seem, particularly after the Great War, that the Anglo-Irish in Ireland discovered that their Irishness was called into question. To what extent did the hyphen in Anglo-Irish remain intact? Did it in fact become a minus sign? If so, which side of it was reduced – 'Anglo' or 'Irish'?

Few of the novels are read now, and yet they were immensely popular in their day. Many appeared in a number of editions, and several were translated into other languages.[16] While the novels may not deserve resurrection for their literary value – although some are certainly interesting, such as Emily Lawless's *Grania: The Story of an Island* (1892) – they are valuable for the contribution they make to the story of this eventful period in Irish history.

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[14] James H. Murphy, *Catholic Fiction and Social Reality in Ireland, 1873–1922* (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood, 1997).

[15] John Wilson Foster, *Fictions of the Irish Literary Revival: A Changeling Art* (New York: Syracuse UP, Gill and Macmillan, 1987), p. xiii.

[16] B. M. Croker's *A Nine Days' Wonder* (1905), for example, was translated into Swedish not only once but twice with different titles; *Mary* in 1917 and *Mary Foley* in 1924.

In "Continuity and Change in Irish Fiction: The Case of the Big-House Novel", Klaus Lubbers argues that there is a great deal of documentary value in Irish fiction in general, and in the Big-House novel in particular, which historians in Ireland ought to recognize.[17] Elisabeth Jay on her part claims that one of the characteristics of minor fiction – and the novels of my study belong to this category with few exceptions – is that it is less concerned with imaginative embodiment than with the case it is intended to present.[18] Novels should not, of course, be read as evidence of what took place in society. Irrespective of authorial intention, it cannot even be taken for granted that a novel expresses the personal opinion of its writer. The novelists of my study belong to the class who became increasingly irrelevant as Ireland entered the twentieth century and approached the era of political and cultural home rule. It goes without saying that we cannot judge novels that deal with social and political change except through hindsight. The ideology in a number of the novels by the Anglo-Irish women novelists appears alien not only according to modern notions of equality but also from the viewpoint of Irish Nationalism. This is undoubtedly part of the reason why some of them have been neglected.[19]

The social change that occurs in the novels is often seen as a threat to Anglo-Ireland. The issues I have chosen to focus on are the land question, religion, race and the emerging new ruling class. Apart from having their Anglo-Irish Protestant status in common, the novelists of my study were also of the same sex. It could thus be argued that it would have been interesting to look at the novels with this aspect in view.[20] However, women's rights were not a specifically Irish issue and did not have any direct bearing on the changing status of the Anglo-Irish in Ireland, and I have hence not subjected them to special consideration in this study.

Notwithstanding the difficulties of using fiction as a source for social history, the approach I have chosen is based on the assumption that it is useful to read

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[17] Klaus Lubbers, "Continuity and Change in Irish Fiction: The Case of the Big-House Novel" in Rauchbauer, ed., *Ancestral Voices*, p. 18.

[18] Elisabeth Jay, *The Religion of the Heart: Anglican Evangelism and the Nineteenth-Century Novel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), p. 3.

[19] In "Nations, Yet Again", a review of *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing* in *The Times Literary Supplement* 27 Mar., pp. 5–7, 1992, R. F. Foster discusses the attack on the anthology for leaving out women writers but suggests that Molly Keane's absence from it, as well as Somerville and Ross's and Elizabeth Bowen's underrepresentation in it, may be due to the Anglo-Irishness of these writers rather than their sex. In 2002, *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Literature Volume IV and V: Irish Women's Writing and Traditions* was published to deal with writers left out in the previous edition (Cork: Cork UP in association with Field Day, 2002).

[20] In fact, two novelists of my study were actively involved in championing women's rights. In 1910 Edith Somerville became President of the Munster Women's Franchise League and Martin Ross one of its Vice-Presidents. See Gifford Lewis, *Somerville and Ross: The World of the Irish R. M.* (Harmondsworth: Viking, 1985), p. 212.

novels in relation to the social and political situation that influenced and generated them. In my attempt to map that situation, I draw on different types of non-fictional texts, contemporary with the novels as well as with the present day. In doing so, I hope to create a dialogue between the novels and other texts dealing with similar issues. The novels' plots and characters are generally invented – there are only a few characters which appear to be based on real-life personalities – but behind the story they present, there is this other narrative which keeps interfering with our reading. This second narrative is, of course, 'history', in this case the 'history' of these Protestant women novelists.

The novelists

The novelists have been chosen because of their religious affiliation, their Anglo-Irishness and their sex. However, in religion as well as in social background there were vast differences between them. A number of them belonged to the Church of Ireland, but even amongst these there were differences in outlook; some novelists were what has been termed High Church while others were Low Church. There are also a considerable number of Dissenters among these women. Most of these were Presbyterians; several were daughters or wives of clergymen. I make no distinction between the novelists in respect of their Protestant persuasion and use the generic term 'Protestant' to designate Anglican and dissenting churches alike, except when otherwise stated. I have also found it interesting to include some novelists who converted from Protestantism to Catholicism, such as Annie M. P. Smithson.

The ethnic diversity among the novelists is as vast as for the Anglo-Irish class on the whole. L. P. Curtis Jr, who has looked into the ethnicity of the Anglo-Irish in "The Anglo-Irish Predicament", acknowledges that as it is impossible to attain any precise knowledge about the size of Anglo-Ireland, either as to population, acreage of land owned or income, it follows that the question of ethnicity must remain one of calculated guess-work. In fact, Curtis alleges that there was no such thing as an Anglo-Irishman to the ethnological purist in the nineteenth century, stating that

> there were men and women of Danish, Norman, Saxon, Scots, Gaelic or Cymric stock who had lived in Ireland and intermarried for several centuries, and their physical features – from the colour of their hair to the shape of their feet – betrayed the basic ingredients of the mixture. Many Anglo-Irishmen tried to minimize the amount of Irish or Celtic blood in their veins – to use the conventional expression – hoping thereby to mark themselves off from the 'mere' Irish among whom they lived. [...]. Perhaps because they suspected a certain degree of ethnic mixture in their veins, they prided themselves on the purity of their 'race' [...]. (pp. 39-40)

Whatever proportion of Danish, Norman, English, Scottish or other blood in

Anglo-Irish veins, there is no doubt that the Anglo-Irish saw themselves as a unique entity, as neither altogether English nor Irish.

As I have stated before, being Protestant and Anglo-Irish did not necessarily entail belonging to the land-owning aristocracy, the class to which W. B. Yeats affected to belong and to which Somerville and Ross as well as Emily Lawless and Elizabeth Bowen actually did. A less well-known novelist, Josephine Martin Callwell (henceforth J. M. Callwell) belonged to the same famous Galway family as Martin Ross.[21] Several novelists had their roots in rectories, mainly rural. For example, Bithia Mary Croker (henceforth B. M. Croker) was the only daughter of Reverend William Sheppard, rector of Kilgefin, Co. Roscommon; Erminda Rentoul Esler's father was the Reverend Alexander Rentoul of Manor Cunningham, Co. Donegal; Rosamond Langbridge's father was the Reverend Frederick Langbridge, rector of St John's Limerick; Ella MacMahon's the Reverend J. H. MacMahon, chaplain to the Lord-Lieutenant, and Jane Barlow's the Reverend, Professor J. W. Barlow, Vice-Provost of Trinity College, Dublin. To know the occupation of the father of the novelist has been helpful to me in that it has given me an indication of the religious denomination of the novelist, at least at birth. There is some evidence that one of the novelists above, Ella MacMahon, converted to Catholicism later in life, although I have not been able to confirm this with any certainty.[22] The fact is that except for some writers, such as Edith Somerville, Martin Ross and Elizabeth Bowen, it is difficult to find extensive biographical details for the novelists of my study, a further indication of the critical neglect they have suffered. For some it has been impossible to find religious denomination stated anywhere, but then the contents of their novels or their names indicate their putative Protestant Anglo-Irish identity. One writer has eluded me as regards religious affiliation as well as possible connection with Ireland, Frances Mabel Robinson.[23] However, she wrote an *Irish History for English Readers* (1885), and her novel *The Plan of*

[21] Martin Ross is the pseudonym of Violet Florence Martin. She was the youngest daughter of James Martin, of Ross House, near Oughterard in Co. Galway. She and Edith Somerville had a common ancestor in Charles Kendal Bushe (1767–1843), once Lord Chief Justice of Ireland. One of his granddaughters was Adelaide, Somerville's mother, and another was Anna Selina who was Martin Ross's mother. I will refer to Violet Martin as Martin Ross throughout.

[22] "Ella MacMahon. Born in Dublin. She evidently never married and apparently converted to Catholicism at some later point in her life". John Sutherland, *The Longman Companion to Victorian Fiction* (Harlow: Longman, 1988), p. 399. This is repeated by EIRData 2000 (The Princess Grace Irish Library of Monaco, http:/www:pgil-eirdata.org): "Ella MacMahon [...] unmarried, and apparently converted to Catholicism later in life".

[23] *The Feminist Companion to Literature in English: Women Writers from the Middle Ages to the Present* (London: Batsford, 1990) lists F. Mabel Robinson under the entry of her sister A. Mary F. Robinson, poet, biographer and critic. The sisters were daughters of George Robinson, archidiaconical architect of Coventry, Warwicks. Mary settled in Paris, but no Irish connection is mentioned (p. 914). *The Longman Companion to Victorian Fiction* does not clarify the matter but mentions Frances Mabel Robinson's feminist themes and Irish settings (p. 541).

Campaign (1888) has a decidedly Irish topic, so I have taken the liberty to refer to her novel on occasion.[24]

I have included twenty-five novelists, while there are a further few that I deal with in one context or other in passing only. They were all born in the nineteenth century. The year of birth is unknown or uncertain for a number of them, as is the year of death. It would seem that Emily Lawless, born in 1845, is the oldest novelist included while Elizabeth Bowen, born in 1899, is the youngest. These two, both from a gentry background, would thus be likely to have had very different personal experiences of life in Ireland. Emily Lawless lived through the Land War, Elizabeth Bowen did not. Lawless died in 1913 and did not live to experience the Easter Rising, the Troubles or the Civil War. Bowen saw them all; she died in 1973.

The geographical spread of where the novelists were born and lived is diverse too. Not surprisingly, as Ireland was a rural country, most of them had a rural background, although at least two were born in Dublin: Jane Barlow and Annie M. P. Smithson. Several were northern women who lived in an environment where their religious minority status was less apparent than for the novelists in the south. It should be mentioned that many travelled to and from England quite frequently and some chose to settle there. Emily Lawless, for example, went to live permanently in England after her mother's death. Her health had been poor for some time, and the doctors recommended that she move to the milder climate of southern England.[25]

Some of the novelists of my study married, for example B. M. Croker (née Sheppard), Mrs H. H. Penrose (née Lewis), Erminda Rentoul Esler, Frances Elizabeth Crichton (henceforth F. E. Crichton) and Elizabeth Bowen. To study women novelists sometimes entails an added difficulty as against studying male novelists, apart from the difficulty already alluded to of less critical attention being paid to the women writers of the time. The name by which a novelist is known may simply be Mrs B. M. Croker or Mrs H. H. Penrose, the initials sometimes being their own and sometimes their husbands'. On one occasion two female novelists turned out to be one: May Laffan and Mary Hartley. Mary 'May' Laffan married Walter Noel Hartley in 1882, when she had already published novels under her own name; but some later novels appear with her new surname. Frances Mabel Robinson used a pen name, William Stephenson Gregg, for *Irish History for English Readers*. Generally speaking, I have elected to use the name of a novelist in the way it is written in the British Library catalogue, ir-

[24] Frances Mabel Robinson was not the only one of the novelists with a sufficient interest in history to write a history of Ireland. Emily Lawless, friend of the historian W. E. H. Lecky, wrote a well-regarded history, *Ireland* (London: Unwin, 1887).

[25] William J. Linn, "The Life and Works of the Hon. Emily Lawless: The First Novelist of the Irish Literary Revival"(Ph. D. Dissertation at New York University, 1971), p. 44.

respective of the name on the actual novel. I will use 'Mac' throughout for Ella MacMahon, Catherine Mary MacSorley (henceforth C. M. MacSorley) and Letitita MacClintock, even though the novels and other references sometimes use 'Mc' or 'M'. Here, too, I follow the practice of the British Library.

While some married, many of the women novelists remained spinsters – Emily Lawless, Jane Barlow, Ella MacMahon, Edith Somerville and Martin Ross, to mention just a few. The demographic situation made it impossible for many women to marry; there was simply an insufficient number of suitable men for them. In a society where there were few opportunities for well-brought-up upper-class and middle-class women with time to spare, painting and writing were possible occupations. Edith Somerville was working as an illustrator and had already published *The Mark Twain Birthday Book* (1885) before she met her cousin Martin Ross. Obtaining funds of her own in this way, she began her habit of studying in Paris during the spring months.[26] Before Edith Somerville and Martin Ross wrote their first novel together, *An Irish Cousin* (1889), they had published short pieces separately. They were both in constant need of funds and dependent on publication as well as publicity. In *Somerville and Ross*, Gifford Lewis explains that Martin was the "string-puller extreme" in the partnership. She was the one who "fixed" reviews in all the major papers, and she could be both business-like and mercenary (pp. 76–77). The money the cousins earned from their writing was needed not only for personal expenses but increasingly for the maintenance of their family houses. Lewis claims that had it not been for Edith Somerville's bitter fight and strength of will to keep the family living at Drishane, it would most certainly have been out of family hands by 1910. Elizabeth Bowen, too, was later under the same pressure to earn an income from her writing as Somerville and Ross. Being an only child, she inherited Bowen's Court, but without any fortune to go with it. One reason why she spent so much time in America is, claims Patricia Craig in her life of Elizabeth Bowen, that she could earn more money there.[27] She could not afford to turn up her nose at articles like "The Case for Summer Romance" or "How to be Yourself but not Eccentric" when they were offered. She thus put her 'proper' work to one side and went out to meet the demands of her ancestral home, although it was a losing battle.

While Emily Lawless, Edith Somerville, Martin Ross and Elizabeth Bowen all came from landed backgrounds, Lawless's situation was different. Her father, Lord Cloncurry, was extremely wealthy, and she was under no pressure to support herself. Because the financial success of her works was relatively unimportant to her, she could deal with subjects and situations she found interesting from a personal point of view, without taking the tastes of the audience who bought

[26] See Introduction by Patrick Coghill, Edith Somerville's nephew, in Edith Somerville and Martin Ross, *French Leave* (London: Tom Stacey, 1973 [1928]), p. ix.
[27] Patricia Craig, *Elizabeth Bowen* (London: Penguin, 1986), p. 131.

fiction into account. Neither did she have to pander to her publishers. In Lawless's obituary in the *Irish Independent,* 24 October 1913, D. J. O'Donoghue, the Librarian of University College, Dublin, writes:

> [...] she was not a prolific author, as things go. She wrote only when she felt she could please herself, and did not think it necessary to have a book ready for each of the two chief publishing seasons of the year. And none of her books could have brought her or her publishers much money.[28]

When it comes to political outlook there was a variety of views represented within the group of novelists included here, albeit, generally speaking, they represented different shades of Unionism. To revert to Emily Lawless, who expressed very strong nationalistic sentiments in some of her poetry, she had nothing but scorn for the ideal of Home Rule and for those who advocated it, as clearly expressed in a letter to W. E. H. Lecky in December 1890.[29] Martin Ross held views similar to those of Lawless. She found it difficult to understand that there were Irishmen who considered themselves able to govern themselves as well as they were governed from London and discussed this in correspondence with Stephen Gwynn.[30] In 1895, Somerville and Ross had campaigned together on the Unionist platform against Home Rule; but Ross travelled without her cousin to Coleraine to watch the Ulstermen signing their "Solemn League and Covenant" against Home Rule in 1912. Somerville's political views differed from Ross's, and increasingly so as the years passed.[31] Edith Somerville comments on her cousin's politics in *Irish Memories* in 1917, two years after Ross's death. She is convinced that Ross's views would have developed and believes "that if she were here now, and saw the changes that the past eighteen months have brought to Ireland, she would be quick to welcome the hope that Irish politics are lifting at last out of the controversial rut of centuries" (p. 315). Somerville herself was always prepared to

[28] Clipping in Marsh's Library. Quoted in Linn, "The Life and Works of the Hon. Emily Lawless: The First Novelist of the Irish Literary Revival", (Ph. D. Dissertation at New York University, 1971), p. 41.

[29] From the Lecky Correspondence, Trinity College Dublin, MS. 639. Quoted in Linn, p. 36.

[30] Stephen Gwynn (1864–1950), prolific man of letters, who recognized the proximity of politics and literature in Ireland. His father, a Church of Ireland warden, later became Professor of Divinity at TCD. Stephen Gwynn wrote verse, books on tourism, a historical novel, political propaganda and a survey of Irish literature. He was Nationalist MP for Galway from 1906–1918. Part of the correspondence between Gwynn and Martin Ross is included in Edith Somerville and Martin Ross, *Irish Memories* (London: Longmans, 1917), pp. 312–15.

[31] Gifford Lewis claims that Somerville and Ross were never "in the same paddock" politically. According to her, Ross's political views were similar to those of her brother Robert, a close friend of the Balfour brothers. They wished "to kill Home Rule with kindness" as they had no confidence in the Irish being capable of ruling themselves. To Lewis, Somerville is a perfect representative of the section of the Ascendancy who worked hard and long to merge with the new Ireland – and to make the new Ireland good. The Somerville sisters and brothers, seven in number, were of different political views. Three, including Edith, were Nationalists, three were Unionists and one was neutral (*Somerville and Ross*, pp. 170–76).

let it be known that she was a Nationalist, albeit of an individual kind, which is made clear in a letter written to the British composer and suffragette Dame Ethel Smyth. In it, Somerville displays her annoyance at Dame Ethel's lack of understanding of the Irish and at her support for the "Black and Tans", the non-Irish personnel who were enlisted into the Royal Irish Constabulary to fight against the IRA during the turbulent times between March 1920 and July 1921:

> I half think of writing an article about the absurdity, if it were nothing else, of grinding and crushing Ireland to death. Oh, yes, I admit the assassinations, but I still can't see why the Irish should not wish for freedom as they have wished and struggled for it since Henry II's time. If the English smash us to pulp, you will have nothing left to laugh at (yes, *you* and all the good and well-intentioned people who think they know what is best for Ireland) [...] In all these centuries of disaffection and disappointment one simple thing has never been tried – giving Ireland what she asks for. If I said I wanted to go hunting, I shouldn't be consoled for a refusal by being given a ticket for a Sunday concert at Albert Hall.[32]

Annie M. P. Smithson travelled further than Edith Somerville on the political road. Smithson grew up in a middle-class Protestant family in Sandymount, Co. Dublin, her mother having re-married after her father's early death. She was reared in a strict Unionist tradition. After training as a nurse in London and Edinburgh, she practised in Ulster before settling in Dublin as a district nurse. She experienced, and was appalled by, the divide between Irish Nationalists and Unionists; and when learning that her father had been a Fenian,[33] she converted to Republicanism as well as Catholicism in 1907. She immersed herself in the Republican movement, actively canvassing for Sinn Fein in the 1918 election, instructing the members of their vitalized republican women's movement on nursing matters and tending to the wounded in the Civil War in 1922. She was arrested, imprisoned and forced to resign her commission in the strongly Loyalist Queen's Nurses Committee. Most of the members of her own family disowned her. In later years, she devoted herself to writing popular novels, several built on elements of her own experiences. Her autobiography, *Myself and Others* (1944), affords detailed insights into her experiences with divided family traditions.

Although all are Anglo-Irish Protestants, according to my definition, the novelists of my study, as I have made clear, differ in many respects. They had different religious outlooks; some were married, others were not; some lived in rural Ireland, others in towns or in England; some came from the middle class,

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[32] Quoted in Lewis, *Somerville and Ross*, p. 162.

[33] The Fenian movement was a secret revolutionary organization, also known as the Irish Republican (or Revolutionary) Brotherhood (IRB). The Fenian rising in 1867 was easily suppressed, but the long prison sentences and the execution of some of its members contributed to the development of the Home Rule movement in which many Fenians were active. The IRB continued as a secret organization within Sinn Fein after the 1916 Rising.

while some had their roots in the Ascendancy. They wrote for pleasure and they wrote to make money. Some were hostile to the political development, while others came to terms with it and even embraced the new Ireland. In this way the novelists included can be seen to be representative for my wide definition of the Anglo-Irish Protestant class.

The novels

It has long been suggested that there is a close relationship between the rise of the novel and the rise of the middle class. English novelists were able to write for English publishing houses and readers who had a strong sense of national and linguistic identity in a country where the middle class was sizeable and expanding. In Ireland, on the other hand, there was never much of a middle class until quite recently, and there were few significant publishers during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. James Duffy as well as M. H. Gill and Maunsel (with an office in Dublin as well as in London) may have been of some consequence nationally, but the majority of works by Irish and Anglo-Irish writers had to find English publishers. For obvious reasons, most of the readers of their novels were English. As pointed out by James H. Murphy in *Catholic Fiction and Social Reality in Ireland 1873–1922*, the advent of one-volume novels, together with a royalty system for their writers, contributed to a considerable upswing in publishing in the 1890s (p. 2).

Many of the novelists of my study wrote what can be termed English novels. These are set primarily in England and deal with mainly English characters. Emily Lawless wrote several of these English novels, as did, for example, Ella MacMahon. Only eight of B. M. Croker's approximately forty novels are set in Ireland and populated with Irish characters; the majority of them deal with upper-class Anglo-Indian life.[34] All these novels have been excluded, and I have chosen only novels that are set mainly in Ireland and where most of the characters are Irish or Anglo-Irish. I have also excluded historical novels. It could be argued that some of these, such as Emily Lawless's *With Essex in Ireland* and *Maelcho*,[35] should have a place in a study of this nature, but I have chosen to limit it to novels set during

[34] B. M. Croker married an army officer with whom she lived in India and Burma for many years before settling in England.

[35] Emily Lawless's history of Ireland, published in 1887, had a profound influence on the fiction she wrote in the following decade. With the exception of *Grania* (1893), her novels produced in the ten years after *Ireland* focus on the past: *With Essex in Ireland* (1890), *Maelcho* (1894) and *A Colonel of the Empire* (1895). In *With Essex in Ireland*, Lawless purports to be the editor of a diary supposedly kept by Henry Harvey, secretary to the Earl of Essex, during his disastrous campaign in Ireland. It was skilfully written and taken to be genuine by many, including Gladstone according to several sources. In *Maelcho* Lawless deals with the Desmond Rebellion of 1579–83, and in *A Colonel of the Empire* she attempts to treat the Protestant-Catholic conflicts of the 1760s in a light-hearted way, making history more incidental than in the two earlier novels.

a specific period of transition in Irish history, excluding the longer perspective through historical novels. Many of the novels I include have 'history' in them – the Land War and the Easter Rising of 1916 for example – and are therefore in one sense 'historical'. However, using James M. Cahalan's definition of an "Irish historical novel" as being one dealing with political events in modern Irish history *prior* to the author's own experience,[36] my study includes no historical novel. A novelist may have chosen to set a novel some years before the novel was written, or at least published; but in these cases it is always within the range of her own experience. For example, in 1925 Somerville and Ross published *The Big House of Inver* where the focus is on 1912 and the attempts to restore the Prendevilles to their Big House, and in 1929 Elizabeth Bowen published *The Last September,* set during the Troubles some years earlier.

In *The Irish Novel,* James M. Cahalan remarks that few Irish novels portray a stable way of life for the simple reason that Irish society itself has been anything but stable. He suggests that the conventional novel is a form for a made society, whereas the short story and the unconventional novel, which bears the strong stamp of the short story, are forms for a society in the making.[37] Furthermore, claims Cahalan, Ireland has the most extensive, oldest and richest folklore in Europe, and several features of the Irish novel may be linked to the strong influence of the *seanchaí* (storyteller): "its loose, rambling approach to plot, with many Irish novels reading like a set of interwoven stories; [...] and the preponderance of fantasy and attention to wild bizarre details" (p. xxii). This is sometimes very obvious in the novels examined in this study. Jane Barlow's two novels, *Kerrigan's Quality* (1894) and *The Founding of Fortunes* (1902), for example, are indeed rambling and the plot hardly discernible. Other works by Barlow have been excluded from my study, as they must be termed stories or tales rather than novels. The most popular works by Edith Somerville and Martin Ross, *Some Experiences by an Irish R. M.* (1899) and its sequels, I have excluded for the same reason, except for an occasional reference. In Emily Lawless's *Grania* (1892), the professional storyteller breaks in now and then with colourful tales filled with Irish lore and superstition.

Most surveys of Irish literature mention the so-called Big-House novel, even though it did not receive any sustained critical attention until the 1990s. The Big-House novel constitutes a major tradition in Irish fiction, emerging with Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* in 1800.[38] It is represented by a number of novels in

[36] James M. Cahalan, *Great Hatred, Little Room: The Irish Historical Novel* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1983), p. xiii.

[37] James M. Cahalan, *The Irish Novel* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1988), p. xxiii.

[38] In "Continuity and Change in Irish Fiction: The Case of the Big-House Novel" in *Ancestral Voices* (ed. Otto Rauchbauer), Klaus Lubbers has traced the fictional debut of the Big-House theme further back than *Castle Rackrent*, to William Chaigneau's *History of Jack Connor* (1752). Lubbers finds that yet another novel written before 1800 deserves mention: the anonymous *The Triumph of Prudence over Passion; Or the History of Miss Mortimer and Miss Fitzgerald* (1781) (*Ancestral Voices*, pp. 18–19). It was, however, *Castle Rackrent* which became the prototype of Irish Big-House fiction.

my study, such as *An Irish Cousin* (1894) and *The Big House of Inver* (1925), both by Somerville and Ross, and *The Last September* (1929) by Elizabeth Bowen. In the context of the Big House, it should be noted that the Big Houses depicted in the novels vary in size and are not always particularly big. This is a reflection of the actual Big Houses in Ireland. In *Classic Irish Houses of the Middle Size,* Maurice Craig, poet-biographer-architectural historian, calls attention to the relatively small typical Big House.[39] The ancestral homes of Emily Lawless, Edith Somerville, Martin Ross and Elizabeth Bowen were all well known Big Houses, but there were considerable differences between them in size and style.[40]

Much of the fiction in this study is so-called minor fiction, but there are exceptions. Whether you agree with James M. Cahalan's view that *The Real Charlotte* by Somerville and Ross is the best of all the Big-House novels and the culmination of the nineteenth-century Irish novel or not, there is no denying its major status (p. 85). This is a realistic novel, even though there are fairly strict boundaries to the realism of Somerville and Ross, as John Wilson Foster points out in *Fictions of the Irish Literary Revival* (p. 178). There are, for example, only sparse references to the agricultural agitation during the late 1880s when the novel is set. The vast majority of the novels are romantic third-person narratives, whose obscure life on library shelves is neither surprising nor regrettable from a literary point of view. Nevertheless, I would argue that they make a contribution to the story of the era and that without them the story is flawed.

The so-called English novels by the Anglo-Irish novelists being excluded here, many novels deal with specifically Irish issues, that is to say issues that were topical in Ireland at the time of writing, such as the land question, religious affiliation, race and the emergence of a new ruling class in Ireland. They could arguably be described as 'Condition-of-Ireland' novels, using Thomas Carlyle's portmanteau phrase for social-problem novels but exchanging England for Ireland. In *The Novel and the Nation*, Gerry Smyth sees the proliferation of this type of narrative concerning the state of Ireland and Irishness from the turn of the nineteenth century as a testament to the fact that the novel and nation were becoming directly linked in contemporary imagination.[41] This created a host of problems; for example, there was the danger that novelistic discourse was being overwhelmed by anthropological discourse to manipulate the narrative to answer

[39] The term 'the Big House' refers to the fact that it was the house of a substantial, and usually resident, landowner, rather than the size of the actual building. As well as these Big Houses there were, and are, a considerable number of houses built or lived in by minor gentry or prosperous farmers, or by manufacturers and traders, or occupied as dower-houses, agents' houses or as glebe-houses. Maurice Craig, *Classic Irish Houses of the Middle Size* (London: Architectural Press [etc.], 1976), p. 3.

[40] See Mark Bence-Jones, *Burke's Guide to Country Houses, Volume 1 – Ireland* (London: Burke's Peerage, 1978). Of the four Big Houses – Somerville's Drishane, Castletownshend; Ross's Ross, Moycullen; Bowen's Bowen's Court, Kildorey and Lawless's Lyons, Hazlehatch – the home of Emily Lawless, the Cloncurry estate, was by far the most impressive.

[41] Gerry Smyth, *The Novel and the Nation: Studies in New Irish Fiction* (London: Pluto, 1997), p. 34.

an extra-literary agenda – the real world of Irish-English politics. In *Catholic Fiction and Social Reality in Ireland, 1873–1922,* James H. Murphy points out that for the Irish Catholic upper-middle-class writers literature was a way to advance their cause by trying to modify the adverse image that Ireland had been assigned to in English cultural discourse. They were able to use their inside knowledge of Ireland to display the peculiarities of Irish life in ways that would evoke sympathy or, when necessary, arouse anger (p. 17). The narrative itself is not always of primary importance, and at times the fictional world appears subservient to the 'real' world. This is, according to Smyth, the reason for much of the narrative of the time being constantly on the verge of degeneration into melodrama and stereotype (p. 35). The Anglo-Irish novelists in their 'Condition-of-Ireland' novels had a dual impulse, too – one towards the virtual world in which their narrative is set, and one towards the changing, 'real' world in which they tried to find a place. Some novels are very focussed on one particular issue, such as the land war; Letitia MacClintock's *A Boycotted Household* (1881) and Edith Rochfort's *The Lloyds of Ballymore* (1890) are examples. However, I also include novels which cannot be considered to deal with any particular issue, Irish or otherwise, but are only accidentally set in Ireland. Characters and narrators indicate their views on contemporary Ireland, albeit in a less direct way, and this goes for love stories, too.

It has, of course, been impossible to include all novels written by Anglo-Irish women novelists during the period. This study comprises a total of some fifty novels, although a number of others are used for reference or comparison in different contexts. Considering the diversity of the novelists of my study, fifty novels should yield a reasonably satisfactory representation of the fictional world of the Protestant Anglo-Irish women novelists.

Some of the novelists have contributed several novels, but I have had no intention of surveying any writer's total *oeuvre*. The earliest novels were written in the 1880s: Letitia McClintock's *A Boycotted Household* appeared in 1881. The latest novels to be included were written in the 1920s, such as *The Big House of Inver* (1925) and *The Last September* (1929), but set in earlier times, as mentioned above. However, no novel is set after the foundation of the Irish Free State in December 1922.

It should be pointed out that some of the novels have been difficult to access. As the bulk of them has sunk not only from readerly but also from academic sight, a great deal of descriptiveness is necessary. Furthermore, I find it essential to quote extensively to create a more immediate connection with these generally forgotten, often obscure, novels. The Protestant Anglo-Irish novelists of the time had their own specific way of expressing themselves, and that way is an essential part of their work.

Previous research

Stephen Brown's much-referred-to list of Irish novels in *Ireland in Fiction* (1919) makes it clear that a great number of novels were published during the period. It contains summaries of nearly 2,000 books and is useful as a survey of works going back to the 1800s, despite Fr Brown's being noticeably partial to Catholic authors. A second volume of *Ireland in Fiction*, covering prose works from 1918 to 1960, was completed by Desmond Clarke after Brown's death and issued in 1985.[42]

A history of Anglo-Irish literature from its origins is given by Roger McHugh and Maurice Harmon in *Short History of Anglo-Irish Literature* (1982). Accounts of the Revival period, taking in all genres, can be found in Ernest Boyd's contemporary study *Ireland's Literary Renaissance* (1916) and Richard Fallis's *The Irish Renaissance* (1977). Boyd only devotes one chapter of fifteen to prose fiction, while Fallis is more generous. His two chapters on Anglo-Irish fiction are divided into two sections, 1900–1923 and 1923–1940, and aptly called "Mirrors up to Ireland" and "Come back to Erin". While these works provide a point of departure, no attention is paid to minor fiction and few novelists included in my study are mentioned.

Julian Moynahan focuses his *Anglo-Irish* on the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, describing how the Anglo-Irish literary imagination comes into its own just as the privileges and power of this community begin to decline and the Ascendancy approaches its inevitable demise. Moynahan contradicts Edward Said who assumes that colonials, except for rare individuals, are everlasting tools of the power that sent them to occupy and dominate. Instead, and interestingly so in point of my study, Moynahan assumes that "an entire colony gets cut off from its extraterritorial roots, becoming as Irish as everybody else, though the cultural contribution it makes remains distinctive for as long as there are a sufficient number of self-identified Anglo-Irish people on Irish ground to constitute a 'critical mass'".[43]

The novel on its own, Anglo-Irish and Irish, is comprehensively studied by James M. Cahalan in *The Irish Novel.* In his introduction, Cahalan points to the peculiar treatment of his subject in the existing critical literature as the reason for his own interest in it. *The Irish Novel* is a very useful survey even though few of

[42] Stephen J. Brown, S. J., *Ireland in Fiction: A Guide to Irish Novels, Tales, Romances, and Folk-Lore* (Dublin: Irish UP, 1968). The bulk of the first edition of 1915 perished in the flames of Easter week 1916, but Brown immediately began to repair the loss and brought it up-to-date for the second edition in 1919 (Dublin: Maunsel). The IUP reprint is a photolithographic facsimile of the second edition and is unabridged, even to the extent of retaining the original printer's imprint. The second volume is Stephen J. Brown and Desmond Clarke, *Ireland in Fiction: A Guide to Irish Novels, Tales, Romances, and Folk-Lore, volume 2* (Cork: Royal Carbery Books, 1985).

[43] Julian Moynahan, *Anglo-Irish: The Literary Imagination in Hyphenated Culture* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1995), p. xi.

the writers of my study – in fact, only Emily Lawless, Edith Somerville and Martin Ross, and Elizabeth Bowen – are included in it. Cahalan indicates that future scholarship of the Irish novel needs much more detailed study, from a variety of perspectives, of such writers as Emily Lawless and other neglected Irish women authors. This was what initially inspired my choice of topic.

One particular genre from a particular period is examined by John Wilson Foster in *Fictions of the Irish Literary Revival.* Foster argues that despite the critical Cinderella treatment of the novel of the period, a copious amount of first-rate imaginative prose was written in Ireland from the 1890s onwards. But, he states, "it was written in furtherance of, or *in conscious reaction against*, the Irish literary revival" (p. xiv). The realistic work of George Moore, James Joyce, Brinsley MacNamara and others tempts him to distinguish an Irish Literary Renaissance from the Irish Literary Revival. The writers of the Irish Literary Revival sought to employ literature in a resuscitation of ancient Irish values and culture which they hoped would transform the reality of the Ireland they inhabited (p. xvi). To a great extent the revivalists invented a native Ireland into which they could comfortably fit, with room nevertheless to accommodate some desirable Anglo-Irish values and characteristics. This description fits some of the novelists of my study, too, although in general these women are not labelled revivalists.[44]

The fiction I have chosen is, as I have explained, neglected by Foster, but also by James H. Murphy. Murphy's study of the fiction from the period is limited to Catholic writers, as the title of his study states: *Catholic Fiction and Social Reality in Ireland, 1873–1922.* The term 'Catholic fiction' does not denote fiction that advocates a specific religious position but refers to fiction written by people who were Catholics, and therefore belonged to a distinguishable section of society. Murphy is convinced that the relationship between literature and life has been a close one in Ireland and that literature has both influenced and been influenced by cultural, intellectual, political and social development, a view with which it is impossible to disagree.

Big-House novels have attracted a great deal of attention in the 1990s, and there are several recent studies. In 1991, Jacqueline Genet edited *The Big House in Ireland*,[45] and in 1992 Otto Rauchbauer edited *Ancestral Voices,* which maps out a few important signposts of Big-House literature. Six years later Vera

[44] One exception is made by Betty Webb Brewer in "Emily Lawless: An Irish Writer Above All Else" (Ph. D. Dissertation submitted to the faculty of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1982), p. 1. She sees Emily Lawless as an early figure of the Irish Literary Revival and argues that two factors account for Lawless's decline in reputation: the well-known fact that the novel, her primary genre, has failed to generate much interest among scholars of the Revival; and the highly charged issue of Irish identity. An unflagging Unionist, Lawless was unwilling or unable to identify 'real' Ireland with peasant Ireland only. William J. Linn, too, in his dissertation, sees Lawless as a novelist of the Irish Literary Revival: "The Life and Works of the Hon. Emily Lawless, First Novelist of the Irish Literary Revival".

[45] Jacqueline Genet, ed., *The Big House in Ireland: Reality and Representation* (Dingle: Brandon, 1991).

Kreilkamp found the genre worth examining because it contains, in her view, neither irrelevant artifacts of a declining society nor, for the most part, nostalgic evocations of a lost ascendancy in Eden. Kreilkamp refers to Georg Lukács's *The Historical Novel*, and concluding that all Big-House novels are historical in focus, she writes:

> They are written with a sense of how the individuality of character derives from the historical peculiarity of an age and with an awareness of human existence as always historically conditioned [...] Place and time in these novels represent not simply neutral backdrops or settings for human behaviour, but, as Lukács suggests, problematic and specific worlds in which the struggle between the classes becomes, to a large extent, the central focus of the narrative action. Although Big House novels are not technically historical novels [...] they emerge from and dramatize – most often on a private rather than on a public level – the major political conflict in Irish history.[46]

Other novels, too, while not strictly Big-House novels, display the tension typical of this genre between two ideologies, one emphasizing the alienation of the Anglo-Irish from the Irish, the other a conservative feudal ideal of social cohesiveness.

Chapters of political and cultural history, analyses of urbanization, of the vernacular, of debates about national culture and the programme of the Gaelic League, take their place alongside detailed reexaminations of some major texts in Declan Kiberd's *Inventing Ireland*.[47] For a general historical overview, I have mainly relied on R. F. Foster's *Modern Ireland 1600–1972*.[48] Foster brings us from the end of the Elizabethan wars and the establishment of the Ulster plantation to Ireland's joining the European Union and the suspension of the Stormont Parliament in Northern Ireland. The book covers a wide range of issues and is an excellent general statement on Irish history. In his essays in *Paddy and Mr Punch*, R. F. Foster deals specifically with the inheritance of the relationship between Ireland and Britain. He often focuses on people who were in some sense 'caught' between the two countries.[49]

A wide historical view is provided by F. S. L. Lyons's *Ireland Since the Famine*.[50] It has proved invaluable in many ways, not least in the detail it provides in economic and social areas. Joseph Lee's *The Modernisation of Irish Society 1848–1918* goes back to the same beginnings as Lyons's work but ends with the general election of 1918. Lee looks at areas that he feels were neglected before he

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[46] Vera Kreilkamp, *The Anglo-Irish Novel and the Big House* (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1998), p. 15. Her reference from Georg Lukács is to *The Historical Novel* (Boston: Beacon, 1963 [1937]), p. 24.

[47] Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1995).

[48] R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600–1972* (London: Allen Lane, 1988).

[49] R. F. Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch: Connections in Irish and English History* (London: Allen Lane, 1993).

[50] F. S. L. Lyons, *Ireland Since the Famine* (London: Collins/Fontana, 1974 [1971]).

wrote his essay, such as the history of education and voting patterns, important issues for the reversal of fortunes in Ireland.[51]

Voting patterns, among other things, are also investigated in Brian Walker's *Dancing to History's Tune*, particularly the ones prevailing at the elections of 1885 and 1886. These elections were a milestone in Irish history; for one thing, the modern political party was born on the basis of a new mass electorate. However, in Walker's view they provided an even more significant milestone than this. For the first time, distinct Nationalist/Unionist politics linked to a clear Catholic/Protestant division throughout Ireland emerged. Regional and class differences became less important when denominational identities appeared as the main determining factor. Another issue that Walker looked at is the change that has occurred over the years in the nature and extent of Irish identity. By the second half of the nineteenth century, people held various ideas on the question of Irish identity and whom it embraced.[52]

Two other studies that focus on the question of identity are G. J. Watson's *Irish Identity and the Literary Revival* (1979) and Norman Vance's *Irish Literature: A Social History*.[53] Watson concentrates on Synge, Yeats, Joyce and O'Casey, and Vance provides an exploration into the ways in which perceptions of Irish literary tradition have articulated contending intuitions of identity in Ireland.

In view of Ireland's colonial history, it is not surprising that identity issues feature in many of the works I have had reason to study. My interest here is limited to those who had their identity hyphenated, the Anglo-Irish. Their lifestyle is portrayed in *Twilight of the Ascendancy* by one of their own, Mark Bence-Jones.[54] He relies on memories, private papers and diaries of a great many Anglo-Irish people. The book affords fascinating insights into the reasonably carefree times that used to be, but also into the changes that took place in Big-House life. It begins at the end of the 1870s, when the reputation of hunting in Ireland was able to entice the Empress Elizabeth of Austria to rent Summerhill, a splendid Palladian country house on a hilltop overlooking the grasslands of Co. Meath. At the end, the Big Houses that survived the changing times became a burden for the Anglo-Irish. Many could no longer afford to maintain their houses and were faced with the alternative of allowing them to become derelict or to sell up. The combination of a leaking roof and no servants proved too much for many. Major Big Houses or castles changed hands, such as Powerscourt and Kilkenny Castle, but so did more modest Big Houses. Elizabeth Bowen had to bow to reality in 1959 when she acknowledged that she could no longer hold on to Bowen's Court.

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[51] Joseph Lee, *The Modernisation of Irish Society 1848–1918* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1973).
[52] Brian Walker, *Dancing to History's Tune: History, Myth and Politics in Ireland* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University, 1996).
[53] Norman Vance, *Irish Literature: A Social History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).
[54] Mark Bence-Jones, *Twilight of the Ascendancy* (London: Constable, 1995 [1987]).

Another Big House, Killeen, the home of the Countess of Fingall, was sold by her son. Elizabeth, Countess of Fingall, was originally Daisy Burke of Danesfield in Co. Galway, where she was a neighbour of the Martins of Ross. The Fingalls were Catholics but the Countess often acted as a hostess for Horace Plunkett, her husband's Protestant cousin, who, among other things, managed to extract from the British administration Ireland's first independent government ministry, the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction. In 1910, together with Emily Lawless, another Plunkett cousin, Lady Fingall became a founder member of the United Irishwomen, today the Irish Countrywomen's Association. All these activities and connections contribute to making her memories in *Seventy Years Young* interesting as an insight into upper-class society during the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the first few of the twentieth.[55]

A more sombre view of the same society emerges in Terence Dooley's *The Decline of the Big House in Ireland*.[56] Dooley's book is a study of Big-House life from around 1860 until 1960 in the twenty-six counties that now make up the Irish Republic. He selected a sample of 100 houses, out of around 4,000, and 100 landlord families who lived in them in order to try to arrive at an in-depth understanding of how Big-House life was lived throughout these decades. The houses were selected on the basis of the size of the estates owned by the 100 landlords, in an attempt to make the sample representative of the socio-economic strata of the landed class, but the existence of primary source material was a decisive factor. As so much is based on the economics of a landed estate, Dooley's most important sources were estate rentals and accounts. However, accounts and figures alone cannot tell the history of the Big House, and some of the landlord families in Dooley's sample were chosen because of the existence of personal papers that could tell something about the social life within a particular house. Quantitative data from household schedule returns of the 1901 and 1911 censuses, colonial office papers, parliamentary papers, newspapers and many other sources have contributed to making Dooley's historical study an important one for providing a better understanding of the fictional works of the period, especially those written by members of the landlord class themselves.

Memoirs, diaries and letters may have their limitations, but Edith Somerville and Martin Ross have provided me with some useful information and insight in *Irish Memories* (1917) and *Wheel-Tracks*.[57] In *Wheel-Tracks*, Edith Somerville writes about the memories of her childhood because "everything in Ireland is

[55] Fingall, Elizabeth, Countess of, *Seventy Years Young* (Dublin: Lilliput, 1991 [1937]).

[56] Terence Dooley, *The Decline of the Big House in Ireland: A Study of Irish Landed Families 1860–1960* (Dublin: Wolfhound, 2001).

[57] Edith Somerville and Martin Ross, *Wheel-Tracks* (London: Longmans Green, 1923). Martin Ross died in 1915; but Edith Somerville believed strongly in Spiritualism – see for example *Wheel-Tracks* (p. 64) – and continued writing novels in partnership with her dead cousin, adding Martin Ross's name to her own as before.

changing, and many things have passed away, [and] there may be specialists who will discover interest, possibly amusement – though not, probably, much instruction – in what I can remember of my childhood" (p. ix). These were great days for letter-writing, and at times Somerville and Ross wrote each other letters as long as short stories. Some of the letters between them are collected in *The Selected Letters of Somerville and Ross*.[58] They are "a patchy collection of fragments" written between 1886, when they first met, and 1912. They wrote about aspects of Irish life generally unnoticed by the centre-stage male; for one thing, they enjoyed many of the places frequented by servants, such as laundries and kitchens. Many of the experiences recounted in their letters found their way into their novels. Apart from these texts, the four individual chapters have all required their own research, as listed in "Works Cited".

Outline of the present study

As I have stated, relevant non-fictional material will interact with the novels with a view to presenting different aspects of life and society, particularly those of the Anglo-Irish, as comprehensively as possible. To distinguish fiction from non-fiction, I use the present tense when referring to novels and the past tense for other material. The first time a non-fictional work is introduced, publication details are stated in a footnote and the full title inclusive of sub-title is given. The sub-title is subsequently omitted. The first time I refer to a particular novel in a chapter, the date of publication is shown within parenthesis in the running text.

The disposition of this study reflects the areas of contention experienced by the Anglo-Irish of the period. Land-ownership and power were intrinsically bound together. Chapter 1, "Land and Politics", deals with different types of Anglo-Irish landlords, benign and not so benign, their estates and their families. Encounters between landlords and their tenants are looked at, too. Typical questions posed in this chapter are: Was there any social contact between the two classes? What impact did the Land War and the agricultural agitations have on the fictional landlords? When the land question lost its identity as a separate issue and became a metaphor for the issue of nationality, the conflict between landlords and tenants became a conflict between Unionists and Nationalists, eventually resulting in the birth of the Irish republic.

Chapter 2 is devoted to different aspects of religion. Generally speaking, Anglo-Irish landlords were Protestants while most of their tenants and servants were Catholics. Protestants had been greatly favoured by the penal laws until full Catholic emancipation was achieved in 1829. Their own Church, the Church of

[58] Gifford Lewis, ed., *The Selected Letters of Somerville and Ross* (London: Faber and Faber, 1989).

Ireland, lost its special position and was disestablished by the Irish Church Act of 1869. This development had a huge psychological impact, and it is against this background that the novels of my study were written. A general question is how Catholics and Protestants are portrayed in them. Mixed marriages are also dealt with in this context, as are priests and nuns. While the boundaries of what constitutes religious fiction are difficult to draw, there are a couple of novels which are more concerned with issues of faith than others, and these 'religious' novels are looked at in some detail.

Increasingly, in order to qualify for Irishness people were required to profess the Catholic faith, but they also had to be of native Irish stock. Chapter 3, "Race", discusses the Celt and his presumed characteristics: 'simpleness', alcohol abuse, laziness, superstition and violence. The way of speaking distinguished the Anglo-Irish from the mere Irish, and I look at how language is used in the novels. The people of the 'other' race, the English, come in for some attention, as does the presentation of the Anglo-Irish themselves.

As the Anglo-Irish lost power, the mere Irish gained control. Chapter 4 focuses on the new ruling class, whom I have chosen to call 'the new Irish'. The chapter deals with land-grabbers and other grabbers, political upstarts and the new Irish heroes. The lingering nostalgia for 'the ould stock' is also brought into this chapter.

A brief conclusion summarizes the fictional outlook presented by the Anglo-Irish women novelists of the changing society in Ireland.

1 Land and Politics

Land in nineteenth-century Ireland was an emotive issue. In twenty years, between 1821 and 1841, the population of Ireland had soared from around 6.8 million to over eight million, and as a consequence competition for land intensified.[59] An excessive population in relation to the amount of land available consumed a disproportionate part of what the land yielded. There was too little produce left to sell for capital to accumulate, with the result that investment into means of employment as an alternative to farming was hindered. In this way, the bond between land and people was further consolidated.

Another factor which made people's minds focus on land at the time was that a great deal of grassland was ploughed up to grow corn after the Napoleonic Wars drove up the world market price for grain. F. S. L. Lyons claims that tillage farming continued to expand at least up to the 1830s, and that the fact that the population was still increasing may have tended to retain the Irish farmer in the more labour-intensive tillage phase for longer than was economically desirable.[60] Landlords – as well as the more substantial tenant farmers – would let a piece of land to a labourer who would pay for the rent of it with his labour. On his tiny holding, the labourer would plant potatoes, which provided the ideal crop as potatoes gave an excellent as well as a nutritious yield. When his sons grew up the strip of land was subdivided into even smaller units, and so an increasing number of the Irish became completely reliant on the potato. This development continued until the 1840s, when "[it] can be stated unequivocally that the potato was a dietary staple".[61] In 1845 the potato blight struck and spread like wildfire to affect about half the country. In 1846 the potato crop failed again and in four years of horror, between 1845 and 1848, the Great Famine devastated the country.[62]

The Great Famine further intensified the passion that surrounded the land issue. The government consensus being that Irish landlords had the responsibility to restructure their estates into more efficient agricultural units, it is

[59] Lyons, pp. 37–38
[60] Ibid., p. 40.
[61] Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600–1972*, p. 319.
[62] Foster claims that the population decline between 1845–1851 has been computed at 2,225,000. The population, 8,200,000 in the early 1840s, would sink to 4,400,000 by 1911 (p. 323).

not surprising that government policy was to try to put the burden of relief during and after the Great Famine on the Irish landlords and the Irish Board of Works.[63]

The Irish landlords felt let down by the lack of support provided for them and became increasingly disillusioned with the British seeming indifference to the suffering of the Irish. In their efforts to alleviate the situation, many were themselves ruined. Not only were their tenants unable to pay their rents, they also had to be provided with free food. Many landlords set up soup kitchens, as did James Martin of Ross House – father of Martin Ross – although his straitened finances could hardly support it.[64]

Many large landlords went bankrupt as a result of the Famine; the number estimated by Foster is as high as ten per cent (*Modern Ireland,* p. 336). Freeing landed property from legal encumbrances, the Encumbered Estates of 1849 provided landlords broken by the disaster with an opportunity to dispose of their estates. This opportunity to rejuvenate Irish landlordism was not a success. The new type of owner, described by Lyons as "hard-fisted graziers" (p. 26), knew the value of money and realized that the changing economic situation no longer favoured tillage farming. They did not have the same feeling of responsibility towards the tenant families, and they were generally much more ruthless in their pursuit of economic efficiency than the older aristocracy. The result was that the lines of conflict between tenants and landlords were accentuated.

The drastic reduction in the population caused by the Famine opened up the possibility for the landlord class to try to consolidate their farms in an effort to evolve into capitalist farmers, in the way that had happened in England in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. To make the most of this opportunity many landlords evicted tenants, thereby clearing more of their land than the Famine had already achieved; some turned thousands of tenants out on the roads while others assisted their tenants with emigration schemes.[65] But even getting the fare to America paid was no guarantee for the future. In general, the mortality rate on the "coffin ships" was appalling. Those who survived the voyage nurtured in their hearts a hatred of the government and the landlords for their failure to deal with the catastrophe of the Famine, and this hatred and bitterness

[63] The solution to "the Irish problem" was clear according to contemporary English commentators, such as T. C. Foster – *The Times*' special correspondent in Ireland in the aftermath of the Devon commission on land tenure in Ireland (1843) – referred to by Philip Bull: "[L]andlords had the responsibility – and Foster assumed they had the power – to restructure their estates as more efficient agricultural units, in which farms were made more compact and investment secured more profitable farming conditions. That this had not been done was due to lack of will on the part of the landlords". Philip Bull, *Land, Politics & Nationalism: A Study of the Irish Land Question* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1996), p. 13. For more details on the Board of Works, see Lyons, p. 81.

[64] Somerville and Ross, *Irish Memories,* p. 16.

[65] W. E. Vaughan estimates that 50,000 evictions occurred 1847–50. Vaughan, *Landlords and Tenants in Ireland 1848–1904* (Dublin: Dundalgan Press, 1984), p. 23.

were passed on to their descendants who were to play an important role in many of the subsequent organizations which had Irish independence as their ultimate goal. That the landlords responsible for eviction sometimes had no choice in the matter, but saw it as a miserable necessity to save themselves, did nothing to alleviate the suffering of those evicted or their bitter feelings against the landlord class.

The actions of the Irish landlords after the Great Famine did little to enhance their credibility with the British ruling class, of which they had generally considered themselves a part. Already in the 1830s and 1840s there had been pressure on them to conform to more efficient English farming practices. However, as Philip Bull points out in *Land, Politics and Nationalism* (pp. 8–15), the Irish rural situation was vastly different from the English rural situation. It is not surprising that *laissez-faire* – as the official ideology of the British state – came to be seen as peculiarly English and therefore as an instrument of domination in Ireland after the Famine.[66] This was unfortunate for the Irish landlords, who were expected to uphold the prevailing principles of political economy. Moreover, when putting aside practical questions such as comparability of land, the views of contemporary commentators involved a false analogy in respect of what had happened in England, where landlords had enjoyed the benefit of several parliamentary acts to facilitate the process of changing farming practices. In England there was also an alternative to life on the land and much of the population was attracted, or forced by financial circumstances, to industrial life in the towns and cities.

The Famine and its aftermath undoubtedly etched a deep divide between landlords and tenants in Ireland. Tenant attitudes were to some degree informed by an awareness of conquest. In 1850 it was only 170 years since the Williamite land settlements, approximately 220 years since those of James I and less than 320 years since the Elizabethan plantations. Philip Bull claims that the memory of conquest so relatively recent is a strong and enduring one, especially in a country like Ireland where it was a majority memory and one kept alive not only by persecution but also by religious continuity and a strong indigenous culture (p. 27). The Anglo-Irish landlords, who saw themselves as having absolute rights to their property in accordance with British property law, were somewhat circumscribed by tradition and social conventions as to how to exercise these rights. In 1869 George Campbell, a man with great influence on Prime Minister W. E. Gladstone, noted that Irish tenants were in contravention of the Irish landlord's perception of absolute ownership by habitually using expressions such as "own-

[66] The Scottish economist Adam Smith (1723–1790), reflecting on the emergence in Britain of the industrial system, argued that the commercial liberty of a competitive market would stimulate production and act in the interest of the public. Restrictions and regulations in all business affairs were seen as detrimental to a nation's economic health. The laissez-faire policy of government non-intervention remained popular throughout the Victorian era.

ing a farm", "selling his farm", "having bought a farm" and "having inherited a farm". Campbell expressed his scepticism against the validity of applying English property ideology to Ireland. In *The Irish Land*, he stated: "In Ireland there are two sets of laws – the English laws, and the laws and customs of the country, which, enforced in a different way, are as active and effective. In the clashing of these two systems lies the whole difficulty".[67]

In 1870 Gladstone's first Land Act was introduced, giving the right of compensation to evicted tenants for expenditure they had made on their farm. Gladstone himself had hoped to go further than the Act prescribed, but had to compromise in a difficult situation. The Cabinet and Parliament had worked hard to find the basis for the legislation, such as it was, in the hope that some of the grievances over land would be removed and not diffuse agrarian unrest in Ireland. It was, however, far too little far too late and altogether an inadequate response to the problems it was meant to address. The Act did nothing to satisfy the tenants' increasingly strident claim for the "three F's" – fair rent, fixity of tenure, and free sale. Nevertheless, the 1870 Act was important in that it could be seen as encouragement for further action – as many of its opponents had warned might happen – because it contravened certain principles of English property law.

Some of the novelists of my study were very much part of the landowning class, such as Edith Somerville, Martin Ross and Emily Lawless. Others were less personally involved in land issues. However, in the latter part of the nineteenth century the question of land ownership, and the agitation and violence connected with it, made it increasingly difficult for any Irish novelist irrespective of background to ignore what was happening. In his survey of Catholic fiction in Ireland of the time, James H. Murphy identifies the dilemma faced by the Catholic upper-middle-class writers (pp. 16–19). Many of them found that their way of being Irish was becoming increasingly impossible with the polarization between Unionism and Nationalism. For Rosa Mulholland, one of the more prolific of the Catholic upper-middle-class writers, Nationalism did not include cultural and political separatism as espoused by other groups in Irish Catholic society. As I have already mentioned, writers in the mode of Mulholland viewed their task as being that of toning down the unfavourable image that Ireland had in English cultural discourse. It was, according to Murphy, a classic colonial problem: an assimilationist class balking at the fact that its country was still being considered 'native'. These writers employed a number of narrative strategies in order to acquit both their own class and Irish society in general of blame for the agrarian outrages. The most common, and perhaps most audacious, strategy traced the source of violence to members of government or to the Protestant As-

[67] George Campbell, *The Irish Land* (London: Trübner, 1869), pp. 6 and 8. Campbell was born and bred in agricultural Scotland. He served as Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces of India. Campbell wrote of his two visits to Ireland, one in the spring and one in the autumn, in *The Irish Land*.

cendancy. This was not likely to be an expedient that their Anglo-Irish contemporaries wanted to resort to, and under four headings I try to establish the alternative strategies they developed. In "The Anglo-Irish Landlords", I look at how the landlords, and also their families, are presented by the novelists of my study, while in "Encounters between landlords and tenants", I deal with social relations and contacts between the landlord and his tenants. These relations changed as the agrarian unrest intensified, and in "Agricultural Agitations" I look at some of the novels that depict the actions of the Land League, the Plan of Campaign and the United Irish League. As these organizations became increasingly politicized, issues other than land came to the fore; they are considered under the final heading of this chapter, "Unionists and Nationalists".

The Anglo-Irish landlords

The landlords in Ireland were by no means a homogeneous group. The majority of them were Protestants, as many Catholic families who still held land in the eighteenth century had converted to Protestantism to avoid the effect of the Penal Laws. English and Scots settler stock accounted for some sixty per cent of the total, according to Mark Bence-Jones in *Twilight of the Ascendancy*. The ethnic diversity of the Ascendancy also included some descendants of Huguenots and other continentals, while nearly forty per cent of the Ascendancy families were of old Celtic-Irish or Anglo-Norman stock (pp. 14–15). To qualify for the title of 'landlord', it would seem that a landowner, according to *Thom's Directory*, had to own some 500 acres. This restriction made the landlord class a very small and select group of about 6,500 in the 1870s.[68] The variations as to the size of their holdings were considerable, as was the variation in the quality of their land, and some landlords were infinitely more prosperous than others. A survey of estates in the 1870s revealed that landlords with estates of 2,000 to 5,000 acres owned twenty per cent of Ireland, and over half the country was owned by less than 1,000 great landlords.[69]

It was the relationship to land that categorized the rural population; tenants were the ones who occupied the land owned by the landlords. The tenants were obviously a much bigger group than the landlords. When a balance is struck between the numbers of farmers and occupiers in the 1870 census, W. E. Vaughan comes to the conclusion that it would be a realistic estimate to suppose that there

[68] *Thom's Official Directory of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland for the Year 1881* (Dublin: Alexander Thom), p. 721. Another way of defining a landlord is by the value of his land. In *Ireland Since the Famine*, F. S. L. Lyons defines a landlord as a person in possession of land valued at one thousand pounds or upwards (p. 148).

[69] Vaughan, *Landlords and Tenants in Ireland 1848–1904*, p. 5.

were 500,000 tenants in Ireland at the time.[70] The tenantry was no more homogeneous than the landlord class. In *Landlord and Tenants in Ireland 1848–1904*, Vaughan estimates that the average tenant holding was about forty acres. The typical tenant, however, had less than forty acres – in 1851 over half of them had less than fifteen (p. 5). Some tenants were quite prosperous farmers with large acreages; at the other extreme, poverty-stricken tenants cultivated small parcels of land. The difference in outlook between these two sections of the tenant class, the former predominantly to be found in the eastern part of the country and the latter along the western coast, was enormous.

A special category of tenants were the graziers. These were often tradespeople who had earned the capital to stock their grazing lands from their trade and who had part of their income independent of the land. They took up large areas of grassland, removing it from the available market in land for tillage farming by undercutting tillage farmers. In many cases they became a new rural elite, more and more closely identified with landlords and therefore objects of hostility in land agitations. This, however, did not prevent a large number of them from getting involved with and supporting the land agitations.[71] As the second half of the nineteenth century progressed, their number increased substantially.

Another, and largely neglected, group in rural society were the labourers who worked on the larger farms. This section of society was virtually ignored by the advocates of land reform, and yet there were twice as many labourers, farm servants, herdsmen and ploughmen as farmers according to the 1861 census.[72] The figure is likely to have been higher than the one stated in this source: many labourers probably returned themselves as "landholders" even if the amount of land they held was miniscule, or "farmers" if they were sons of farmers, as the term labourer held very low status. The labourers were by far the poorest section of rural society. They were much worse off than the tenants and could be thrown out of their cottages with a few weeks' notice. They were only casually employed and seem to have moved from one place to another.

Details as to estate sizes, number of tenants, etc., are lacking in the novels of my study. The distinctions within the different rural groups can be observed only to the extent that some landlords appear to have bigger, less dilapidated houses than others, while the living conditions of the tenants hover between two

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[70] W. E. Vaughan, *Landlords and Tenants in Mid-Victorian Ireland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 6.

[71] One theory regarding the involvement of traders/graziers in agrarian agitations is that it served as a competitive tool, enabling a shopkeeper to win customers on the basis of his political alignment. See Michael D. Higgins and John P. Gibbons, "Shopkeeper-Graziers and Land Agitation in Ireland, 1895–1900" in P. J. Drudy, ed., *Ireland; Land, Politics and People* (Cambridge: UP, 1982), pp. 110–11.

[72] Figures quoted in Vaughan, *Landlord and Tenants in Mid-Victorian Ireland*: 440,697 farmers as against 890,520 farm servants, labourers, herds, and ploughmen (p. 7).

extremes: comfort and destitution. The term 'labourer' is not explicitly used in any of the novels, and I therefore use the concepts 'landlords' and 'tenants' only. In the strict sense of the word, 'tenants' are no longer always tenants in some of the novels: nor are the 'landlords' landlords to the same extent as they used to be; many have sold at least portions of their lands, as landlords in Ireland tended to do after the Land War. However, it is generally impossible to ascertain from the novels whether a tenant, sometimes referred to as a farmer, is in fact a tenant or an ex-tenant, or whether the landlord has enough land left for him to qualify for the title according to *Thom's Directory*. Therefore, I will not attempt to make any distinctions between past and present status of the characters but use the terms comprehensively, as the narrator in *An Enthusiast* (1921) by Somerville and Ross seems to do when considering the hooded women at Colonel Palliser's funeral as tenant-women (p. 4), although a reader acquainted with the context would probably not have regarded them as such except in a historical sense.

The landlord class is portrayed in many novels and the tenants appear in them, too, although there is only one, *Hurrish* (1886) by Emily Lawless, in which the principal character is a tenant. How are the landlords and their families presented in these novels by the Anglo-Irish women novelists? To what extent do the landlords look after their estates, and what does the future have in store for the fictional Irish landlords? These are some of the questions addressed in this chapter.

Land was a source of income, contributing food and fuel for landlords as well as for their tenants, and it was hence of interest to both groups. The question of land ownership is dealt with in a very direct way in some novels and merely touched upon or non-existent in others. Several possible strategies are suggested for solving this increasingly pressing issue. One commonly used by Catholic novelists, James H. Murphy claims, is to indicate that the solution would be that a Catholic gentry take over from the Protestant Ascendancy (p. 44). Rosa Mulholland's *Marcella Grace* (1886), for example, which was an immensely popular novel, promotes the idea of a Catholic landlord. Marcella, a young Catholic girl, born into poverty in Dublin, inherits an estate in the west of Ireland. Her previous poverty is invoked as a contributory reason for her suitability as a good landlord. This type of landlord was not a viable option for the Protestant novelists. *Priests and People: A No-Rent Romance* (1891), written by an anonymous but obviously Protestant novelist, rejects the possibility of this Catholic landlord solution outright and attacks the Irish people. Eileen, the daughter of a Catholic landlord, takes over the estate when her father and her uncle have been murdered. Initially full of hope and good intentions, she is soon disillusioned and embittered, despite sharing the faith of her tenants. She realizes that "in this land

of poetry, misfortune is coming not from without, but from the very heart of the people themselves" (p. 40).[73]

Replacing Protestant landlords by Catholics was not advocated in novels written by Anglo-Irish novelists as a way of improving relations between the social classes in Ireland, and other ways had to be considered. A more congenial way for the Anglo-Irish to do so had already been suggested by Maria Edgeworth. When she wrote *Ennui* (1809) and *The Absentee* (1812), it was against the background of the break-up of the Grattan Parliament and the flight of the ruling elite to London. With Dublin degraded to a provincial town, the Irish landowners – who used to spend most of their time at home looking after their estates, with the exception of a few weeks in Dublin at the Castle – had started spending more time in London and in England. Their estates were left in the hands of agents, whose main task it became to supply the money for often ill-afforded townhouses and living expenses. Maria Edgeworth who had, together with her landlord-father Richard Lovell Edgeworth, been against the Act of Union and the ensuing dissolution of the Irish Parliament, criticized these absentee landlords and depicted a better specimen in *Ennui* and *The Absentee*: the educated and improving kind of landlord, who became resident on his estate. Thus, reformed landlord characters was one possible solution to the Irish problem.

While the circumstances in Irish society had changed dramatically during the following century or so, there were still some novelists who seemed to advocate somewhat of the same solution as Maria Edgeworth. However, there was more compromise and a wider spectrum of alternatives envisaged as to the future role of landlords. In *Kerrigan's Quality* (1894) and *The Founding of Fortunes* (1902), Jane Barlow has a special partnership in mind. Both novels suggest model landlords as a possibility for improving the conditions for the tenants in Ireland. Contemporary reality seems quite remote, and Land League activities are not overtly in evidence in either novel. Certainly, the people in Port Maguire are dissatisfied with their lot and feel that "them few folks have grabbed hould of everythin'" *(Founding of Fortunes*, p. 175); but the criticism remains vague. It is one of the young men, Owen Kinsella, who expresses it. More conscious of the situation in society than the rest of the men, Owen sees an opportunity of stirring up the people to make a stand when a new incumbent in the nearby lodge threatens to put a stop to the hitherto more or less accepted poaching. Poaching has provided the only chance of much needed

[73] In *Ireland in Fiction*, Brown states categorically that the anonymous writer is "ignorant on Catholic matters". He further writes of the novel: "A book inspired by the bitterest dislike and contempt for Ireland. The views expressed by the young English soldier (p. 101) seem throughout to be those of the author. The interest turns almost entirely on the relations between landlord, tenant and the League, and no effort is spared to represent the two latter in the most odious light" (p. 12).

supplementary income for the local people. However, Owen comes to realize the futility of hoping for any joint action by the villagers as "you might as well talk to saygulls and bid them quit screechin' and fightin'" (*The Founding of Fortunes,* p. 180) as try to speak sense to the people of Port Maguire. It seems that, to some extent, the Irish themselves are blamed for their situation. Still, Owen remains hopeful that there will be a chance of everybody coming together to do something at some future date.

The something to be done in Port Maguire, it is indicated, should preferably be in the line of what has happened in Glenore. Glenore is a model village, although some years previously it was as impoverished and forlorn as its neighbour. The metamorphosis is as miraculous as are the circumstances under which it happened. Mr Kerrigan, a rich returned Irish-Australian of humble peasant descent, buys the local deserted Big House. Sir Ben, impoverished gentry, or "quality" as the gentry is usually called in these two Barlow novels, is forced to stay in the locality after an accident and moves into Kerrigan's Big House. Together Kerrigan and Sir Ben set about reforming the estate. The view of the locals is that the two men have "quare ideas" about the land because "they seem to think thim that are workin' on it had a right to come before thim that would only be grazin' over it", and they are surprised that "thim that works on the land in Glenore, as good as owns it very nearly" (*The Founding of Fortunes,* p. 179). The tenants have horses, ploughs and all kinds of machinery. There is no doubt that Glenore has come to be considered an ideal place to live, all thanks to the co-operation between Kerrigan, a man of the people, and Sir Ben of "the quality".

The two old-fashioned landlords in *The Founding of Fortunes*, Sir Herbert Considine and Lord Fintragh, are both doomed. Sir Herbert Considine disapproves of his father's and grandfather's harsh dealings with the tenants; but the resources available to him are so poor that there is not much he can do to help either the tenants or himself. Sir Herbert's roof is leaking over his head and his servants are "a couple of old scarecrows of cripples letting on to be keeping up the place on half wages". Old Lord Fintragh has only "three thrashy garrons" in his stable, whereas his father was Master of Foxhounds and had at least thirty hunters with "a parishful employed to look after them" (p.153).[74]

Jane Barlow's novels seem very even-handed in the way they portion out responsibility for social conditions in the country. Even though they, in the voice of Owen for example, put some blame on the people themselves, the landlords must take their share of responsibility. New attitudes as well as new methods are necessary for society to work. Kerrigan and Sir Ben set the example for Mr

[74] A 'garron' (garran, garraun) is an old horse, a nag [Ir. gearrán]. See Richard Wall, *A Dictionary & Glossary for the Irish Literary Revival* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1995), p. 74.

Hanmer from London, who takes over Sir Herbert's estate with the intention of improving the conditions for the tenants. Like Kerrigan, Hanmer intends to enter into partnership with a person of the gentry, although the partnership he has in mind is of a different nature. He proposes to Sir Herbert's daughter, and again it is indicated that members of the gentry, who are able to compromise and adapt, will have a role to play in Ireland in the future. What is expected from them is that they remove themselves from their own class. Sir Ben is, according to Kerrigan, "an exile from his own class and companions" (*The Founding of Fortunes*, p. 213).

In Jane Barlow's novels, Mr Kerrigan and Sir Ben in combination clearly represent the 'good' landlord. In *Land, Politics and Nationalism*, Philip Bull points to the prevalence of these images of 'good' as well as 'bad' landlords in accounts of Irish history and other literature in the nineteenth century (pp. 18–20). The 'bad' landlord was the absentee landlord, or the one who rackrented or evicted his tenants; but the 'good' landlord was more difficult to define. Sometimes the image of a 'good' landlord was that of an old-fashioned, easy-going paternalist, who was sensitive to the feelings of his tenants, and ready to ingratiate himself with them in order to alleviate the lingering resentment at his usurpation of the land. To others this type of landlord was a 'bad' landlord because he was likely to run his estate inefficiently and be heavily indebted, hence in fact being partly to blame for the crisis of landlordism in Ireland. Uncle Richard of the Glanmore estate in *Burnt Flax* (1914) by Mrs H. H. Penrose seems to epitomize this breed of landlord. He dies at the beginning of the novel, his epitaph pointing to the two sides of the coin in this concept of the 'good' landlord:

> Richard, however beloved, had not been exactly a model landlord. It was doubtless because he had so many of their own qualities that his people had loved him. If he had been generous, he had also been careless; and although he had ever been ready to help distress, ever unwilling to press for payment, he had allowed the cottages on his estate to fall into a lamentable state of decay with no more adequate reason than that which he had constantly offered to his nephew, the agent, that he couldn't be bothered at his time of life with bricks and mortar all over the place and under his feet at every step; the cabins would last as long as himself, and afterwards Eustace could do what he liked (p. 13).

Instead, a 'good' landlord to those who saw the dangers of the easy-going paternalist was a landlord of the improving, modern capitalist variety, even though he might be ruthless enough to extract an appropriate market rent from his tenants. In the mid-nineteenth century, the general English and Irish Ascendancy opinion was that it was the improver and the moderniser who was the best landlord. As he tended to interfere too much with traditional Irish farm practices, the tenants would not necessarily have agreed with this view.

The cousins Edith Somerville and Martin Ross have pictured many memor-

able landlords in their novels, few of whom can be considered 'good' in any sense of the term. They, who had personal experience of living in Big Houses in rural Ireland, are far more pessimistic about the future of the landlord class than Jane Barlow. In *An Irish Cousin* (1889), their first joint literary venture, Somerville and Ross introduced the theme that was to become so central in their writing, the Big House and its gentry in decline. They had initially intended *An Irish Cousin* to be a sensational Gothic novel, but after Somerville visited an old impoverished relation and saw "[an] old maniac's face at the window over the White Hall door", they changed their minds and decided to write "a shocker or story of sorts" on that foundation.[75] They used the common device for commenting on the Irish scene, the visitor from abroad, in their "shocker". Theo, an orphan, comes from Canada to visit the ramshackle house, Durrus, which her Uncle Dominick has inherited under somewhat mysterious circumstances. Uncle Dominick does not seem to take any part in the running of his estate and subsequently dies. Willy, Theo's cousin, does not give the impression of being much more efficient as a landlord than his father. His life circles around horses and dogs, and after marrying the lodge-keeper's daughter he leaves Ireland to emigrate to Australia. It is not made clear what happens to Durrus. Theo is now the rightful owner, but she is getting married to the son of the neighbouring estate, Nugent. He is, in contrast to the rough-and-ready Willy, an educated man, although he seems more interested in playing the piano than in running an estate.

In *An Irish Cousin*, Somerville and Ross do not seem to have any suggestions as to the future possibilities for the landlord class and the Irish people, the way Barlow has in *Kerrigan's Quality* and *The Founding of Fortunes.* They do, however, place the responsibility for the fate of the Irish landlords firmly upon the Irish landlords themselves, as they also do in *The Big House of Inver* (1925).[76] Robert Prendeville built the Big House of Inver high on a hill, so that he could look out over the sea and keep an eye on the coming of vessels that brought claret from Bordeaux to Western Ireland. However, the narrator points out, it must not be supposed that he was a common smuggler, breaking the laws for mere money. Robert Prendeville was a very great personage, who owned the better part of the Barony of Iveragh, and he took pride in trying to outwit the King. However, whatever power and wealth Robert had is wasted by subsequent generations. Kit Prendeville, son of Jas who lost his lands to his agent, is a landless landlord with less refined habits than his ancestor Robert; Kit takes his drink, unlikely

[75] Lewis, ed., *The Selected Letters of Somerville and Ross*, p. 143. Letter from Ross to Somerville dated August 21st 89. It is made evident by the letter that it was Somerville alone who knew the story of the "old maniac" at White Hall, although in *Irish Memories* she later fictionalized the inspiration for the novel to include Ross (p. 129).

[76] *The Big House of Inver* was inspired by a letter written by Martin to Somerville on 18 March 1912. See Lewis, ed., *The Selected Letters of Somerville and Ross*, pp. 293–94. See also chapter 3 "Race", "The Anglo-Irish", p.188.

to be claret from Bordeaux, in Connor's pub. Training horses is "the single art for which his gifts and fancy fitted him" (p. 43). He still owns the Big House, and it is his illegitimate half-sister Shibby Pindy's dream that Kit will regain the demesne by marrying the agent's daughter. However, the agent's daughter does not oblige and the Big House of Inver burns down.

The landlords in *An Irish Cousin* and *The Big House of Inver* are both background figures to their sons. While the sons are useless, the fathers are even more so. Dominick is an alcoholic and an impostor. Jas is an alcoholic, too, in addition to being a very old man. The landlord/father in *The Real Charlotte* (1894), also by Somerville and Ross, is even more incapacitated. Sir Benjamin Dysart has had a stroke on his son Christopher's twenty-first birthday. He is wheeled around in a bath-chair by a servant, shouting abusively to relatives and visitors without seeming to recognize any of them. Despite his inability to perform his landlord duties he is nevertheless the landlord in the eyes of the old tenants, such as Julia Duffy. When she is in fear of losing her home, the old woman is prepared to walk all the way to Bruff, after having fortified herself with "a taste of sperrits", to appeal to him to keep his promise that she should never be disturbed in her holding. However, Sir Benjamin is totally incapable of any rational conduct. When he brandishes a stick at her, she staggers away down the avenue and runs into his son. The only help Christopher is able to offer her against the protagonist's – Charlotte's – "plots and tricks" to make her homeless, is encouragement to write him a letter about it. Christopher Dysart is certainly not a man of action. His background as a civil servant in the West Indies does not make him a match for Charlotte's business schemes when they meet to discuss how the affairs of the estate are handled by the agent. A union with Francie, Charlotte's relative, who is as energetic and lively as Christopher is the opposite, is suggested as a possibility for Christopher to break free from his inertia and to assure a strengthened family line, but Francie declines his proposal. Christopher is an absentee landlord in the making. The reader easily envisages his return to a civil service career after the shattering end of the novel, leaving all the landlord's duties at Bruff in the hands of an agent.

In another novel written by Somerville and Ross, *Naboth's Vineyard* (1889), the landlord is in fact an absentee and is hated as a result of it. When his woods go on fire, nobody is prepared to help extinguishing it. "If he wouldn't live in the counthry and mind his place, let him lose it and d -- d to him!" (p. 191).

In *Mount Music* (published in 1919 but set roughly from 1890 to 1907),[77] Somerville and Ross present two landlords: Richard Talbot Lowry, a loyalist

[77] In *The Irish Cousins: The Books and Background of Somerville and Ross* (London: Heinemann, 1970), Violet Powell reveals that *Mount Music* had been planned and partly written in Martin's lifetime, that is to say before 1915 (p. 173).

Major and a Protestant, of Mount Music and St Lawrence (Larry) Coppinger of Coppinger's Court, a relative of the Talbot Lowrys but a Catholic "by accident". Larry is a child in the beginning of the novel, and in the eighties and nineties – when he was a boy and the Major's daughter, Christian, a little girl – the class known as the landed gentry was still pre-eminent in Ireland.

Richard Talbot Lowry is initially a reasonably popular man in the neighbourhood, but he refuses to sell his lands and his tenants turn against him. He has a large family to support on a dwindling income, and in his need he turns to one of the 'new Irish', Dr Mangan, who outwits him, with the result that he has no choice but to leave Mount Music. Larry, however, who seems to spend his time fox-hunting or travelling around Europe to paint, is one of the "stray reptiles" (p. 11) who survive the general doom, and he holds on to Coppinger's Court even though most of his lands have been sold. It is impossible to say whether this was meant as an indication that a Catholic landowner had greater chance of survival than a Protestant one. Mark Bence-Jones, in *The Twilight of the Ascendancy*, claims that no landlords were singled out for attack by the Land League because they were descended from Cromwellian or other English settlers, as has sometimes been suggested. In fact, he gives quite a few examples of Catholic landlords of Celtic-Irish or Norman descent who suffered at the hands of the League during the period (pp. 29–30).

Contrary to the novels by Somerville and Ross mentioned above, Emily Lawless's novel *Hurrish* (1886), set during the Land War, seems to indicate that the landlord is without blame for the precarious situation in which he finds himself. For the past sixteen years, O'Brien has tried to obtain a fair day's work for a fair day's pay but without success, and he has now given up the practice of surprising his men out on the fields in order to detect malingerers. He has resigned himself to his fate. Even though he has not raised his tenants' rent for forty-five years, this "poor, good-natured, well-meaning, utterly puzzled, heart-broken man" is perceived by them as a "sort of blood-sucking, land-grabbing, body-and-soul destroying monster" (p. 70). O'Brien's nephew and heir, Thomond, finds fault with his uncle for being too lax. Thomond is convinced that if landlords "would only put their feet down resolutely, encourage the decent fellows, drive all the agitators into the sea, and bid the English Government mind its own affairs and leave the management of Ireland to them" (p. 213), all problems would be solved. While the novel makes it clear that O'Brien is a victim of the Land Leaguers, it is made equally clear that England has to take its share of the blame for what is happening to him. O'Brien's tenant, Hurrish, dies "a martyr to a long and ugly past". He was dying because

> hate of the Law is the birthright and the dearest possession of every native son of Ireland. He was dying because, for many a weary year, that country had been as ill-governed a morsel of earth as was to be found under the wide-seeing eye of God. The old

> long-repented sin of the stronger country was the culprit, as surely as if it had pointed the gun at his breast. (p. 177)

The understanding expressed here for the hatred felt by "the native sons" of Ireland is quite remarkable, even though the hatred mentioned is directed at the English rather than the Anglo-Irish.[78] *Hurrish* made an impression on the British Prime Minister, W. E. Gladstone, who praised it as he prepared his arguments for Home Rule. Gladstone stated that Lawless had presented to her readers "not as an abstract proposition, but as a living reality, the estrangement of the people of Ireland from the law".[79] Nationalists in Ireland, however, were not enamoured of either Lawless or her novel. Pierce O'Brien did not fit their picture of a landlord: he was too kind and thoughful. To the reviewer in the *New Ireland Review, Hurrish* is "not more than a third-rate novel, spoiled as an attempt at honest fiction by a stern desire to state a case against the Land League".[80]

In the conclusion of *Hurrish,* the eponymous protagonist – portrayed as honest and upright – is dead, as is his mother, while the two girls of the family join the convent in Galway. Pierce O'Brien's heir, Thomond, is somewhere in the Antipodes. The short-term picture for Ireland that the novel paints is bleak, but it does allow for some hope. Pierce O'Brien himself, who is presented as a good man and a thoughtful landlord, does not give up; nor does he leave his country, although he is perpetually appealed to by Mrs O'Brien to leave the whole wretched thing in the hands of an agent and join her and her daughters in Brighton. Hurrish's boys are growing up to be good men like their father, and there is said to be "kindliness, faith and purity" in abundance in Ireland, qualities which might win out over "politics – of any complexion" (p. 196) in some distant future.

The landlords in Letitia MacClintock's *A Boycotted Household* (1881) are also portrayed as good and innocent people. The main landlord character in the novel, Mr Hamilton, is said to be an indulgent landlord, a good magistrate, and an active poor-law guardian. He has paid his way until the year 1879, when a bad harvest impoverished the country and agitators advised tenants not to pay their rent. There was no reason why the tenants on his estate should not pay, "for the land was let low, and most of the holdings were of good size; but the Land League was very active in the part of the country where Castle Hamilton was situated" (p. 13). As the Hamiltons no longer have any income, their financial situation is becoming precarious.

Several other landlords, from different parts of the country, are portrayed in

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[78] Emily Lawless was a confirmed Unionist; but despite her avowedly conservative outlook, she sometimes reveals that she is angered by, and holds England guilty for much of, Ireland's misery. See the Lecky Correspondence, Trinity College Dublin, MS.639.

[79] Quoted in Cahalan, *The Irish Novel,* p. 80.

[80] The *New Ireland Review*, volume III (March–August 1895), p. 127.

MacClintock's novel. Phil Montmorency lives in Co. Mayo, where the Land League has a firm grip on the countryside. Montmorency has strong views as to his duties as landlord, and one of his principles is never to be away from his estate for more than one month at a time. It has been impossible to find reliable biographical details of Letitia MacClintock, but the narrator in her novel supplies a perspective which is obviously that of an Anglo-Irish landlord. Without irony we are told that Montmorency has always tried to teach his tenants "industry, thrift and cleanliness", and that "he built them a bathhouse, although nobody was adventurous enough to take a warm bath" (p. 89). There was a time when Phil Montmorency used to say that nothing would tempt him to be an absentee landlord; but the situation in Mayo has become so intolerable that he would, indeed, leave Ireland if he had the money to do so. Yet another landlord family in the novel, the Harveys of Ardnamona, are in a better position than the other two families, as they receive their rents. The reason for this, we are told by the son of the house, is that theirs is sufficiently Protestant a neighbourhood for the Land League not to become too influential. The first John Harvey received his charter from Queen Elizabeth as a reward for services rendered to her in her wars with the rebel Irish: the family have thus lived at Ardnamona for many generations. The Roman Catholics, or Irish, and the Protestants, or Scotch and English, of the neighbourhood live side by side; and when agitators let them alone, they are said to amalgamate pretty well. The present Sir John Harvey is portrayed as a very benign landlord: he has allowed four people in the village to live on in Harvey houses for two or three years without paying rent, although, the narrator tells us, "Mr Parnell would no doubt call him one of the tyrant landlords" (p. 174). Letters from friends and newspapers make it impossible for the Harveys to be unaware of the claustrophobic atmosphere experienced by most other landlords in the country.

Bitterness towards the Irish as well as towards the English is clearly expressed in *A Boycotted Household.* The Anglo-Irish landlords have been let down by their tenants but also by the English. The solution to their predicament suggested in the novel is rather vague. In the short term, the Hamiltons decide to turn to the Orange Emergency Committee, which sends workers to help landlords all over Ireland. In the long term, Mr Hamilton's wishful thinking appears rather naïve: he hopes that when times are better, the people will realize that the advice given to them by Mr Parnell is wrong. In passing, another alternative is suggested for the Irish landlords: they should pack up and go to America, where they should found a colony. England would have no bitterer foes than the wronged and ousted expropriated Irish landlords.

In another novel by Letitia MacClintock, *The March of Loyalty* (1884), we meet Mr Verschoyle, a landlord who attends conscientiously to matters of importance to his class. Mr Verschoyle is "a good country gentleman, attend[s] board meetings at the work house; [is] an active and severe magistrate, never absent

from the Bench of Petty Sessions; and an autocratic but not unfair landlord; a great stickler for the respect due to his order; in fine, a man whose opinion [is] esteemed on all public matters" (p. 7). Despite all the virtues listed, Mr Verschoyle is an entirely unsympathetic character. Everyone in his household is subject to his bad temper. He openly shows his disgust with his son, young Archdale, who is not sufficiently intelligent to pass the examination for entering the army despite having attempted it three times. Verschoyle is also keen to find faults with his wife, even though she is an excellent woman and housekeeper. However, the focus of the novel is on the local rector's family and as Verschoyle is not a main character in the novel, there are no conclusions to be drawn from it as regards the landlord class in the same way as in MacClintock's earlier novel.

In *The Lloyds of Ballymore* (1890), Edith Rochfort writes about landlord issues in more detail than MacClintock in *The March of Loyalty.* The setting of Rochfort's novel is one of Ireland's midland counties, and it opens on the last day of 1881. According to historical accounts, the year 1882 began – if possible – more gloomily in Ireland than its predecessor had done. Though the Land League was suppressed, and its chief leaders in prison, the condition of the country was worse than ever, and seemed to become more and more hopelessly disorganized day by day. A Land Act had introduced judicial fixing of rents in 1881, and a "No Rent Manifesto" had been issued by the imprisoned Nationalist leaders. This caused considerable financial hardship to many landlords. In *Twilight of the Ascendancy*, Bence-Jones mentions a Co. Down landlord as an example. After the Government Commissioners imposed a rent reduction in the summer of 1882 of as much as thirty per cent, he was left with no income at all after mortgage interest and other charges had been paid. There were many similar cases among landlords whose estates were heavily encumbered, and many of them faced financial ruin (pp. 39–40). Furthermore, now that there was no longer a Land League, the secret societies had it all their own way, and outrages multiplied alarmingly in all parts of the island.

The first scene of *The Lloyds of Ballymore* is strikingly similar to the one in MacClintock's *A Boycotted Household.* The Lloyds are facing financial ruin because no rents are forthcoming. Mr Lloyd is rather a weak character but he is much loved by his family. He is presented as a good landlord in that he is loath to evict his non-paying tenants. The only son of the family, Tom, is no stronger than his father. He is surprised when he finds out about their financial problems and readily admits to not being able to understand "these things". Tom has nothing much to think about except hunting and shooting. His way of life, and the life of the landlord class in general, is criticized by one character in the novel, the Major, who claims:

> The country would not have come to the pass it has if the Irish country gentlemen had had an ounce of sense, and, instead of making eldest sons of young fellows who would

> come in for perhaps fifteen or eighteen hundred a year, had sent them into business or a profession, instead of hanging on at home idling, riding their horses, smoking their cigars, on means that compel them to rack-rent their unfortunate tenants. (pp. 159–160)

Eventually Mr Lloyd's increasingly bad finances force him to go ahead with the eviction of a non-paying tenant. By setting an example, he hopes to make the other tenants realize the severity of the situation so that they will settle their debts. No rents are paid, however, and by his action Mr Lloyd signs his own death sentence. Again, Tom is unable to understand what is happening around him. He expresses his total incomprehension that their "own people", to whom his father had shown so much goodness, could kill him. The tenantry does not attend Mr Lloyd's funeral, which is another blow to Tom. The first volume – the novel has two volumes – of *The Lloyds of Ballymore* ends with the end of the Lloyds as a family of landlords. They are forced to sell Ballymore and move to Dublin to live in poor circumstances on Tom's salary from the bank where he has managed to secure a job thanks to his connections.

Tom is an arrogant and spoilt young man, and in the first volume of the novel he is presented in rather an unsympathetic way. In the second volume he lives in humble circumstances in Dublin, and his personality changes for the better. He regrets his previous way of life: "It doesn't do to live as I did, for nothing in the world but amusing myself" (p. 22 vol. 2). There are several similarities in setting and plot between MacClintock's *A Boycotted Household* and Rochfort's *The Lloyds of Ballymore*, but the perspective is quite different. It would have been interesting to know a possible, however hypothetical, reason for this. Unfortunately, it has been impossible to find reliable biographical details for either novelist.

Criticism of landlord sons is a theme that appears in several novels. Sir Herbert Considine's son in Jane Barlow's *The Founding of Fortunes* is a gambler, and his father's already crippled resources deteriorate further through his reckless habits. As I have already mentioned, Willy in *An Irish Cousin* and Kit in *The Big House of Inver* are little improvement on their fathers. In another Somerville and Ross novel, *The Real Charlotte,* Christopher is a more passive waster than these two; but his passivity is so severe that he provides no hope for the future. Arthur Hamilton, landlord son in MacClintock's *A Boycotted Household,* is another example of an unsuitable elder son, as is Richard in *Mount Music* by Somerville and Ross who, "pursuing the usual course of Irish eldest sons, had adopted the profession least adapted for young men of small means, and large spending capacity, and had gone into his father's old regiment". Another son has "with the special predisposition of his family towards financial failure, selected the profession of land-agent, in a country in which peasant-proprietorship was already in the air, and would soon be an accomplished fact" (p. 38).

The choice of career by landlord sons was largely about consolidating social position. In *The Decline of the Big House in Ireland*, Terence Dooley has looked into the occupations chosen by younger sons of Irish landlords and claims that – out of a total of 163 younger sons from the 100 sample families of his study on whom information was available – seventy-five per cent chose an army or naval career. A private income was a precondition for a military career; but even when the Irish landlords began to fall on hard times from the late 1870s, they and their sons continued to go into army or navy. The importance of social connections outweighed the poor army pay that had to be supplemented by allowances from the family estate to cover the expenses for uniform, horses etc. Apart from the army and navy, Irish landlords and their sons filled other important positions in the service of the state. Long after the home civil service, the army, the navy and the law had been taken over by the middle classes, the Foreign Service remained the stronghold of the landed classes. The Church too supplied an occupational outlet for younger sons. Land agency provided a further career option for landlords' sons. A land agent was quite independent in the day-to-day running of the estate. His social standing in rural society was enhanced by his right to replace an absent landlord as resident magistrate or grand juror (Dooley, pp. 74–77).

Having spent some time in India, Malachi Malone in E. C. Jeffreys's *An Irish Landlord and an English M. P.* (1890) comes back home to take over the family estate. His friend, the English M. P. Cyril Armitage, accompanies him with the purpose of studying Ireland. In this way, the novel is provided with many opportunities for the narrator and the characters to comment on the situation in the country and on the Irish people. The narrator tells us that "the utter hopelessness of everything, the misery, the squalor and, more than all, the passive resistance to all suggestions of improvements" affect Malachi Malone. Armitage's suggestion to his friend that the people could be "raised, their moral tone elevated" is rejected by Malone. It might work in England but not in Ireland (p. 33). The outlook presented in Jeffreys's novel is pessimistic in every conceivable way. There is not much hope left for any solution at the close of the novel. Malachi has been shot dead, his sister has married the Englishman and the estate has been taken over by a Malone from America, who does not believe in Irish property as an investment.

Many of the fictional landlord sons are sent to school in England or are, like Malachi Malone, absent from Ireland during long periods of time for other reasons. At times the reader is encouraged to draw the conclusion that this may have something to do with their lack of knowledge of the situation in Ireland. The narrator in *Mount Music* by Somerville and Ross states that Larry, the young landlord of Coppinger's Court, knows no more of Ireland than a boy can learn in his school holidays (p. 251). Christian Talbot-Lowry certainly seems to think she knows more, and better, than Larry does, as she has not been educated in

England and spent the past four years in France. On one occasion, when discussing politics, Christian mocks her cousin; "I may have been stuck down here in a hole! [...] but anyhow, I haven't lived in England and lost my eye!" (p. 117). Later, when Larry has committed himself to Home Rule politics, she tells him, "I'm *not* a Home Ruler, as it happens. I've no breadth of outlook! *I* haven't been in France for four years!" (p. 196). Milly, daughter of Mr Lloyd of Ballymore in Edith Rochfort's novel, is more aware of what is happening in Ireland than her brother Tom. She expresses her views to a friend of Tom's and is ready to admit that the landlords have brought some of their present trouble on themselves by negligence and apathy. She goes as far as thinking that it may be rightful to consider giving the land back to the Irish peasantry, as it was taken from them by force (p. 103). *The Lloyds of Ballymore* is quite even-handed in the way it portions out the blame for what is happening; the landlords have to take their fair share, as does the Government for allowing things to go unchecked for so long. The Land League is not the only culprit, and the representative of the Land League, Tim Cormack, is not an altogether unpleasant character despite being a murderer.

Tom Lloyd in Edith Rochfort's *The Lloyds of Ballymore* is one of several representatives of a landlord family forced by circumstances to look for an alternative way of living. In Erminda Rentoul Esler's novel *The Wardlaws* (1896) and in C. M. MacSorley's *Nora* (n. d. [1908]), two young girls have to support themselves. Margery Wardlaw has lost her parents and her stepmother and is responsible for the upbringing of her infant half-brother. The Wardlaws' castle and valuable possessions are long gone. In fact they are so poor that "they haven't even a blissed debt left" (p. 9), in part because Margery's mother was too charitable; she went as far as tearing up the oak floors of the castle to make coffins for the victims of the Famine. Margery's choices as to providing an income for herself and her brother are limited. She decides to set up a grocery shop in the front room of the house where she lives. Margery manages quite well and enjoys many aspects of her new life, such as "reckoning the economies" (p. 110).

In C. M. MacSorley's *Nora,* Nora O'Callaghan's forefathers have been spendthrifts. Her father does his best to pay his way in life by selling a silver tankard or two, but he runs out of credit. The O'Callaghans have to leave Rathcallaghan House. When Nora's father has died in lodgings in Dublin, Nora obtains a position in an English family as a governess. By coincidence, since one of the children falls ill and needs to recuperate in fresh Irish air, the family ends up renting Rathcallaghan House. Nora is very happy to be back in her home albeit as a governess. When she is married, her husband buys Rathcallaghan House for her as a wedding present. He is not interested in the land, however, as he is going to become a writer. Furthermore, everyone has told him that "there were bad times coming for Irish landlords" (p. 156).

Sir Thaddeus Munfort in Ella MacMahon's *The Job* (1914) tackles the situation he is in actively. Most of the land around Mount Pleasant had belonged to him and his forefathers for generations, as the Munforts came over with Cromwell, and although he has had to sell the greater part of it to his tenants, his love for it is not quenched. He creates an alternative way of making a living in the town of Ballymaclashin by setting up a carpet-factory. The carpets are much admired by Lady Hexham and her niece, Ria, in a shop in London where they meet Thady. Ria lives with her uncle, Lord Hexham, and takes a typewriting course to be able to help him in his work. Thady as well as Ria want to pay their way in life, and it comes as no surprise to the reader when these two people fall in love.

In a late novel, *An Enthusiast* (1921), Somerville and Ross portray another active landlord who has lost most of his land. Tellingly, the first scene describes a sick man, Dan Palliser, looking out through the window at his father's funeral. The old era, represented by Colonel Palliser, is buried in a coffin covered by the Union Jack. Dan, who is recuperating from influenza, has opted out of Cambridge and spent two years at an agricultural college. He wants to stay in farming and is convinced that he will make a go of farming the demesne. He is very keen to try out the new ideas he learnt at college. In his view, the way of calming the unrest in Ireland is "by means of continuous cropping" and "by engrossing her superfluous energies in milk records" (p. 54). Dan is so earnest in the pursuit of his dream of setting up a co-op that he cannot see the irony in the idea of attempting to establish co-operation by means of separators. He seems to speak with Horace Plunkett when he proclaims: "Prosperity is what will bring peace! [...] And education! To knock the riches that are in it out of the land – to teach the children to look ahead and forget the past [...]" (p. 41). Horace Plunkett, an Anglo-Irish liberal Unionist landlord, educated in England, was the social reformer who, in 1888, set about establishing a rural self-help movement in Ireland centred around co-operative creameries. By exploiting the splits in the two Irish political parties, Plunkett managed to persuade the Parnellite Nationalists to join with the liberal Unionists in a demand for a Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction. An act was passed establishing the new department – the first Irish government department to be created that was independent of the inefficient administration in Dublin Castle – and Horace Plunkett became its Vice-President. While there are many similarities between Horace Plunkett and the fictional Dan Palliser, Dan is active on a smaller scale and at local level; he is the Vice-President of the Farmer's Society in Eskragh.[81] Through this position and through his seat on the Eskragh Rural District Council, Dan hopes to have the opportunity of persuading the farmers that he only has the good of the country in mind when he preaches co-operation in all its aspects: farm implements, materials and creameries. However, the narrator does not trust Dan to succeed but notes: "It is of no avail to record

[81] See also Chapter 4 under the subheading "Political Upstarts", pp. 214–25.

Dan's theories. There is little doubt that they were of the large and healthy family of platitudes and truisms, methods and principles, so correct and so obvious, that nothing could be less likely than that they should be put into practice" (p. 41).

Dan is an idealist who tries to live his ideals. He dedicates himself to Ireland; whatever he can do for his country he will do, but the Irish people sorely try his convictions and ideals. He makes many enemies, as did Plunkett, and when he falls in love with Car Ducarrig, his English tenant's wife, he is very tempted to leave Ireland and elope with her. He has had so many disappointments in his efforts to improve agriculture in his area that there is no enthusiasm at all left in the former enthusiast. The hopelessness of his situation is palpable. When he is shot at and killed in front of his own house, the reader is apt to feel that death was the only way out for this fictional landlord character.

While Dan Palliser takes an active part in working what is left of his land, the demesne, few other landlords seem to have any personal involvement in the work on their estates. Willy in *An Irish Cousin* by Somerville and Ross does have all outdoor affairs at Durrus under his control, though, the narrator informs us. "[A]t any time during the morning he might be seen tramping in and out of the stable or standing about the yard, giving orders and talking to the numerous workmen in a brogue in no way inferior to their own" (p. 59). However, his involvement in running the estate does not seem to be very time-consuming; he has plenty of time for his cousin. Of Pierce O'Brien in Lawless' s *Hurrish* it is said that he used to be out in the fields supervising his men, but that he no longer has anybody working for him because of Land League activities. Nelly's uncle in B. M. Croker's *Two Masters* (1890) has lost all his money but is, at least, out "in a dilapidated straw-hat and a shabby shooting-coat" superintending the collection of hay. Miss Coppinger of Coppinger's Court in *Mount Music* by Somerville and Ross is said to be very interested in farming, especially in its theoretical aspects. She reads agricultural papers avidly and believes all she reads to the extent that she accepts their advertisements with the enthusiasm of her religious beliefs. However, "[s]he was an incalculable force, with a disposition towards novelty, and novelty, especially if founded on theory, is abhorrent to such as old Johnny Galvin the steward, or Peter Flood the gardener, or, stiffest in her own conceit of all, Mrs. Twomey of the dairy" (p. 83). The swinging-balance for weighing the milk is a particularly detested innovation. The irony is even blunter as regards Larry Coppinger's involvement in farming. Outside the chapel one Sunday morning, Larry makes conversation with John Herlihy, one of the largest of his own late tenants, who is able to tell him that the corn he did not know he had had been threshed ten days earlier (p. 227). In Letitia MacClintock's *A Boycotted Household,* the whole family partakes hands-on in farmwork, but only because they have been boycotted and have no choice. However, Kerrigan and Sir Ben in Jane Barlow's novels partake voluntarily in the work on their model farm; but they are exceptions. The great

majority of the landlords in the novels of my study are curiously inactive when it comes to farming matters, and few have a reason as valid as that of Sir Benjamin in *The Real Charlotte*, who is physically as well as psychologically unfit because of his stroke. The inertia of Sir Benjamin's son Christopher is typical of the class as it is generally presented in the novels, irrespective of when the individual novel was written. In the early Somerville and Ross novel *An Irish Cousin,* Uncle Dominick spends his time in his room totally unaware of what is happening to Durrus. In Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September*, written nearly forty years later, Sir Richard does on one occasion go out to check the rain damage on his fields (p. 79); but his main occupation seems to be to act as a pleasant host at Danielstown.

Several novels suggest that instead of taking part in the running of their estates, the landowning class kept itself occupied by hunting and shooting. Some novels, such as those by Dorothea Conyers (wife of a younger son of the Castletown Conyers of Co. Limerick) have buying, selling and maintaining horses as their main theme. In *B.E.N.* (1919), horses take priority over the thought of war, as "war's alarms were little heeded in the country in July, 1914, and the men who strolled into the sunlight thought more of a colt foal by Baraldach than of the cloud hanging over nations" (p. 5). In *Anglo-Irish*, Julian Moynahan suggests that in the 1890s, when the traditional authority of the landlords was increasingly undermined, many landlords resumed hunting with an enthusiasm that was perhaps obsessive:

> [Hunting] masked a nostalgia for dominance that would never again be satisfied in reality. Similarly for the Anglo-Irish cult of the horse and the hound: the horse, perpetually and everywhere symbolizing lordship, but nowhere more than in Ireland, becomes an end in itself when there are no more genuine lords. The hound, typifying fidelity, replaces the human "villein" in a fossilized survival of an old feudal bond requiring a servility that was always more wished for than real, and which dogs can be trained to supply on demand. (pp. 191–92)

Some of the novelists themselves participated vigorously in the sporting life. Somerville and Ross were fearless horsewomen and devoted to hunting. Somerville was in fact Master of Fox Hounds of West Carberry, a particularly great honour for a woman. Ross, like the character Francie in *The Real Charlotte,* had a serious fall from a horse, although Ross survived. The cousins portray several "half-sirs" like Willy and Kit, who spend their time with dogs and horses. Florry Knox of their R. M. stories is another, and striking, example.[82] Tom Lloyd of *The Lloyds of Ballymore* by Edith Rochfort also spends his life hunting and shooting,

[82] Somerville and Ross, *Some Experiences of an Irish R. M.* (1899), *Further Experiences of an Irish R. M.* (1908) and *In Mr Knox's Country* (1915). All three were issued as *The Irish R. M. Complete* in 1928. The stories are loosely bound together by common characters, one of them being the R. M. himself, Major Sinclair Yeates. An R. M., or Resident Magistrate, was a paid judicial officer whose duty it was to visit honorary benches, sit with the J. P.s, the unpaid justices of peace, stiffen them with his support, advise them on legal points, and generally see to it that their administration was free from local prejudice.

until disaster strikes and he has to work for a living. Girls are not excepted from taking an interest in horses and hunting in the novels. Jerry in B. M. Croker's *Beyond the Pale* (1896) lives with her stepfather, a detestable bully, in rather 'low' circumstances. Her own class, however, is evident from the way she is able to deal with horses: she is "as thoroughbred as the magnificent animal she rides" (p. 89). Several other heroines are judged by their riding ability. Christian in *Mount Music* by Somerville and Ross is spoken of with admiration by the farmers because of her "sate" on her horse (p. 176), while Doctor Mangan's daughter, Miss Letitia or Tishy, has a crooked seat and a heavy hand on the curb (p. 51).

It cannot be denied that there is a distinct ambience of doom permeating the landlord class in the novels of my study. The landlords in general are portrayed as benign but ineffectual. They are seldom actively involved with the running of their estates, and many seem more interested in hunting and shooting than in estate management. Their estates are impoverished and most of the Big Houses are dilapidated. Before the 1903 Wyndham Act, more than twenty years of reduced or uncertain rents had caused the landlord class to feel the pinch, which is clearly reflected in the novels. The role of the heir was not an enviable one. In the fictional texts the future hope of landlordism in Ireland, the heirs of the estates, does not afford much ground for optimism; they emigrate, start a new life in Dublin or die. Jane Barlow's novels, perhaps the most optimistic ones of my study, suggest that the survival of the landlord class will be possible by means of cooperation with the peasantry, while in some novels intermarriage is suggested – and rejected – as a way of overcoming the impasse. In Letitia MacClintock's *A Boycotted Household*, Mr Hamilton expresses the hope that everything will improve when times are financially better and the Irish come to their senses. In Mrs H. H. Penrose's *Burnt Flax*, Sir Richard's successor, Colonel Fitzpatrick, leaves the country when an attempt has been made on his life; but his daughter and her husband come back. Thirty years later they have replaced the disgraceful hovels on the estate and set up a model dairy farm. Despite these attempts at perceiving a silver lining, the general outlook for the landlord class presented by the fictional works is exceedingly bleak. The blame for this is equally distributed by Protestant women novelists: to the landlords themselves, to England, but above all to the Land League and later agrarian agitations, which led the Irish people astray. It is interesting to note that Protestant writers seem more inclined to be critical in their representation of the English than their upper- middle-class Catholic counterparts. In his survey of Irish Catholic writing, James H. Murphy observes that when English characters are involved in a situation entailing unjust accusations against someone Irish, they are excused as being misguided or naïve, whereas a member of the Protestant Ascendancy in similar circumstances is seen as corrupt. English participation in Irish affairs does not meet with the same opprobrium in Catholic novels as does that of the Protestant Ascendancy (p. 20).

Encounters between landlords and tenants

Did the landlord's position isolate him in rural society, or was there any occasion when landlords and tenants would meet, except to attend to business matters? The fact that the landlord owned the land naturally set him apart from his tenant. Furthermore, to have owned the same land for generations conferred gentility on its owner – he belonged to 'the ould stock' – and this entailed social as well as political responsibilities. Irish landlords were different in other respects than regarding their relation to the land; they were, for example, generally Protestants while their tenants were predominantly Catholics. There is no doubt that rich Protestant landlords, with their English manner of speech, must have seemed rather alien to their tenants; but although landlords and tenants kept their distance socially, there were occasions when they did come together.

In *Twilight of the Ascendancy*, Mark Bence-Jones writes of Willy Bence-Jones whose coming-of-age, together with the marriage of his sister, was celebrated in 1878 at a dinner given by his parents at Lisselane, a Big House in the style of a French chateau in Co. Cork. Some forty or fifty tenants sat down in the dining room, the family silver was all out, and the dinner "very much as if prepared for gentlemen" (p. 10). Although, as Bence-Jones points out, relations between landlords and tenants were never quite the same after the Land War, celebrations for the heir's coming of age continued, and illuminated addresses were prepared for landlords on occasions such as marriage as late as 1902, when the Earl of Arran was presented with one by his tenants (p. 41).

In *An Irish Cousin* (1889) by Somerville and Ross, a twenty-fifth-birthday celebration is organized for another Willy, the heir of Durrus. This fictional celebration is less lavish than the one portrayed by Bence-Jones. However, it gives a vivid impression of a feudal Ireland. Theo – Willy's cousin from Canada – does not recognize many of the people present, but the attendance of men, women and children is impressive. A great glowing mound of a turf bonfire has been set up outside the front gate in the middle of the road, and bagpipes are "squealing". When Willy and Theo appear through the gate, the men initiate a big cheer. After several speeches in honour of Willy, the dancing commences. The celebration is a great success until Brian, the gate-keeper, has a little bit too much to drink from the barrel of porter Willy has sent as his contribution to the festivities. The night ends on an unpleasant note when Willy refuses to dance with Brian's daughter (pp. 161–65). Bonfires such as this one for Willy were a common part of every kind of celebration in Ireland at the time; another is lit for Gerald in C. M. MacSorley's *An Irish Cousin* (n. d. [1901]), when it has become known that he has inherited Creevemore. The occasion requires Gerald, a young boy, to speak, and he goes out to address the "boys" – some of whom are, in fact, grey-headed men.

Funerals were other occasions for landlords and tenants to get together. In *An*

Enthusiast (1921) by Somerville and Ross, the old Colonel has died. His son, Dan Palliser, is not able to participate in the funeral but watches the gathering from his upstairs window. Dan's mother and his cousin, Eileen Caulfield, stand in an open space behind the coffin, surrounded by a number of top-hats representing Dan's male relations. Thronging around these top-hats are the men and women who had been Colonel Palliser's tenants. There is a hearse; but it is filled with flowers only, for "the men who had been his tenants had claimed the right to carry to his grave the man who had been their landlord" (p. 4). As the bearers brace themselves to their load and start, the *caoine*, the Irish cry, rises from the hooded tenant-women. Dan, feeble because of illness, is physically affected by it. The keening is like a stab of actual pain to him, and yet he thinks "gloryingly": "They haven't given us up yet! They know our hearts are Irish, even though our name isn't!" (p. 4).

In a letter to Edith Somerville written in August 1888, Martin Ross tells of attending the funeral of one of the estate workers at Ross, Tom Walsh. Her account of his illness and death says something about the intimacy that could exist between estate workers and their landlord families:

> Mama and I have been with him a good deal, and small trouble it was, it being a treat to talk to him. He died unexpectedly and on Friday last did not know anyone – not his own children – till Mama went in – "do you know me Tom" she said stooping over him, "Mrs. Martin" he said with a smile of the gentlest kind – and then relapsed into mutterings to himself. He died early next morning [...] On Monday he was buried and we all went to his funeral, despite the fact that he was a Delegate of the National League, at least I went a bit of the way – the funeral passed our gate and I waited there with a cross of white asters and ferns, while the others drove up to meet it. It was horrible when it did come – two or three hundred people straggling along – lots of them drunk – the coffin in the cart – and Tom's daughters sitting on the coffin – as it is always done here [...] There was a sort of howl when the cart stopped at the gate, but the Irish cry was mostly done with by that time – I put the cross on the coffin and walked half a mile or so with Tom's son [...].[83]

Farming societies provided a more everyday opportunity for landlords and some of their tenants to meet other than for birthdays and funerals. They were likely to be members of the same local farming societies, the landlord in the capacity of President or in some other exalted position. In *An Enthusiast*, Colonel Palliser, Dan's father, has in his day been the President of the Agricultural Society of Eskragh, where many of his tenants have attended meetings. As an office or privilege that has been held by a father is felt to be the lawful due of his heir, the Presidentship passes almost automatically to his son. Dan, who is an ex-British officer, son of a landlord and a loyalist, is "placed unquestioningly on the box seat of a coach

[83] Lewis, ed., *The Selected Letters of Somerville and Ross*, p. 117.

whose officials and passengers [are] theoretically antagonistic to him on almost every point of conduct, religion, and politics" (p. 62). Some of them have been tenants once but are so no longer. Instead a new, totally different type of tenant is about to appear on the scene. The death duties after the Colonel's death are substantial and it is not possible to manage them without letting the Big House, Monalour. Dan and his mother move into the Lake House, formerly the agent's home, and a tenant from England moves into Monalour.

Some novels set in the North portray 12 July celebrations, and this is a day when Protestants of all classes come together while Catholics also have their part to play. Even though different social classes do socialize, the occasion displays the gap between the two religious communities more than anything else. Colonel Bob Ward in F. E. Crichton's *The Soundless Tide* (1911) is to deliver the speech to commemorate the day. The banners are flaunting in the sunshine, and when the Colonel and the party from Ballylissan House take their places on the platform there is a great roar of cheering. Mary Ellen, a villager who comes from a family of staunch Protestants, is in the crowd. She is in love with a Catholic man who, although "on the other side", comes to the celebrations as well, but with a different purpose from Mary Ellen's. In Letitia MacClintock's *A March of Loyalty* (1884), Mr Verschoyle of the Hall does not take part in the celebrations as he is not an Orangeman himself. However, the Rector's daughter Nichola Deverell is there with her father's curate, and there is a great mix of people. When the procession comes, half the village rushes to gaze at it in admiration and delight while the other half looks askance and frowns. As in *9*, the day ends in stone-throwing. The drum and other instruments fall down on the road, men swarm over the field and two prostrate figures are left on the ground, surrounded by crying girls.

Charity events, bazaars and garden fêtes also provide opportunities for different classes of the rural society to spend time together. In B. M. Croker's *A Nine Days' Wonder* (1905), Mrs Doran of the Big House organizes a concert for the poor in the parish. Mary, a poor but beautiful girl, sings at it and is much admired by Ulick, Mrs Doran's son; but when he looks around at the surrounding faces of grooms, gardeners and labouring men, he realizes that she is "one of them". The irony is that she is in fact a changeling and of far nobler birth than Ulick himself. At a "mixed concert" in *Mount Music* (1919) by Somerville and Ross, Mrs St George is indignant when it is decided that "God Save the King" is not to be played. This is a concession to the Gaelic Leaguers, who occupy the sixpenny seats and may cause a row if the Unionists insist on the anthem. The parochial concert at Letter Kyle in another Somerville and Ross novel, *The Silver Fox*, "was neither more or less than such entertainments are wont to be. Lady Susan, in her gorgeous *sortie-de-bal*, sat in the front row and carried on a conversation with Mr. Glasgow that, thanks to the vigour of her lungs, was quite unhampered by

the effort of the performers [...]". Slaney, the protagonist, is "inured to parochial concerts" and is more polite than the other characters (p. 95).

In Ella MacMahon's *The Job* (1914), the Duke and Duchess of Castlemore do a fair bit of handshaking at their annual garden party. The Duchess finds the event utterly boring because she is never really happy except when feeding her hens (p. 143); but she does her duty and shakes two hundred and fifty hands in something under an hour and a half. In Somerville and Ross's *The Real Charlotte* (1894), Lady Dysart does not seem to look forward to her entertainment any more than the Duchess of Castlemore does in *The Job*. However, duty compels her to organize "two catholic and comprehensive entertainments" for her neighbours on a yearly basis. Lady Dysart is an Englishwoman, and as such "constitutionally unable to discern perfectly the subtle grades of Irish vulgarity"; but she is aware that many of the ladies on her visiting list are "vulgar". Charlotte Mullen, the tenant of Tally-Ho and later Gurthnamuckla, is probably no less vulgar than they, but she seems less dull. Lady Dysart's "serene radicalism" welcomes a woman who can talk to her "on spiritualism, on books, or indeed any current topic with a point and agreeability" (pp. 11–12). Charlotte is, in fact, not only a tenant but also a landlord. It is in her capacity of landlord that she visits Ferry Row where two or three householders pay rent to her.

Under normal circumstances, that is to say before the Land War, the payment of rent was quite a public affair. Rents were paid twice a year, either in a local hotel or in the landlord's study where he kept a rent table, a piece of furniture found in many Irish country houses, specifically for the purpose. This habit became obsolete during the Land War when some landlords received no rents at all. Landlords of impeccable Celtic-Irish descent suffered no less than Protestant Anglo-Irish landlords. As an example, Mark Bence-Jones mentions the armless and legless Arthur MacMorrough Kavanagh, who had taught himself to ride, shoot and sail his yacht. He had a close relationship with his tenants and used to sit under an oak tree in the courtyard of his Big House, with his pet bear chained nearby, and receive anybody who came to see him. His rents were stopped by the League but some of his tenants paid him in the darkness of the night, or sent him the money by letter from a far-away post-office (*The Twilight of the Ascendancy*, pp. 11, 30). The few tenants who come to pay their rents in the novels also do so in secret. Two of Mr Hamilton's tenants – or rather their wives – in Letitia McClintock's *A Boycotted Household* (1881) sneak into Castle Hamilton to pay the rents they owe, perhaps not so much out of love for their landlord as from superstition. The fact that the wrong person has been murdered, and that the murderer dies while his house burns down, is taken by them as a sign that an evil act has been committed; by paying, they try to make amends for their part in it. However, they do not want any receipt as they are afraid that other tenants may find out that they have paid. Tenants have been known to be beaten to death for

paying their rents, we are told. Hurrish in Emily Lawless' *Hurrish* (1886) chooses to approach his landlord, Pierce O'Brien, stealthily in the woods, where he pays the full rent without any reduction and even before it is due.

Tenants may come to the Big House on errands, even though they are not paying their rent. Mrs Pat Gegan in Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September* (1929), for example, comes down to talk about the apples with Lady Naylor; but social visits are, with the exception of Charlotte's to Bruff, a rarity. However, visits by members of the landlord's household, albeit not by the landlord himself, to the tenants' cottages are more frequent in the novels. Mr Montmorency and Marda, who are staying with the Naylors in *The Last September,* call at Dannie's cottage when they are out walking. When tenants are sick, the ladies of the Big House bring a basket of food and keep an eye on the patient. Ellen Hamilton in Letitia MacClintock's *A Boycotted Household* visits Matt Riley's wife every day when she is sick, and Ellen's mother sends her the wine that is the only thing she can take. Ellen has also taken it upon herself to have a writing school for the tenants. She gives her second last dress to Rhoda Riley, and the Riley family has received many similar "kindnesses" from their landlord throughout the years. Matt Riley assures Ellen that the Hamiltons have been "father" to the Rileys for generations and that he would be prepared to shed his heart's blood for them.

The charity visits to the cottages are not always appreciated. In Mrs H. H. Penrose's *Burnt Flax* (1914), the orator from the Land League blackens Miss Fitzpatrick because she goes around to the cottages acting "Miss Bountiful". She sometimes burdens Maurice, the agent and her fiancé, with a basket of food to be delivered to one of the tenants. On one of these occasions, he meets with Anastasia in her cottage. Anastasia looks after two elderly and sick relatives on her own and cannot possibly pay the rent. Maurice deals with the problem by giving of his own money to Anastasia so that she will be able to pay. It may seem too idealistic to ring true, but according to Bence-Jones it was not unknown for similar things to happen in reality (*Twilight of the Ascendancy*, p. 25). On one estate in Co. Mayo, tenants who were not able to pay their rent would ask their landlord's wife for "a loan". In this case, the lady dispensed the loans with her husband's connivance. However, Robert Cole Bowen, Elizabeth Bowen's grandfather, who was "as sharp as a fox and as hard as iron", never knew that his wife sometimes waited on rent days "inside the door to the passage, to slip the required sum, from her own pocket, into some hand that came empty and damp with fear". Robert's eldest daughter, Sarah, used to be sent out to collect the rents on the out-lying farms; but, as she said to Elizabeth Bowen, hard cases so much softened her feeling that she could not continue to press for what was due and she would be "crying with fear" on the way home at the thought of facing her father.[84]

[84] Elizabeth Bowen, *Bowen's Court & Seven Winters* (London: Vintage, 1999 [1942]), pp. 363–64.

Tenants' cottages are sometimes places of refuge from bad weather for members of the landlord family. Ulick in B. M. Croker's *A Nine Days' Wonder* (1905) finds it difficult to light his pipe in the wind and goes into the Foley cottage to do it. Here he meets Mary, with whom he is later to fall in love. He gives her mother a "fine dog" during one of his visits. The Foleys, like so many other tenant families, seem to have their doors open for anybody to enter. In another novel by B. M. Croker, *Beyond the Pale* (1896), Denis Mooney is of the landlord class only to the extent that his family has rented the local castle. He spends a long time inside the Shea cabin, listening to a "lawless old poacher woman" telling stories about a boycotted farm and the O'Bierne family (p. 25). Willy and his cousin in *An Irish Cousin* by Somerville and Ross are out ferreting when they are overcome by rain and take shelter in the Sweeny cabin. Mrs Sweeny is most hospitable and makes place for them by shooing away the calf and the hens while offering them some milk to drink. One of the children is sick and Willy volunteers a ticket for the doctor, but Mrs Sweeny declines. Instead, Willy and his cousin receive gifts from their hostess. She takes down a bowl from her dresser and hands it and its contents, eight beautiful pullet's eggs, to Willy.

Generosity between landlords and tenants could seemingly be displayed in two directions and not only fictionally, a fact that Martin Ross was to be made aware of in 1888 when she and Mrs Martin moved back to Ross. The estate had been taken by a tenant on a fifteen-year lease in 1873 at Mr Martin's death. Ross had fallen into bad repair and Mrs Martin and her daughter volunteered to go back and head the first work-party. They got by very much on the charity of old servants and tenants, a curious reversal of the usual image of the landlord women as charity workers among 'their people'. In a letter to Edith Somerville dated 27 June 1888, Martin Ross writes:

> The tenants have been very good about coming and working here for nothing – except their dinners – and a great deal has been done by them. It is of course gratifying, but in a way very painful, and makes one want money more than anything. The son of Tom Walsh, the carpenter, has been making a sort of hanging cupboard for me, also all for love. He was a little embarrassing as he is a very smart person, went to America, and was a conductor in a Pullman, then engine driver on the Grand Trunk and so on. He now keeps a pub in Galway and is a most dashing young man with a curled moustache and a yachting cap. However he is still the same Johnny Walsh whom Charley and I used to beat with sticks till he was 'near dead' as he himself says proudly.[85]

In a letter dated some days later, 9 July, Ross also tells Somerville about receiving

[85] Lewis, ed., *The Selected Letters of Somerville and Ross*, pp. 80–81. In the same letter Martin Ross is reminded of Durrus (*An Irish Cousin*) when she looks at the dilapidation of Ross. "The hot house is like the Durrus one – only more so. It is a sloping bank of vines. The melon pit rears a grove of nettles with great care [...] Everything wants repairing, papering, painting – and there is no money to do it [...]" (p. 78).

"embarrassing" presents: "about 6 pounds of butter, about 4 dozens of eggs, a chicken, a lot of white cabbage and a bottle of port – all from different tenants, some very poor". All of these presents had to be received with "a due amount of conversation". Martin and her mother, perhaps to reciprocate for all the help they received, invited the National School teacher and twelve of her best scholars to come for tea on the lawn and races afterwards one Saturday in July. However, the party was boycotted; Nurse Barrett thought the priest had vetoed it, and Ross had to go around to some "loyal" villages to ask some other children to come. Eventually, there was "great hilarity" after all.[86]

In the novels, the children of landlords and the children of tenants sometimes grow up in close proximity to each other – at least when it comes to activities out of doors. Thomond, the nephew and heir of the landlord in Emily Lawless' *Hurrish*, always came to his uncle as a child, where he "danced jigs with the maid-servants; made bonfires on all the hills around; visited every wake, faction-fight, and wedding he could hear of in the neighbourhood" (p. 120). Hurrish, the tenant, Thomond and O'Brien also used to go fishing together. Captain Boyd in Mabel Morley's *Boycotted* (1889) has been very friendly with Thady – now a Land Leaguer – since they were boys. Nancy, thirteen years old, and Gerald, ten years old and the landlord-to-be, in C. M. MacSorley's *An Irish Cousin* befriend a poor boy, Paddy Mulligan, who is brought up to the Big House on some occasions. Gerald goes to the Mulligan cottage only once, to speak to Paddy's grandfather on his deathbed. Together, Nancy and Gerald visit the village school. Nancy does not appear to be the least shy. She is quite pleased to look at the copies which, by Miss Flanagan's direction, a few of the best barefooted little scholars bring up to show her, and to praise the neat sewing which some of the little girls have done.

When the landlord's male children grow up, other ways of associating with the tenantry become a temptation. However, as Mark Bence-Jones points out *In the Twilight of the Ascendancy*, Ascendancy morals were improved by Evangelicalism; and those who were undeterred by the sanctions of religion generally felt constrained to go to Paris, London or at least Dublin for their amorous escapades. "Taking one's pleasure on the country", or even "sowing one's wild oats in one's own county town", came to be associated in the Ascendancy mind with people who had rather gone to seed, like Henry Briscoe of Tinvane. It was said of him that he dared not throw a stone at any child in the town of Carrick-on-Suir for fear it might be his own (p. 25). Neither Kit in *The Big House of Inver* nor Willy in *An Irish Cousin,* both novels by Somerville and Ross, is as prolific as Henry Briscoe, even though the two of them – and their estates – have indeed gone to seed. Kit Prendeville's has long been in decline. Several generations previous to Kit, Nicholas Prendeville married one of the gamekeeper's daughters while Nicholas' two

[86] Ibid., pp. 84–85.

sisters went off with two grooms. In this way, a decisive blow against the glories and greatness of Inver was struck. Five successive generations of mainly half-bred and wholly profligate Prendevilles rioted out their short lives in the Big House, living with countrywomen, drinking and gambling. Kit's father, Jas, spends a great deal of his time in the local public-house. "The Prendeville motto, '*Je prends*', had in Iveragh and Cloon received the sanction of centuries, and the Widow Hynes, owner of the public-house, was sufficiently mediaeval to enable her to accept with composure a certain Droit de Seigneur" (p. 23).[87] So it is that her daughter, Margaret, moves in with Jas in the old Tower of Inver where he keeps her in defiance of priest and parson. A daughter is born before Margaret dies. The daughter is christened Isabella but seldom called anything but Shibby Pindy, "Shibby" being the easy-going local diminutive of Isabella and "Pindy" a variant of the Prendeville name, which "as a matter of convenience, gradually had been accepted as a mode of distinguishing those of the family who were entitled to bear a bar-sinister on their scutcheons, from those on whom this distinction was not entailed" (p. 23). In his old age Jas marries a "good sensible lump of a girl" and sires a son, Kit, as well as a legitimate daughter. Jas's wife dies after a year or two, and Kit and his sister are looked after by Shibby. Kit follows in the footsteps of his Prendeville forebears, mixes with the locals and gets a village girl pregnant.

The relationship between the Prendevilles and the villagers is close, and the Prendevilles differ from landlord families in other novels in that they are completely isolated from their Anglo-Irish peers. Kit's father, Jas, made a conscious decision to avoid them when he was made a fool of at a ball after having drunk himself into a stupor. For this reason, the community in *The Big House of Inver* is distinguished from that in other Somerville and Ross novels, such as *The Real Charlotte, The Silver Fox, Mount Music* or *The Enthusiast.* It is much closer to the isolation of Durrus in the earlier novel, *An Irish Cousin.* Willy does mix with other local landlord families to some extent; but the isolation of his father, Dominick, from the world at large encourages corruption to fester. Dominick takes as his mistress Mad Moll, who believes herself to be an illegitimate daughter of an uncle of his, and is therefore possibly a cousin of Dominick's. When he marries a woman of his own class, she is turned out of the house and married to a tenant. Dominick's wife dies after having given birth to Willy, and Moll, who has given birth to a child around the same time, becomes Willy's foster mother. Moll's daughter falls in love with Willy, who may be her half-brother. During the course of the novel, she and Willy marry.

The hunting field was a place where landlords and a wide section of society

[87] Mark Bence-Jones claims that a present-day historian of Irish landlordism has found only one instance of *droit de seigneur* in the second half of the nineteenth century, the landlord in question being an obscure figure of the 1860s (*Twilight of the Ascendancy*, p. 25).

could meet. In the novels, doctors and priests are often said to join the hunt. In *The Silver Fox* (1898) by Somerville and Ross, the hunt consists of two old ladies, the doctor, farmers, Mr Glasgow and the police. The gentry, the clergy, the doctor, the hotel-owner and some of the farmers ride together in another novel by the cousins, *Mount Music*; but people are also needed to look after the horses and the hounds, and to heave the hounds over walls which they are unable to jump. Miss Coppinger makes the sweeping statement that she detests hunting in all its ramifications. "We are always told that its great merit is that it brings all classes together, she continued. In *my* opinion that is a very dubious advantage, if, indeed, it is not a drawback!" (p. 143).

The race meeting held by the Kildare Hunt at Punchestown Races provided an important date in the gentry's social calendar at the time, with the great houses of the neighbourhood filled with guests. These races were of the gentrified variety while local race meetings, sometimes held in conjunction with fairs, were simple affairs which brought the gentry and local people together. Similar arrangements occur in the fictional texts as well. For instance, the Clytagh races in *The Big House of Inver* are attended by countrymen, "the grabber's daughter" Peggy and a visiting Englishman, Burgrave. Kit Prendeville rides in the race and is the representative of 'the ould stock' in the novel. The races at the Agricultural Show at Eskragh in *An Enthusiast* are very similar to the Clytagh races in their mixed attendance. Dan Palliser, like Kit, partakes in the racing. It is these two who win the races. Thady in Ella McMahon's *The Job* goes to Kilbarrack Fair to sell ponies. Thady also mixes with social classes other than his own in the ball-alley, which he built for the benefit of others but enjoys playing in himself.

There is not much evidence in the novels of the tenants coming to ask the landlord's advice on matters in the way that Bence-Jones portrays it in *The Twilight of the Ascendancy,* where George Burke of Danesfield, father of the Duchess of Fingall, received tenants in his study. They would come to consult him, or to bring their disputes to be settled by him, arguing them out in Irish, which he could speak and understand (p. 11). This idyllic patriarchal atmosphere is far removed from the fictional experience of Julia in *The Real Charlotte* when she tries to get help from her landlord in her dispute with Charlotte.

In the novels, the encounters between landlords and tenants bespeak a rather limited and superficial relationship. Generally, the landlord family imagines itself to be closer to, and more appreciated by, the tenants than it actually is. The fact that Thady in Mabel Morley's *Boycotted* has been Captain Boyd's boyhood friend has not prevented him from joining the Land League. In MacClintock's *A Boycotted Household*, Ellen believes that the Rileys are grateful for all her kindnesses to them; but her brother is killed by one of them. The charity displayed by the landlord families is not always as appreciated as it is meant to be. Generally speaking, a flavour of patronizing permeates whatever relationship there is, as is

amply displayed when the children in MacSorley's *An Irish Cousin* visit the local school to look at the writing and neat sewing of the barefooted little pupils. The landlords and their tenants live on and off the same land but in different worlds, the gap between them becoming more evident as the agrarian agitations take a firmer hold on the country.

Agrarian agitations

The shortcomings of the 1870 Land Act became apparent when it came to its practical application. The landlords resented the fact that their property rights had been intruded upon and circumvented the greater security for the tenantry that was meant to arise from it. As a result, the demand from tenants for further reforms became increasingly persistent. Deteriorating economic circumstances occasioned by the crisis in agriculture in the British Isles in the 1870s also caused confrontation between landlords and tenants to be accelerated as well as aggravated. Why, then, did landlords not reduce the rents during an obvious economic recession to try to avert the looming crisis? W. E. Vaughan and others have claimed that the tenants and not the landlords had been the major beneficiaries of the agricultural prosperity that had risen dramatically after the Famine, while rent had not gone up. The reason why landlords did not voluntarily reduce rents when the recession of 1877–79 set in was that, quite apart from their sense of the injustice involved, in many cases they simply could not afford to do so. Tenant farmers, on the other hand, had come to expect a somewhat higher standard of living, and they were prepared to defend it against erosion.[88]

A number of local tenants' associations had existed throughout Ireland for some time, but in 1879 tenant discontent was channeled into a national organization, the Irish National Land League. The conflict arising between landlords and tenants through the activities of the Land League between 1879 and 1882 has been termed "the Irish land war". Unrest was to recur during later agitations and there are some writers on the subject, including Philip Bull in *Land, Politics and Nationalism*, who think that the term should include the period up to the Wyndham Land Act of 1903 (p. 95).

The Land League set a model for political action which came to shape Irish politics in relation to the issues of land and nationality for the next twenty-five years. Very efficiently, the Land League organized the tenants collectively to oppose the payment of rent unless it was reduced to satisfaction. Furthermore, it saw to it that new tenants were prevented from occupying farms from which others had been evicted through boycotting, intimidation and other forms of collec-

[88] W. E. Vaughan, "A Study of Landlord and Tenant Relations in Ireland between the Famine and the Land War, 1850-78" (Ph. D. thesis, Trinity College, 1973), p. 11, pp. 122 ff. Quoted in Bull, pp. 76–77.

tive action, some involving more violence than others. The government reacted by creating special courts to deal with the unprecedented frequency of "agrarian outrages" that arose from such practices. Between 1879 and 1882, 11,215 families were evicted. Agrarian crime, much of which consisted of "Threatening Letters or Notices", increased to unprecedented levels. Of the 67 agrarian homicides between 1879 and 1882, few involved landlords or agents.[89] In general, the leaders and organizers of the League were committed to legal, open and constitutional means. Gradually its objectives came to include self-government. By 1880, it was in effect the constituency organization of parliamentary nationalism, which demanded control over Irish affairs by a Home Rule parliament in Dublin. The effect of this collaboration was that the Home Rule body developed from being a rather disorganized affair into a much more disciplined party, strengthened by the power of mass mobilization behind it. In fact, it could be said that the Irish Parliamentary Party was Westminster's first modern political party. In 1880 Charles Stewart Parnell, a Protestant landlord, was elected its chairman. Through his background, to quote David Fitzpatrick, "unique bite" was added to his rhetorical assault upon his own class.[90]

The Land Act of 1881 at last gave the Irish tenant farmers the "three F's" (fixity of tenure, fair rents and free sale), and the Act was extended several times during the next few decades. For the purpose of deciding on fair rent, a Land Commission was set up to which tenants were to apply for their rents to be fixed by judicial arbitration. Between 1881 and 1891, £1.2 million was struck off the collective rents of 277,160 holdings, while arrears of £1.8 million were extinguished under section one of the Arrears Act.[91] In 1885, the Ashbourne Act provided greater facilities for the sale of land to occupying tenants. It gave the power to the Land Commission to buy whole estates for resale and to initiate the purchase of their holdings by tenants, either from their landlords or from the Commission. And yet, in 1886, it was time for another agricultural agitation. It was, again, a fall in agricultural prices that triggered this second phase of the agitation, the Plan of Campaign. The aim of the Plan of Campaign was for tenants on an estate to come together to offer the landlord what they considered to be a fair rent. If the landlord did not accept the amount offered, the money was instead to be handed over to the Plan of Campaign to hold in trust until the landlord was prepared to accept a suitable rent reduction. The idea of peasant proprietorship was now widespread – it was, in fact, already receiving some

[89] Vaughan, *Landlords and Tenants in Ireland 1848–1904*, pp. 28–29.

[90] David Fitzpatrick, "Ireland since 1870" in R. F. Foster, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993 [1989]), p. 220.

[91] Vaughan, *Landlords and Tenants in Mid-Victorian Ireland*, p. 209. The Arrears Act of 1882 was added to the 1881 Act to solve at least some of the problem caused by leaseholders and occupiers being in arrears with their rents.

consideration by the government – and it served to make the Plan of Campaign more radical than the Land League. The agrarian enemies, the landlords, were welcome to leave if they did not accept their new situation. The Plan of Campaign, to a greater extent than the Land League, linked its agrarian interest to wider national objectives.

The third phase of the agricultural conflict led to the founding of the United Irish League in 1898. Once more, economic recession was the cause. This time the objective was clearly expressed as "peasant proprietorship" and the catch-cry was "compulsory purchase", but the League was also concerned about restitution for tenants evicted during the Plan of Campaign. In 1902, a Land Conference took place in Dublin with participants from the United Irish League as well from the landowners' Land Conference Committee, a breakaway group from the official landlord organization, the Landowner's Convention. Its report formed the basis of a new Land Act, the Wyndham Act of 1903, which carried land purchase further than any land act had ever done before. It proposed that landlords sell entire estates, not only a bit of land here and there, and that sales should go ahead if three-quarters of the tenants on any given estate agreed. One of the more attractive parts of the Act for the landlords was the mechanism to bridge the gap between the price they demanded and what the tenants were prepared to give, the so-called bonus of twelve per cent of the total purchase price, provided by a special fund and financed by the Treasury. Even though compulsory purchase was not conceded until the amending Act of 1909, and then in a minimal form, the pace of land transfer was greatly accelerated. Under the Wyndham Act alone, some 200,000 tenants bought out their farms. It is estimated that between 1903 and 1920 nearly nine million acres changed hands while two million acres were in the process of being sold (Lyons, pp. 792, 219). A comment on the 1903 Act of Parliament in Somerville and Ross's *Mount Music* indicates how it could be viewed by the landlord class:

> It would be out of place, even, if not impertinent, absurd, to discuss here the Act of Parliament that in the year nineteen hundred and three, made provision to change the ownership of the Irish land, and to transfer its possession from the landlords to the tenants. It is sufficient to say that those of both classes who were endowed with the valuable quality of knowing on which side of a piece of bread the butter had been applied, lost as little time as was possible in availing themselves of the facilities that the Act offered them. The ceremony of Hari Kiri, even if entered upon with the belief that it will lead to another and better world, is not an agreeable one, but it was obvious to most Irish landlords that, with bad or good grace, sooner or later, the grim rite had to be faced, and that the hindmost in the transaction need expect only the fate proverbially promised to such. (p. 159)

The inevitability of the changing times is thus accepted, albeit with regret.

As time went by, the Anglo-Irish landlords became more or less landless.

Their position in society changed radically from the essentially happy 1870s, when they had still had control over their estates and had been able to hunt and generally enjoy life, even though their political power had begun to be challenged and the agricultural depression had already started. How did the works by the Anglo-Irish novelists of my study present the effects of these changes in the lives of landlords? How did they portray the agitations and the new political situation?

In some novels Land League activities are essential ingredients in the plot of the novel, while in others they provide a backdrop only. In Letitia MacClintock's *A Boycotted Household* (1881), the Land League takes on the role of a character: the villain. The landlords are innocent, good people, who are uncomprehending of the current events. They do not blame the people for what is happening to them but the League, which coerces farmers to join and abide by its rules, using blackmail and threats to induce its members to kill animals and people. The agitators have advised the tenants not to pay their rents and as a result the landlord family in the novel, the Hamiltons, suffer hardship. The boys are unable to go back to school, Rugby in England, and the rest of the family members have no option but to stay where they are; they only own land in Ireland. However, there are other worries than mere financial ones. Another more direct attack on the family comes when their haystacks are burnt down and the boycott begins. The boycott means that none of the tenants will work on the Hamilton lands, and Mr Hamilton himself and his family have to do as much as they can with the help of their butler's son and his family, the McPhersons. The McPhersons have rented a neighbouring farm after its tenants were evicted and as a consequence they, too, are boycotted. Their lives are threatened and their sheep, as well as a cow, are killed. When they discuss reporting the killings, they realize that there is no help to be expected, as all their neighbours "with the priest at their head had joined the Land League" (p. 110).[92]

The atmosphere in the Hamilton household gradually deteriorates. The Catholic servants are suspected of having dealings with the League; or, if not, they are believed to have at least listened to their "Nationalist priest's teachings", and hence are not expected to have much sympathy for their master's predicament. The Hamiltons become quite cautious in their dealings with them. Eventually most of the servants desert the family, reluctantly we are told, as they all receive a "coffin-letter" – that is a letter with a coffin drawn in it to indicate what would happen to the recipient if he or she did not abide by the Land League's wishes. According to contemporary returns these coffin-letters or letters from Captain Moonlight were common, particularly in 1880, 1881 and 1882, when 1,763, 2,862 and 2,733 "Threatening Letters or Notices" were reported to the Royal

[92] See chapter 2, "Religion", on clerical involvement in the agrarian unrest (pp. 121–23).

Irish Constabulary.[93] The butler in the novel, however, does not heed the threat and stays with the family: a staunch Orangeman, he will not be dictated to by "them devils o' Papists".

To get away from the claustrophobic situation at home, one of the Hamilton daughters, Evelyn, goes to the Harveys of Ardnamona House with financial help from her aunt. Here the situation is somewhat better, even though the threat of spreading Land League control is always with the landlord family. The estate being remote from its neighbours, the post hour has become an important one at Ardnamona; but this autumn the interest in it is not chiefly due to letters. The newspapers are far more interesting, we are told, and the novel goes on to provide insights into how desolate landlords in Ireland could feel at the time:

> The newspapers, filled with accounts of atrocities that are making Ireland a scandal to the whole civilized world, and accumulating disgrace upon the Government, brought daily consternation to the breakfast tables of Irish landlords. The so-called "English garrison" felt themselves helpless to break the meshes that were being cast around them, while unaided by England; and as they read of unoffending citizens being tortured and maimed, lives threatened and recklessly taken, dumb animals brutally injured, just right unrecognized, they began to think themselves utterly abandoned to the enemies of their race. (p. 229)

The choice of so many emphatic words – "atrocities", "scandal", "disgrace", "consternation", "tortured and maimed", "brutally injured" – in a short passage emphasizes the strong feelings involved. The helplessness that could be experienced by Irish landlords comes through very strongly in MacClintock's novel.

A Boycotted Household presents the Land Leaguers as generally Catholics; but in areas such as the one where the Hamiltons live, Protestants are thin on the ground and they, too, have been forced to join the League. If not, they would not have been able to buy anything in the shops or have a market for their produce. The Hamiltons are on their own, except for the McPhersons, surrounded by enemies, and the claustrophobic situation goes from bad to worse. There is a threat against Mr Hamilton's life, and the family members have to carry guns for their protection. However, it is the eldest Hamilton son, Arthur, who is killed by one of the tenants in mistake for his father. This is supposed to have been a reluctant action forced by the Land League, at least according to Mrs Scanlon, wife of one of the tenants, who assures Mr Hamilton that "there was plenty very sore whin we heared that it was to be done, but we didn't dare to speak a word,

[93] *Balfour Papers, Ireland 1–22, Misc. Documents* (1888). No. 11 – RETURN of the Number of Offences of each kind specially reported throughout Ireland, in each year from 1860 to 1887, inclusive. In 1878 there were only 230 "Threatening Letters" reported and in 1887 only 466. Tenant farmers who attacked the property and livestock of landlords in response to evictions during the Land War were called Moonlighters. Their threats were usually issued over the signature Captain Moonlight.

good or bad. Sure enough it was a pity about Mashter Arthur, that was the handsome, cheery, pleasant young gentleman, well liked by both high an' low – shot by mistake" (p. 318).

According to statistics in the *Balfour Papers, Ireland 1–22*, the number of "Firing at the Person" was at its highest in 1881 and 1882 (104 and 105) respectively, while "Murder" was more prevalent in 1882 (43) than in any other year during the 1881–1887 period. W. E. Vaughan, however, has pointed out that the police defined all crimes arising out of disputes about land as agrarian, including family rows and disputes between neighbours. He claims that of more than 100 agrarian homicides reported between 1858 and 1878, for example, only 24 per cent were due to disputes between landlords and tenants.[94] According to Bence-Jones only one Ascendancy landlord, Viscount Mountmorres, an obscure and impoverished peer from Co. Galway, actually lost his life during the first phase of the Land War between 1879 and 1882, whereas others were shot at but somehow escaped injury (p. 29).

In E. C. Jeffreys's novel *An Irish Landlord and An English M. P.* (1891), the killer succeeds in killing the landlord, Malachi. Malachi has not seen his old nurse for a long time, and he is shocked to find her cottage dilapidated and dirty. He offers her another one; but a tenant has been evicted from it and his nurse does not want it. She is afraid of what her son might do if she accepts. It is her son, Larry, who shoots Malachi dead. Everybody knows he is the perpetrator, but no proof can be obtained, and he is able to escape to America.

Another successful killer is presented in Edith Rochfort's *The Lloyds of Ballymore* (1890). The Lloyd family includes two daughters and one son, Tom. On one occasion Mr Lloyd brings one of his daughters into town to talk to his attorney about a possible eviction. Here they happen on the Land League agitator, O'Ryan, who is speaking in the area. The rhetoric is convincing to the people present, and his speech comes across as an attempt to present the reader of the novel with an opportunity to learn something about the Land League view on the situation:

> We have been called cowards and assassins, but we will hurl such epithets back at our stigmatisers. Why should not the tenant farmers stick firmly to their homesteads, the memories of which were cherished by the Irish exiles who in foreign lands jealously guard the memories of their faith and fatherland. It was not necessary to open the page of history to find out the evil doings of landlordism in Ireland! In 1847 the ground beneath them was made to swell with the coffinless bones of their brothers, while the bones of others, who, endeavouring to seek a refuge in a foreign land from landlords' tyranny, had succumbed to the pitiless storms, and were bleaching beneath the wild

[94] Vaughan, *Landlords and Tenants in Ireland 1848–1904*, p. 17. Vaughan refers to other studies which confirm that only about forty per cent of agrarian crime was caused by landlord-tenant disputes.

> Atlantic waves, and as often as the angry wind swept its troubled bosom they howled a great cry for vengeance in the ears of their destroyers [...]. The Land League will prevent a repetition of these outrages. It has already forced unwilling rulers to admit the necessity for land reform. The tenant farmers have paid their rents as long as they were able; now they can no longer do so, for are they not starving? (pp. 38–39)

The tenants may be poor, but O'Ryan is the only one to suggest that there is starvation at the Ballymore estate.

Mr Lloyd is said to be a kind and thoughtful landlord. He has given Mrs Cormack, one of the women on the estate, a cottage, although she has no farm. When the precarious financial situation has compelled Mr Lloyd to evict a tenant to set an example, it is Mrs Cormack who warns him of the danger to his life. Ironically it is Mrs Cormack's only son, Tim, who kills Mr Lloyd and is condemned to death. Wanting a better life for his mother, he was brought into crime by the League and bad company, we are told (vol. 2, p. 56).

There is a reference to the Phoenix Park murders in the novel; it is noted that they occur a few weeks after Mr Lloyd has been shot.[95] Rochfort's novel, like McClintock's *A Boycotted Household,* conveys a sense of the despair felt by the landlords:

> Law and order! The words were a mockery in the land. There was no law but the law of rebellion; there was no order at all. Men looked at each other in horror and amazement, and asked themselves with bated breath what did these things mean. Had the English Government utterly thrown over the loyal population of Ireland? – Was the demon of assassination to stalk unheeded through the land? (pp. 255–56)

In *Twilight of the Ascendancy* (pp. 31–33), Mark Bence-Jones writes of how the Land League struck at William Bence-Jones of Lisselane in West Cork. The situation is very similar to the fictional ones portrayed in *A Boycotted Household* and *The Lloyds of Ballymore.* William Bence-Jones' troubles began in the usual way with his tenants demanding a rent reduction with which he did not agree. He received threatening letters, a grave was dug outside the Lisselane hall door, then he was boycotted and most of the workers on his estate were forced to leave. This was a difficult situation for the family, as there were a hundred cows to be milked and a thousand animals to be fed including the horses and sheep. William Bence-Jones himself was too old to work, but his son Willy and daughter Lily were both at home. Willy and a Scottish farm bailiff fed the animals while Lily milked the

[95] The Phoenix Park murders took place on Saturday, May 6, 1882. Lord Frederick Cavendish arrived in Dublin to be present at the entry of the new Viceroy, Lord Spencer. When the ceremony was over he took a car drive to the Viceregal Lodge in the Phoenix Park. On the way he passed Mr Burke, a well-known Castle official for many years. Lord Frederick Cavendish got off the car and walked with Mr Burke through the Phoenix Park. It was a bright summer evening and they were walking on the principal road, but armed assassins attacked them and literally cut them to pieces without anybody noticing what was going on, and without any opposition being offered to the escape of the murderers (*Annual Register 1882*, p. 191).

cows with the help of the butler and a gardener, who were both English, and of an Irish housemaid who had remained faithful to the family. Just before Christmas, Lily wrote to her married sister Carry in England:

> Poor Willy's back and neck were quite doubled over for one evening and my arms are weak with the milking [...] And even now we can neither of us sit in a low chair without groans over our poor legs. However, we are really getting on bravely...if that hard-hearted brute Mr Gladstone could only be hung in chains as the officer with the Dragoon from Bandon suggested yesterday we should do very well.[96]

The Dragoons and ten policemen with double-barrelled guns had been sent to protect them, and Lisselane was in a state of siege. The family all carried revolvers, and in that atmosphere they celebrated Christmas in 1880. By the middle of January, a new labour force had been recruited and was at work under the protection of the police. There were no casualties in this instance.

Nobody is killed in Mabel Morley's *Boycotted* (1889) either, but the sense of desolation is the same as in *The Lloyds of Ballymore* and *A Boycotted Household.* However, no blame is expressed towards England for what is happening in Ireland. Instead the Boyds, the landlord family of the novel, are disappointed with their tenants. Captain Frank Boyd owns the Grange, and it is all he has in the world. His wife has always been convinced that he was popular with his tenants, but when "the incorrigible O'Malleys" are evicted, his people turn against him. As a result, the Boyds are boycotted and after three months of isolation their suffering is acute. The Irish autumn sets in, but there is no labourer to mow their acres of hay or cut their corn. Turf is needed for winter firing, but no one is prepared to cart it in case they, too, would suffer boycotting. It is also becoming increasingly difficult for the family to buy provisions, and Mr Boyd has to go further and further afield to be able to buy what they need. He is well aware that he may endanger his own life as well as the lives of his family by sending to Dublin Castle for help; but he feels he has no choice. Besides, he has known the tenants since he was a boy and always treated them well. It is difficult for him to imagine that they would pose a serious threat. However, when the labourers, and the soldiers to protect them, arrive, he promptly receives a note from Captain Moonlight with a rough sketch of a black coffin. He is advised to look for stray bullets fired from behind the hedges. Captain St Helier, who brought the soldiers from Dublin, has fallen in love with Boyd's sister-in-law. He thinks Boyd is mad to expose his family to danger in this way. Boyd, however, is still of the opinion that the "malcontents" only want to demonstrate their displeasure, even though Thady, a tenant and Boyd's boyhood friend, assures him that they are very serious indeed. The boycotting escalates.

Boycotting was a very efficient way of putting pressure on landlords and on

[96] From the Bence-Jones papers, quoted in *Twilight of the Ascendancy*, p. 31.

others who did not abide by the rules of League. Around the time when *Boycotted* appears to be set, it was quite widespread in Ireland, although on 31 January 1888 the total number of persons boycotted in the four provinces was generally half of what it had been on 31 July 1887. Munster was the part of Ireland that was hardest hit, with 2,577 people or nearly half of the total for the country (1887).[97] For the Boyd family in *Boycotted*, the effects of their predicament become increasingly difficult to handle. A long list exemplifying the problems that a boycotted landlord might experience is enumerated in the novel. As the groom has had notice from the League that if he drives the family "he'd get his whiskers scorched", the Boyds are no longer able to go to the morning service. Patsy who used to fish for them is afraid to do so any more, and Mrs Boyd's sister, Connie, has to do the fishing herself with St Helier. Connie also takes over the baking when the baker stops his deliveries. The forge is suddenly closed down because the blacksmith has had to decamp as a result of helping the Boyds on one occasion. When Moonlighters put nails through the horses' hooves, the Boyds are no longer able to travel far enough to be able to find someone who is prepared to sell to them. It would seem that it cannot get much worse; but an attempt is made on Captain Boyd's life and Connie is waylaid and terrified by a group of men on her way to town to collect the post the postman no longer delivers. Mr Boyd's boyhood friend is one of the culprits. Connie is eventually sent on her way unharmed, but the Boyds now have to admit to themselves that it is too dangerous to stay on at the Grange. All Mrs Boyd's ambitions of having a model village are crushed to the ground. "What had she not done, or wished to do, for those ungrateful people?" (p. 250). The blame for the landlord's plight in this novel is squarely imposed on the Irish people.

According to Stephen Browne's *Ireland in Fiction*, *Burnt Flax* by Mrs H. H. Penrose (1914), set in the 1880s, shows the agitation from a landlord point of view (p. 254), a statement which is not quite correct. True, the Land Leaguers in the novel are no sympathetic characters. However, descriptions of sickness and abject poverty reveal the predicament of the tenants. They have no money to pay their rent, and their only possible choice is to enter the League. The previous landlord of the estate has been very lax and never pressed for payment of rents, but then he never looked after his estate either. When the new landlord Colonel Fitzpatrick arrives, everybody in Kilryan is made aware of the fact that non-paying tenants will have to leave. Those who have joined the Land League take the information with sullen defiance, and those who have not swear that they are going to join immediately.

[97] *Balfour Papers, Ireland 1–22. Miscellaneous Documents* (1888). Boycotting (Ireland) RETURN to an Order of the Honourable The House of Commons, dated 10 February 1888; – *for* RETURN showing by PROVINCES and COUNTIES, the Number of Cases BOYCOTTING and the Number of Persons Wholly and Partially BOYCOTTED throughout Ireland on the 31st day of July 1887 and on the 31st day of January 1888, respectively.

Maurice, the fiancé of the Colonel's daughter Kathleen, acts as the agent and knows the tenants of the estate personally. He has a softer nature than Fitzpatrick and is in a difficult position. He speaks up for some very worthy causes, but the Colonel wants no exceptions. Kathleen, too, feels that people who are clearly unable to pay through no fault of their own should not be evicted. Together Maurice and Kathleen manage to prevent the eviction of the Dear family, while the rest of the tenants remain in imminent danger of being turned out of their homes. Despite warnings, the Colonel does not realize how precarious his position will be if he goes ahead with his plans.

A Land League meeting is announced to take place near the estate. The Land Leaguer, Martin Dogherty, wants to beat up a large attendance from the Fitzpatrick property. In a number of novels, the local Catholic priest is involved with the Land League, but Father O'Riordan in *Burnt Flax* tries to discourage Dogherty from spreading his message in the area. Asking Dogherty what he is doing in Castlebeg, Father O'Riordan answers the question himself in no uncertain terms: "Rousing the dormant spirit o' the people? Is that what y're thrying t' say? [...] Will it help the cause o' liberty t' cut the tail off a misforchunit cow? Are the men fit f'r liberty that would break in on a poor old woman an' card the flesh uv her?" (p. 103). In Father O'Riordan's view, it is Dogherty and the likes of him who delay the freedom of the country, making poor, ignorant and foolish men do dirty work while lining their own pockets and giving nothing in return but a chance to go to prison or the hangman's rope. He is not afraid to confront the Land Leaguer.

The involvement and interference of priests in Land League activities was a difficult issue for the church at the time. Grave apprehensions arose, particularly among members high up in the hierarchy, as to the agitational methods of the organization that often led to violence and therefore posed a threat to law and order and the social structure in general. It became an important task for the leaders of the League to persuade the clergy that the League was committed to legal and constitutional political action. One of the most appealing arguments for getting priests involved was that they might be able to encourage restraint within the League. Father O'Riordan in *Burnt Flax* has no involvement with the League, and he has no influence over Dogherty. Dogherty, "nominally" a Catholic the narrator tells us, is bound to show outward respect to the priesthood; but even though the priest gets so frustrated with the Land Leaguer that he curses – and a curse from a priest is said to be a serious thing – Dogherty does not hesitate to go ahead with the meeting.

Already before the meeting, the men have discussed killing their landlord. Not everybody is in favour of going as far as killing him. However, Pat Keogh reminds them that "a dead lan'lord can't ask f'r his rint, nor evict them that hasn't got it t' pay" and volunteers to be the killer. Anastasia Dear, whose family has paid the

rent with the help of Maurice, finds out and warns the Fitzpatricks of the plan to murder the Colonel. In the meantime, the men have congregated in the pub. As in Somerville and Ross's *Naboth's Vineyard*, they drink at the expense of the Land League before setting off on their errand, in this case to kill their landlord. However, the Colonel has left and they are met by Maurice and the butler. Maurice would like to bring the men to reason by talking to them, but he feels threatened by Pat Keogh and fires at him. The men scatter. Having come to the conclusion that it was Anastasia who warned the people in the Big House, they put the Dear cabin on fire in revenge. All the Dears are killed.

There is no doubt that the Land League, represented by the selfish Dogherty who hopes to gain a trip to America for his efforts on the Fitzpatrick estate, is presented in negative terms. The tenants, however, are innocent pawns in Dogherty's hands because of their hardship. The priest is a benign character who wants nothing to do with the violence of the Land League. He does his best for his parishioners as well as for the landlord family. The final chapter in *Burnt Flax* is set "Thirty Years On". As the novel was published in 1914 but set in the 1880s, this chapter is more or less contemporaneous. We are told that one of the men who was involved in the arson was hanged while some of the others were sentenced to life imprisonment. The Colonel himself never returned to Ireland. His confrontational attitude does not work; but now the estate is said to be run successfully by Maurice and Kathleen. The landlord has to accept his share of the blame for what happened.

Emily Lawless' *Hurrish* (1886) differs from McClintock's, Jeffreys's, Rochfort's, Morley's and Penrose's novels outlined above in that the main characters are tenants and not landlords. Lawless's novel is set in the Burren, which is "nakedness personified, starvation made visible" and ripe ground for the Land League. However, Hurrish rents a fertile oasis in it, Gortnacoppin, from Major Pierce O'Brien. A widower and a hardworking man, Hurrish looks after his family well. He does not feel very enthusiastic about the calls of the Land League:

> Murder as a recognised social institution had never somehow quite commended itself either to his intelligence or his humanity! Though he had openly and enthusiastically joined himself to every association which had even nominally the emancipation of Ireland for its aim, he had never allied or desired to ally himself to any of those less avowed societies with which Clare, like every other part of Ireland, is honeycombed, and which subsist upon murder, and upon murder only. He had been elected to one of them, it is true, in his absence, and had weakly refrained from insisting upon his name being struck off again. (p. 13)

Neither the Land League nor the protagonist is portrayed in a favourable manner in this paragraph. The narrator keeps a noticeable distance from them. However, the picture of Hurrish has many lighter shades in other parts of the novel.

Hurrish's patriotism is very mild and diluted compared to that of his mother, Bridget. It is she who knows when, where, how and why the latest agrarian outrage has been committed, and she is always the first to raise the war-cry of triumph on these "joyful occasions". She brings back tales of vengeance that usually have rather a chilling effect on Hurrish. Bridget, on the other hand, "feasts" her eyes with all the relish of "a petticoated vampire" on her prints "representing the roasting alive of men in swallow-tail coats, tall hats, and white neck-cloths, presumably landlords" (p. 7).

The real trouble in the novel starts when the farm next to Hurrish's becomes vacant. Hurrish is asked by the landlord, Pierce O'Brien, to take it over, but he cannot accept a farm from which a tenant has been evicted. Instead Hurrish's enemy, Mat, takes it. As other farms have also been reoccupied, there is a need for the League to make an example of somebody. It is decided that Mat is to be the one. However, nobody at the Land League meeting shows any disposition whatsoever for the job, so Hurrish, who does not attend the meeting, is selected. Later, when confronted by Mat's brother Maurice about it, Hurrish is so genuinely surprised and shocked at the suggestion that he has no difficulty convincing Maurice that he knows nothing about it.

Mat, however, has no qualms about shooting anybody or anything. One morning Hurrish finds one of his sheep shot dead. When a bullet whizzes past close to his own head and he discovers Mat behind the barrel, he hits him with his blackthorn-stick. The blow proves fatal. As soon as Mat's body is found, Maurice accuses Hurrish of his brother's murder. As an informer, he becomes extremely unpopular amongst the people, while Hurrish is their hero. Everybody thinks that Hurrish has abided by the wishes of the League and murdered Mat; everybody, that is, except Pierce O'Brien, the landlord. Pierce O'Brien has suffered much hardship during the time that the League has held the neighbourhood in its grip. Now, with his belief in Hurrish's innocence and his refusal to sign the warrant for his arrest, Pierce O'Brien becomes as much a hero as Hurrish himself. Within a dozen hours of the "outrage", the news of his refusal to sign has travelled all over Ireland. As a consequence, the ban that has hung over the O'Brien estate for so long is lifted. O'Brien is no more of a Nationalist, or Liberal even, than he has ever been, and he scoffs openly at the manifestations of the change of opinion; but even as he scoffs he is rather pleased to be acknowledged by people again.

Hurrish is portrayed in quite a sympathetic manner, albeit as a simple man and a typical Celt. Pierce O'Brien is presented in an equally sympathetic fashion: "Poor Major Pierce! Poor tenants!" the narrator exclaims, but also "poor 'Government'" (p. 41) – the quotation marks around Government possibly added to indicate an opinion about its handling of the situation – that has to interpose between the two in a hopeless deadlock. Prejudices from above and prejudices

from below create the situation, and the Land League has taken the opportunity of exploiting the tragedy.

The Land League does not appear in a better light in *Naboth's Vineyard* (1891) by Somerville and Ross than in Lawless's novel. Gifford Lewis claims that the cousins' "background knowledge of the land war was used to effect [...] in *Naboth's Vineyard.*" The background Lewis refers to is, for example, entries in Somerville's diary on 8 January 1882: "Uncle Josc's tenants have paid up £300 and refuse to give more. The amount due is £1,600. Pleasing prospect for Uncle Joscelyn until eviction forces the brutes to pay". On 13 January the same year, she entered: "Micky Collins was punished for paying his rent by 2 of his sheep being killed last night by his friends and neighbours". Robert Martin, Martin Ross's brother, received no rents from the Ross estates after 1879.[98] He went to London to support himself as a journalist and song-writer, where he earned the nickname "Ballyhooly", the title of his greatest hit. When returning to Ireland, he undertook the dangerous work of going out as an Emergency man to bring labour and goods to boycotted landlords.[99]

Naboth's Vineyard was, claims Hilary Robinson in *Somerville and Ross*, originally commissioned for a literary magazine which published writings featuring various religious and political opinions.[100] The landlord class are not the main characters in this novel either – the landlord here is in fact the traditional hated absentee – but the middle class. The novel is set in the fishing village of Rossbrin in the south-west of Ireland in 1883. Mr John O'Donovan of Donovan's Hotel is the president of the Land League in the district. When James Mahony has to leave his farm at Dhrimnahoon, the widow Leonard takes it over because the farm used to belong to a relation of hers and she reckons that she is entitled to it. She is a good Land Leaguer herself, who has always paid her dues to the League, so she is not worried about repercussions for moving in. However, Donovan warns her of Captain Moonlight and soon after her best heifer is killed. To avoid a similar fate for the rest of her herd, the widow decides to sell it. But when the cows are brought to the fair nobody even looks at them; Mr Donovan has been there to warn prospective buyers off. Donovan also sees to it that the widow and her daughter, Ellen, are boycotted in other ways. To display his power, Donovan, shop-owner as well as hotel-owner, continues

[98] Lewis, *Somerville and Ross,* p. 26. Diary quotes: ibid., p. 26.

[99] Powell, p. 15.

[100] Hilary Robinson, *Somerville and Ross: A Critical Appreciation* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1980), p. 69. The commissioner, Langbridge, then changed his mind and decided to publish *Naboth's Vineyard* in "a cycle of newspapers". However, Somerville and Ross refused to let it appear in newspapers, and eventually it was published as a novel in 1891. Somerville and Ross are said to have been amazed that the book was treated as a serious work about the political situation. Somerville always maintained that it had been a mistake to write *Naboth's Vineyard* and when, in 1916, Longmans thought of reissuing the novel, she was not enthusiastic. She thought the subject too tragic (Robinson, p. 72).

to read *The Freeman's Journal* while refusing to sell tea to Ellen. The servants desert Ellen and her mother, with the exception of Dan Hurley who is in love with Ellen. He, too, has an axe to grind with Donovan who put his mother in the workhouse.

Donovan is the obvious villain of the novel while the hero is Rick O'Grady. He, like Jane Barlow's model character Kerrigan, is a returned emigrant. Rick has made his own fortune in the States. He finds out that the boycotting is "a put-up job" of Donovan's and tries to convince the neighbourhood that Donovan's vendetta against the widow is a personal one: Donovan wants her farm for himself. But it is difficult to persuade the local members of the League of this because they feel compelled to believe in Donovan; they are all debtors in his pub.

Naboth's Vineyard is a potentially tragic novel not so much because of the picture of the political situation but because of the way evil seems to predominate in it. Donovan is a thoroughly evil person, as is his wife, Harriet. Donovan shows his evilness in many ways, among others by inciting Mahony, the previous owner of the widow's farm, to put her house on fire. Rick and Donovan see the fire from the pier. By tempting the men with drink in his pub and by using his authority as a Land Leaguer, Donovan prevents them from going there to extinguish it. Rick, however, lives up to his hero status and challenges the Land Leaguer. Rick puts out the farmyard fire single-handedly. He also manages to break the boycott, swims a brimming river and, in the end, marries Ellen. The characters in the book are either black or white and rather stage-Irish. The stock villain is there as the gombeen-man who uses his position in the Land League to better himself and to "grab" more land.[101] The fact that he does it without the authorization of the League does not alter the dark picture of the League presented by Somerville and Ross in this novel.

An interesting and different novel about the agricultural unrest in Ireland was written by Frances Mabel Robinson. I have not been able to ascertain her connection with Ireland, but as the title of the novel indicates, *The Plan of Campaign* (1888), the setting and plot of the novel are very Irish indeed. The Plan of Campaign was the second phase of the agricultural agitation, devised by Tim Harrington and initiated in October 1886. One of the main characters in the novel, if not the protagonist, is Mr Talbot, an agitator for the land cause. He is "a low-born son of a Dublin solicitor", according to one of the landlords in the novel, Robert Gough Esquire of Gough Hall, but a powerful man in the movement. He travels all around the country to strengthen the position of the Plan of Campaign. The Roeglass estate is a trump card for a Land Leaguer; nobody defends Roeglass – an absentee whose rents are often more than double the valuation, and who keeps his tenants out of the landcourt by threats of coming down on them for every

[101] For a further discussion of gombeen-men, see chapter 4 "The New Irish", pp. 196–225.

penny of the inevitable arrears. Titus Orr and Mr Kinsella have joined Talbot for the occasion of visiting the Roeglass estate. It is a very cold and wet day. Nevertheless, nearly everyone at the meeting, even the poorest, has a green neck-tie or hat-band, or at least a sprig of green laurel in his cap and coat, and many wear a pale green card in the band of their hats: the card of membership in the National League. Orr claims to feel uneasy at times when his Tory friends remind him that to some members of the party agitation is a livelihood. However, the weather being as bad as it is on this particular occasion, he is convinced that "no man with health enough and brains enough to be chosen for a paid Member need perforce earn his living in such an extremely uncomfortable manner" (p. 143). Under the influence of his surroundings, Orr realizes that he has never felt more like a Land Leaguer in his life. It is Orr who comes up with the solution of fixing a fair rent by arbitration in the novel. His suggestion is: "Offer it to the landlord and if he will not take it, appoint a trustee in secret and let him take it" (p. 159). Talbot is thrilled with this idea. The landlords may sue, but prosecution is a slow affair and will not have much effect. In Kinsella's view, the Government does not mean to act anyway; the Tory minority is too fond of office for that. "They'll hunt with the hounds and run with the hare for another six months and the winter will be over before they've made up their minds" (p. 162).

There are a good few landlords in Talbot's social circle, one of whom, Lord Dromore, professes to be "half a land-leaguer". This is the reasoning he gives at a dinner-party:

> I'm half a land-leaguer myself; not because I respect the League, but because I despise my own class. Look at us now – a set of lily-livered curs! Men clamouring for what we call our rights, and never daring to exact them! Not one in ten of us lives on our land; not one in a hundred dare be staunch to an unpopular neighbour. [...]. We're loyal to no party, neither to our tenants nor to one another. We have no sense of right nor justice. Some fellow demands an extortionate rent. Do we disown him? Do we denounce his dishonesty? Do we use what little influence we have? No. [...] Another man gets into undeserved unpopularity among his tenants [...] – he's partly boycotted, the farmers send us word he mustn't hunt. Do we stand up for 'um? Do we uphold him? No! [...W]e hunt without him, we boycott him. Because he's wrong? No; because we're afraid of our tenantry. (pp. 201–02)

Lord Dromore is a sympathetic character, much liked by Titus Orr. When visiting the Dromore estate with the agitators, Orr feels bad towards his host. He admits to being all for the tenants at the Roeglass estate, but inclined against the ones on Lord Dromore's estate. They want to pay fifty per cent only, which would give Dromore two per cent less than the mortgage costs him. Lord Dromore does not mince matters; "[the tenants] want to rob me; I want to rob them; not that we're either of us evil-minded, but each would rather other men's children should starve than his own" (p. 288). The novel offers more of an insider's

view of the agricultural agitation than any other novel, but this does not result in hostility to the landlord class in general.

In other novels, the Land League and the agrarian agitations are less to the fore than in the novels previously mentioned in this chapter. *Mount Music* by Somerville and Ross, for example, is mainly concerned with the part religion plays in Irish society, but it is set in the context of current events, including the imminent transfer of land from landlords to tenants. Major Talbot-Lowry is loath to sell his land; undaunted, he faces deputations of public bodies and of his tenants, headed by the priest, who try to persuade him to change his mind. The Major's neighbour and relative, Larry of Coppinger's Court, sells his tenanted lands, thereby undermining the Major's position. But, contrary to Larry, the Major has his estate heavily mortgaged and simply feels that he cannot afford to sell. This was a problem common to many indebted landlords at the time, as the purchase price depended on the rents paid to the landlord and the rents had generally been substantially reduced.

In *The Real Charlotte*, Somerville and Ross only make very vague references to the Land League, none of which seems to take its threat very seriously. The religious director of Sir Benjamin's tenants writes to inform Lambert, the agent, that they have pledged themselves to the Plan of Campaign. However, as the May rent has been paid, Lambert does not mind if they "amuse themselves over summer". Charlotte has her own way of dealing with Land Leaguers. At one of Lady Dysart's "entertainments", after having listened to the archdeacon's melancholy pessimism as regards the current situation, she interrupts Major Waller in a fine outburst on martial law and boasts of her own practical politics: "D'ye know how I served Tom Casey, the land-leaguing plumber, yesterday? I had him mending my tank, and when I got him into it I whipped the ladder away, and told him not a step should he budge till he sang 'God save the Queen!'" (p.13).

During the Land War the Land League did not limit itself to encouraging tenants to withhold rents and to boycotting; it also extended its activities to the hunting field. As hunting was extremely important to landlords, this was a most effective form of protest. Its importance was captured by Lord Waterford in his plaintive cry:

> No one who has not had experience of what hunting is for a county can imagine what a fearful thing this is totally irrespective of the sport which is destroyed. It will destroy all social relations and will take thousands and thousands of pounds out of the county besides throwing hundreds of people out of work.[102]

The end of 1881 had brought hunting to a halt through sabotage and acts of violence. On the day of a hunt, farmers, their wives and children would come

[102] Waterford to Gibson, 9 Oct. 1881 (House of Lords Record Office, Ashbourne Papers, B154/3). Quoted in Bull, p. 125.

together to scour the countryside noisily to make sure no fox would be likely to be around when the hunt set out. Philip Bull points out that Lord Waterford took his hunting establishment over to England (p. 125) – a fact also mentioned by Bence-Jones in *The Twilight of the Ascendancy* (p. 39) – but for those not rich enough to do so, the winter months were very gloomy with only shooting as a consolation. "Land League hunts" destroyed even this alternative in some parts of the country, where people came together in their thousands to kill all the game on a particular estate. In *Mount Music* by Somerville and Ross, the partridges are run down by the greyhounds that have already killed off the hares; the salmon is poached; but worst of all, the covert the Major has planted a long time ago on Carmody's farm is burnt down and the vixen and her cubs perish with it. The Carmodys are prepared to go to any length to show their hostility towards their landlord and his family. On one occasion, Christian, the daughter of the house, has a narrow escape. On her way to the meet she is warned that Carmody's fences have been wired. Later, she gets a second warning from an elderly farmer. The meet follows the fox to Carmody's bounds, but the veiled hints of danger that have beset Christian throughout the day wake the spirit of revolt in her. After all, her father has the sporting-rights in the area. On the landing side of one of the big banks, a young man runs towards the riders, bawling and demonstrating with something that looks like a gun. A second man appears, yelling and brandishing a wide-bladed hay-knife. Christian's horse balks at the suddenness of the attack but is unable to stop herself. She falls forward and Christian falls with her. Christian is unhurt, but the horse has to be shot. Valiantly, Christian goes to the nearest farm, Carmody's, to borrow the gun she saw in the hands of one of the Carmodys earlier on. The young Ascendancy girl is shown to display great courage.

In *The Silver Fox* (1898) Lady Susan, the English wife of Captain Hugh French, is prevented from drawing a covert because of the superstition surrounding it. She is of the opinion that "rubbish of that kind" – so prevalent among the Irish – is as bad as the Land League (p. 54–55). However, judging by the novels of my study, there is no doubt that the Land League and the subsequent campaigns cause more hardship and upheaval for the landlords than any amount of superstition the tenants display.[103] Some novels express disappointment with tenants who do not honour the friendship that has existed between landlords and tenants for generations; others display an understanding of the tenants' joining the League, indicating that the tenants are as much victims of the League as the landlords. There is, in fact, often a curious way of dissociating the Land League and its actions from its members, the tenants. The agitators in Robinson's *The Plan of Campaign* are mainly portrayed as worthy and dedicated men; but in general the Land League is represented by selfish individuals such as Dogherty in

[103] About the Irish and superstition, see also chapters 2 and 3, "Religion" ("Catholics and Protestants", p. 100) and "Race" ("Superstition", p. 164).

Mrs H. H. Penrose's *Burnt Flax* and Donovan in Somerville and Ross's *Naboth's Vineyard*, and its deeds are presented as cowardly and criminal. England gets its fair share of the blame for allowing the agitation to fester, as well as for its lack of support for the Anglo-Irish landlords in their difficult position, in novels such as *A Boycotted Household* and *The Lloyds of Ballymore*. The Land League agitations forced landlords to take stock of their lives and their identity. The League created a political and social structure with implications far beyond its initial intentions.

Nationalists and Unionists

As time passed, the land question lost its identity as a separate issue and became a metaphor for the issue of nationality. By appointing Arthur Balfour, incidentally a friend of Martin Ross's brother Robert, Chief Secretary for Ireland in 1887, the government played into the hands of the Nationalists in Ireland, as his abrasive actions prevented the splitting of interests in Nationalist and Catholic Ireland. In 1889-91, however, the controversy over and the fall and subsequent death of the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, Charles Stewart Parnell, caused a divison in the Nationalist camp. Many younger Nationalists rejected the idea of parliamentary action and tried to create a new, more separatist Nationalism on the lines of Fenianism. The United Irish League, founded in 1898, was intended as a political answer to this, and its Nationalist function and aim were more open than those of earlier agitations.

F. S. L. Lyons points to the importance of the Boer War for Irish Nationalism and notes that Irish Nationalists were given a boost by the conflict in South Africa, in that it was felt to be a major setback for what had seemed to be the impregnable advance of British imperialism. A new surge of Nationalism developed around Arthur Griffith, who had spent some time in South Africa, and others of the Transvaal Committee, which lead to the political formation which was later to become Sinn Fein (Lyons, pp. 248, 260). On the issue of land tenure, by 1903 it was generally accepted by all parties concerned that purchase by tenants was the solution to the problem. The government, however, gave priority to repressing agitation rather than to speeding up and proceeding with reform. This is one of the reasons, as Philip Bull sees it, why the United Irish League was able to discredit the government in other areas. For one, the use of coercion made the judicial process in Ireland an easy target for attack and ridicule. The exaggerated use of contempt of court and conspiracy charges, as well as jury packing, which would have been unacceptable in other parts of the United Kingdom, helped undermine the moral standing of the government in Ireland. The United Irish League followed in the tradition of the Land League and set up its own "League courts", where anyone with a grievance was invited

to come and lay the facts before a tribunal at the meetings of the League executive. Another quasi-governmental role was taken over by the United Irish League, when it started to distribute relief to people suffering from economic distress with monies collected from Irish Americans. It also provided the Irish party with its chief instrument, its parish network. Increasingly, the League devoted itself to electoral politics and fund-raising for Home Rule. In December 1900, the Irish Parliamentary Party abstained from attending the opening of Parliament in London, going instead to a national convention of the League in Dublin. In doing so, they seemed to take a decisive step towards alternative government for Ireland (Bull, pp. 126–32).

Landlords were at this stage generally so embattled that they were eager to transfer the ownership of their lands. The tenants, on the other hand, had their eagerness mixed with a certain amount of apprehension. What would happen if agricultural prices were to fall again? They would no longer have the option of requesting a rent reduction, and the consequences of defaulting on purchase payments could turn out to be more serious than a failure to pay rents. It is interesting to note the glee with which old Mrs Knox in one of the Irish R. M. stories by Somerville and Ross clarifies to Stephen Casey his changed circumstances after having bought his farm. At the heart of Stephen Casey's trouble is a shop account, complicated by loans of single pounds to the extent that Goggin, the gombeen-man, is to take possession of Casey's three calves, a donkey and a couple of goats to liquidate the debt. In his desperation, Casey turns to Mrs Knox. Surely she would never be satisfied to see one of her tenants wronged? "I have no tenants, replied Mrs Knox tartly; the Government is your landlord now, and I wish you joy of each other!"[104]

Among those who sat in Parliament as Home Rulers in the 1870s, no less than half had come from the Ascendancy, according to Bence-Jones (p.18). Charles Stewart Parnell, Home Rule leader until his fall in 1890, also came from an impeccable Ascendancy background. On the whole, however, the movement had little support from the wider Ascendancy, even though it initially claimed rather a limited degree of independence. As the British Liberal Party was committed to Home Rule, the Irish Unionists felt that they had to campaign against them in Britain. Among those who got actively involved were, as I have already mentioned, Somerville and Ross, who went to canvass in an election in East Anglia in July 1895.

While there was opposition among the Anglo-Irish in the south of the country, there is no doubt that the strongest opposition to Home Rule came from the Protestants in Ulster. Ulster was the most Protestant and the most prosperous of the four provinces. After Catholic emancipation, it was inevitable that

[104] Somerville and Ross, "The Finger of Mrs Knox" in *The Irish R. M. Complete*, p. 322.

Protestants would constitute a small minority in an all-Ireland parliament. When Gladstone introduced his 1886 Home Rule Bill, severe rioting followed in Belfast, and there were further disturbances after the second bill. In 1905, the Ulster Unionist Council was formed, linking the Orange Order and Unionist associations throughout the province. Even if Protestants in the rest of Ireland were forced to yield to Nationalist aspiration, Ulster was determined to stay in the Union. When the 1912 Home Rule Act was introduced, the peers' veto on legislation had been reduced to delaying power; and with the prospect of the act becoming law in 1914, the Ulster Volunteer force was formed to protect the interests of Ulster. However, with the outbreak of the First World War it was agreed to postpone the implementation of this Government of Ireland Act until the war was over. By that time much had changed in Ireland.

In response to the Ulster Volunteer Force, the Irish Volunteers was formed in the south, while the intention of the Irish Citizens' Army, also formed in 1913, was to defend workers against police harassment during the strike and lockout actions in Dublin that year. When the First World War broke out, the leader of the Irish Party, John Redmond, wholeheartedly supported the war effort. This alienated the extreme Nationalists among his followers. The Irish Volunteers were infiltrated by members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, the Fenians, who – availing themselves of the Nationalist commonplace that England's necessity was Ireland's opportunity – fixed Easter Sunday of 1916 as the date for a rising in Dublin. Despite the odds being heavily against them, a number of the insurgents, among them Patrick Pearse, decided to go ahead.

Once the rebels had occupied some of their targeted buildings, they had nowhere to go. Only about 1,600 members of the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizens' Army turned out in Dublin. The rest of Ireland showed little interest in joining the rebels. After six days, Pearse was compelled to agree to the demand for unconditional surrender. Most of the casualties of the Rising were unarmed civilians, and the initial popular reaction to it was fury and disgust. However, the overreaction of the government played into the hands of the rebels. Patrick Pearse and two other signatories of the republican proclamation, which Pearse had read out outside the rebels' headquarters, were tried by court martial and shot. A few days later, fifteen executions had taken place. The executed men became martyrs, and the earlier apathy – or even hostility – towards republicanism was replaced by sympathy.

The majority of the Ascendancy found the idea of Home Rule unpalatable, although there were a few who sat in Parliament as Nationalists and Home Rulers as late as the 1890s and 1900s. According to Mark Bence-Jones in *Twilight of the Ascendancy*, there were also those who went further than supporting Home Rule, such as Albinia Brodrick, a daughter of Lord Midleton, who joined Sinn Fein, as did Constance Markievicz. Constance Markievicz, sister of the poet Eva

Gore-Booth of Lissadell in Co. Sligo, used to frequent Dublin Castle; but after 1908 she felt more like blowing it up than dancing in it (pp. 142–43). She took an active part in the Easter Rising in the College of Surgeons, and by a stroke of irony the officer who accepted its surrender, Captain Henry de Courcy-Wheeler, was a relation by marriage of the Countess.

In the novels, characters express different views on the matter of Home Rule and Nationalism. Larry in *Mount Music* (1919) by Somerville and Ross is an ardent Nationalist from an early age. As a child, his "young soul burned with the hatred of England, borrowed from the Bards of 'The Nation' Office" (p. 29).[105] When in Oxford, he starts the Companions of Finn and he professes to be a Home Ruler, if not even a Republican. Back in Ireland, Larry is persuaded by his Catholic friends to stand as the Nationalist candidate in the forthcoming election. It is true that Larry is a Catholic himself, albeit "by accident"; but he is also a landowner, and his relations – including his wife-to-be – are all Protestants. When Larry's uncle hears of his candidature, he is so upset that he has a stroke. Larry's politics come between him and his cousins, and his secret engagement to Christian Talbot-Lowry is put on hold. It is indicated that the Church, that is the Catholic Church, determines the election (pp. 249, 264), and only one of the priests in the area supports him. One priest's support is not sufficient, and Larry loses the opportunity of becoming the Nationalist representative of the area.

Nationalist Protestants faced the problem of being mistrusted by their Catholic countrymen as well as by the members of their own religion. To some the Gaelic League, founded in 1893 to preserve Irish as the national language and to publish Gaelic literature, seemed to offer a way of being Nationalist without a change of religion. In *Irreconcilables* (1916), Elizabeth Hart, a Catholic novelist, tests this option; but disaster awaits the Nationalist Gaelic Leaguer, a duke's son, who encourages his family to associate with Catholics and Nationalists. The novel sounds a clear warning against Protestants who were trying to find a place in the new Ireland.

The 1916 Rising features in two of the novels of my study: *vincent* (1918) by Nancy Millicent Chastel de Boinville (henceforth N. M. Chastel de Boinville), and Annie M. P. Smithson's *Her Irish Heritage* (1918). *O'Reilly of the Glen* shows sympathy for the 'dear Irish' but little understanding for their national aspira-

[105] *The Nation,* a weekly cultural and political journal, was founded in 1842 but suppressed in 1848. In 1849, a moderate wing of the original group began to publish a second series of the journal, which continued until 1896. The poetry and the essays that appeared in *The Nation* were collected in different forms. One of the most important anthologies to result from it was *The Spirit of the Nation,* first published in 1843 and later enlarged. In 1870, its fiftieth edition was published. *The Spirit of the Nation* is referred to on a number of occasions in *Mount Music. The New Spirit of the Nation* was published in 1894, the same year Larry and his cousins first meet. It contains poems published in *The Nation* after 1845, including some by Lady Wilde (Speranza).

tions. Dermot O'Donnell has been chosen by the late O'Reilly as tutor for his only son, principally on account of his violent patriotism. When O'Reilly dies, he leaves O'Donnell with the guardianship of his children, and the man is true to his trust. The young O'Reillys are "cradled in hatred. Hatred of law and order, of rule or reason, above all, hatred of their fellow countrymen" (p. 29). Young Pierce O'Reilly, of an old and distinguished Irish Catholic family, is upright and gallant, but he has been led astray by O'Donnell and is now a convinced Sinn Feiner. It is interesting to note that in Rosa Mulholland's *Marcella Grace*, another young man from a Catholic gentry family, Bryan Kilmartin, associates with men of the 'wrong politics', in his case the Fenians. He is framed by them because he wishes to leave their ranks. As James H. Murphy sees it, Mulholland, by portraying the Fenians as an unrepresentative force in Irish life, sought to mitigate the contagion of violence and its detrimental effect on Ireland's image in Britain (p. 21). Violence is acknowledged, but it is emphasized that there is objection to it within Ireland and that the whole community should not be judged on account of it. This could be seen to apply to Chastel de Boinville's novel, too. However, one important difference between the two novels is that the girl who supports Kilmartin is an Irish Catholic, Marcella Grace, while O'Reilly is made to see O'Donnell as the liar and embezzler that he is thanks to a Protestant girl from England, Rosamund Rynd. The story tells how she is won from her respectable English soldier by the romantic glamour of O'Reilly. He is a Nationalist but also a gentleman, and therefore he keeps his word to his comrades and takes part in the Rising.

Her Irish Heritage, "Dedicated to the Memory of the Men who Died Easter, 1916", was written from a different point of view by a convert from Unionism to Nationalism, Annie M. P. Smithson, and it shows a glowing pride in the sacrifice of the rebels. While the novel deals mainly with Clare Castlemaine's efforts to come to terms with her Irish heritage, the Catholic religion, there is some political fervour expressed by her Irish cousins. Early on Shamus hopes for a torch to be lighted that will run like a wildfire throughout the length and breadth of Ireland so that sparks will fall in every county – sparks that will burst into flame and purify his beloved country. When his friend Mary begs him not to do anything rash or get into any sort of trouble, he echoes:

> *Trouble!* [….] Why Mary, do you think I would mind any trouble – any hardship – do you think I would grudge the last drop of blood in my body if it was for Ireland! Oh, Mary, I often and often think what an honour – what a joy unspeakable it would be for me, if I *could* only say when Death called me – "This is for Ireland!" (p. 151)

Shamus, like Patrick Pearse, is convinced of the necessity of a blood sacrifice to arouse the Irish people. He, too, gets his wish fulfilled.

When the Rising takes place, Clare Castlemaine and Mary are in Co. Clare, where Clare is preparing herself for her baptism into Catholicism and her first

Holy Communion. The news of what has happened in Dublin takes some time to reach their village. When the newspapers finally arrive, they are full of "revelations of what English martial law means for Ireland" (p. 165). Clare and Mary telegraph Dublin but receive no reply, yet they never doubt for one moment that Shamus "had given his life for his 'darling Rosaleen' – for his dear, ill-fated land – the land that all down through the centuries has always had, and always will have, the power to bring under her banner all the best and brightest, and purest of young Irish manhood" (p. 166). Clare expresses her shame at being half-English to her fiancé, but he reassures her that once she is Mrs Farrell she will be Irish "every bit". Mary Carmichael, in the meantime, pours out her soul in prayer for those who "died for Ireland". Her grief is great, her heart torn with suffering and pain, and yet, over and above all her sorrow, there is "a feeling of pride and glory in the thought of those gallant young lives laid down so gladly – oh! so gladly! 'for Ireland'" (p. 170).

As regards the 1916 Rising, many in the Ascendancy world were convinced that ordinary people had no sympathy for the rebels and that the government's harsh reaction was justified. For them, the events in Dublin were overshadowed by what happened in the mud of Flanders and on the beaches of Gallipoli. It has been estimated that about 200,000 men from Ireland, as well as expatriates from Britain and the United States, joined the Irish colours. Protestants were over-represented, a fact attributed to the high recruitment rates in Ulster.[106] Many Anglo-Irish families lost close relations and people they knew. In Jessie Louisa Rickard's novel *The House of Courage* (1919), Kennedy Gleeson fights in the First World War, and the novel is set mainly in France and Germany. Apart from the fact that Kennedy is the son of an Irish landlord, there is nothing particularly Irish about this romantic novel. Reviewing it, a writer in *Everyman* noted: "In so far as they deal with Ireland, Mrs Rickard's novels are a very notable contribution to the Irish literary movement. She writes of the fast-declining generation of landlords and their homes with an intimate knowledge and a sure touch [...]" (Brown p. 317). Whether the writer of the review wished to indicate that the First World War played a part in the decline of the landlord class is, of course, impossible to guess. However, when the war was over, the Young Master was, as Bence-Jones expresses it in *The Twilight of the Ascendancy*, "no more than a memory and a photograph in uniform on a side table" in many country houses (p. 187).

The already precarious position of the Ascendancy was not improved by their members' having fought in what Irish Nationalists considered to be a British war. Those who survived the battles on the continent returned to a different Ireland from the one they had left in 1914. Their experience is one shared by some

[106] Fitzpatrick, "Ireland Since 1870", p. 235.

fictional heroes. Dan Palliser in *An Enthusiast* (1921) fought in the trenches but sympathizes with the Nationalist cause to the extent that he is called a rebel by his own Anglo-Irish family. The Sinn Feiners come to his house one night for money for their army; but he refuses to give them anything. Having fought for the King, he is not going to pay men to fight against him. That same night two of Dan's bullocks are stolen, and Dan realizes that for all his sympathy with the Nationalists, he is still considered their enemy.

The principal beneficiary of the 1916 Rising was Sinn Fein, the political movement founded in 1905 by Arthur Griffith. Griffith argued that the Irish MPs should quit Westminster, set up their own assembly in Dublin and make British government unworkable. As public opinion turned against the Irish Parliamentary Party, Sinn Fein won several by-elections in 1917. Among its successful candidates was Eamon de Valera, who had fought with the rebels in 1916 and who escaped execution because of his American citizenship. When a general election was held in December 1918, Sinn Fein won seventy-three of the 105 Irish seats, most of the rest going to the Unionists, while the old Nationalist party had almost ceased to exist. Sinn Fein's programme emphasized withdrawal from Westminster and resistance to British rule by all means (Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p. 490). Most of the Sinn Fein candidates were in prison in England, but on 21 January 1919 twenty-five members met in Dublin and adopted a declaration of Irish independence, committing themselves to the republic which had been declared in 1916 by Patrick Pearse. This Provisional Government, unrecognized by Britain, was led by de Valera with Constance Markievicz as Minister for Labour. On the same day that independence was declared, the War of Independence began, the so-called Troubles. By the end of the year, a virtual guerrilla war had developed between the anti-British section of the Volunteers, now called the Irish Republican Army (IRA), and the police and government forces. The country grew increasingly lawless as police barracks were attacked and country houses raided for arms. Some of these raids were armed robberies disguised as searches for arms, and on such occasions Sinn Fein and the local IRA would sometimes arrest the raiders when the police failed. This made a considerable impression on some country-house owners, who, as Bence-Jones claims, saw the government as either unable or unwilling to protect them while Sinn Fein seemed to try to maintain law and order (p. 194).

The government soon realized that the military and police were inadequate against the guerrilla warfare of the IRA, and, in the words of a contemporary, the Duchess of Fingall, the Government in London presently committed one of the worst mistakes ever made by a British government, even in Ireland:

> Unable to combat the campaign of assassination with their ordinary forces, they decided to fight their opponents with their own weapons. If they could not find an assassin and get a jury to convict him and execute him, they would employ men who

> would take the law into their own hands, without trial. They increased the numbers of the R. I. C. with new recruits, many ex-soldiers fresh from the battle-fields – and some ex-convicts fresh from gaol. The supply of dark green cloth being limited, these appeared half in their old khaki and half in R. I. C. uniform, and were christened after a famous old pack of Hounds, the 'Black and Tans'. In addition, a new force was formed, called the Auxiliaries. These were mostly ex-officers, many of them shell-shocked. They had little or no discipline, being all of equal rank. Some were Irishmen, wanting any job after the War, and little knowing what they were going to be asked to do. They were dropped down in barracks throughout the country, where they led as unsuitable a life as could be chosen for men still war-shattered. Their barracks were fortified with steel shutters and barbed-wire entanglements, as though they were in dug-outs in France. But here they lived in the middle of a populace where any man's hand or any woman's, might be against them. No social life was possible, and they spent their days in their fortified barracks with occasional lorry drives at break-neck speed through the country, leaving terror and destruction behind them. They drank a great deal, and their usual raiding time was at night, when the villages trembled at the sound of their lorries coming through the dark and quiet country. As well they might tremble. (*Seventy Years Young*, pp. 393–94)

When a policeman was shot or a barracks burned by Sinn Fein, it was a signal to the Black and Tans for reprisal, and a reprisal meant the burning of a village. Often the inhabitants of the particular village had nothing to do with the first outrage, as the perpetrators usually were not locals. Then the closest Big House might be burnt down as a counter-reprisal. And so it went on, in a vicious circle. The majority of the country houses destroyed in 1920–21 were in fact burnt in retaliation. In Bence-Jones' view, however, the number of these burnings has been greatly exaggerated. He notes that the total number of Irish country houses burnt between 1920 and 1923 was not more than about 200, or about 10 per cent of the 2,000 that existed in Ireland when the Troubles started (p. 195). Terence Dooley, using newspaper reports as his source, ends up with a higher figure, 275. 117 of these burnings took place between January and April 1923, Cork and Tipperary being the counties worst affected (pp. 286-87). The irony of all this is that no matter how pro-British the owner of the burnt house was, his view of the Black and Tans was probably similar to that of a Sinn Fein supporter. The atrocities committed by the Black and Tans made them unpopular with all sections of Irish society.

An Enthusiast by Somerville and Ross starts politically where another of their novels, *Mount Music*, ends. *An Enthusiast* is set during the Troubles in 1920, and even though the district of which Eskragh is the centre is less "disturbed" than others, "there were not many days of that summer, and still fewer nights, when the peace that seemed to hold it was not broken; when the glory of the summer mornings was not smirched by the smoke of fires [...]" (p. 87). One day the

roof of the court-house is gone; only the outside walls still stand, the door and the windows being boarded over. Where the town-clock has been, there is now a hole with blackened edges. Dan's groom knows what this means; Sinn Fein has been active, and now it is time for retaliation by the Black and Tans. We are "between the jigs and the reels, as they say, a pairson wouldn't know hardly where he'd be! Shot dead one day, may be, and burnt out the next!" (p. 104). Dan Palliser, however, is an optimist where Ireland is concerned – at least initially. He hopes that prosperity, created with the help of his advanced farming methods, will quench rebellion and discontent. He believes himself to have friends among all sections of society. The local Catholic priest, Father Hugh, and Dan have a great deal in common despite their different backgrounds; and Dan seems to take the Nationalist side on many occasions. He visits Patrick Curtin while Curtin's sons are dying from gunshot wounds upstairs just after the attack on the police barracks, but he chooses not to "see anything" and would certainly never report them. When he visits Eugene Cashen, a much-respected Sinn Fein man, the police arrives and Dan is prepared to lend Eugene his motorbike to escape. Dan loves Ireland but does not want to be put into any fold. All the same, he realizes that however aloof he may be where politics are concerned, his inner convictions have begun to diverge from the creed that has boomed in his ears from his youth up. "I'm not a Unionist, he reflects, and I'm certainly not a Sinn Feiner. I suppose I'm among the half-tones, what they call 'pasteltints'... No, hang it! I'm nothing" (p. 56).

In one conversation with Father Hugh, just after Dan's bullocks have been stolen by Sinn Feiners, Dan expresses his disappointment at being treated like an enemy by the rebels, despite his obvious sympathy for them. Father Hugh points out that it is impossible to be neutral and "stop half-way" in Ireland. Dan wants to be a farmer, simply and solely, without any politics, and he refuses to be bullied into taking sides. But he is not the only one to suffer this predicament. Many poor people who have not taken sides any more than Dan are in the same situation. "If it isn't one side 'll shoot me and rob me it's the other!", a mountain-farmer says in desperation, "or maybe it's to burn me little house over me head, they'll do!"(pp. 121–22).

Dan has had to let Monalour to Lord Ducarrig who, against Dan's advice, invites a few friends from England to come over to shoot. The telegram clearly states that "three guns" are coming over to him, and as the post is often read by people to whom it is not addressed, it is only a question of time before Monalour is raided by Sinn Fein in search of weapons. Dan has just left a dinner party there when Car, Ducarrig's wife, hears footsteps on the gravel outside and suspects that Sinn Fein has arrived. The men inside the house decide to take up their arms and defend themselves and their weapons against the intruders. Dan, as is his habit, is caught between the two parties: the men in the Big House and

the rebels. However, this time the odds are higher than usual and the outcome is fatal. He is killed by accident by one of the men he just left behind; and with Dan Palliser gone, the hope of a new Ireland, an Ireland including Protestant landlords like him, seems to be gone.

The same ambivalence as to identity and the same inability to take sides that afflicts Dan Palliser is expressed by one of the characters in Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September* (1929). He claims that the Anglo-Irish side, "our side", is "no side – rather scared, rather isolated, not expressing anything except tenacity to something that isn't there – that never was there" (p. 82). A lady visitor from London asks about the war with the same sense of impotence: "Will there ever be anything we can do, except not notice?" (p. 82). *The Last September* is also set in 1920, and it is centred around the character of a young girl, Lois. The Naylor family invite army officers to tea and to tennis-parties but nonetheless find it difficult to identify with the army's cause. When told that the army has captured Peter Conor, son of a tenant and a rebel, Sir Richard does not react in accordance with what the officer expects of him. "I'm sorry to hear that," he says flushing severely. "His mother is dying" (p. 91). The officer in question, Gerald, with whom Lois thinks she is in love, is shocked to find his perceived alliance between the Anglo-Irish Naylors and the barracks disintegrating. However, the seeming alliance of the army and gentry continues as Lois attends an officer's party at the barracks of Clonmore. When she returns, Lady Naylor, as always ready to criticize the English, remarks that if the soldiers "danced more and interfered less, there would be less trouble in the country" (p. 164).

Elizabeth Bowen herself came from Bowen's Court in Co. Cork, on which she modelled Danielstown. Her evocation of the twilight world of the Anglo-Irish in *The Last September* chronicles the death of a world from an autobiographical perspective in an almost documentary fashion. In *Bowen's Court*, Bowen describes the history of her own Anglo-Irish family from the Cromwellian settlement until 1959. From her account, it would appear that she was not actually at Bowen's Court during the 'Troubles'; but she was kept informed by friends and family, and Bowen's Court was never far from her mind:

> Between the armed Irish and British troops in the country, reprisals and counter-reprisals – tragic policy – raged. Fire followed shootings, then fires fires. In the same spring night in 1921, three Anglo-Irish houses in our immediate neighbourhood – Rockmills, Ballywalter, Convamore – were burnt by the Irish. The British riposted by burning, still nearer Bowen's Court, the farms of putative Sinn Feiners – some of whom had been our family's friends. What now? From the start, Henry VI [Bowen's father] had watched this pointless fatal campaign more with moral distress than with fear of loss. He now wrote to me – I was in Italy – telling me what was latest. "I am afraid," he said, "that, as things are now, there can only be one other development. You must be prepared for the next news, and be brave. I will write at once." I read

> his letter beside Lake Como, and, looking at the blue water, taught myself to imagine Bowen's Court in flames.[107]

It did not, after all, happen; but while Bowen's Court stayed untouched, Danielstown in *The Last September* does not escape. The novel concludes with the dispossessed guardians of Danielstown outside their Big House. "Above the steps, the door stood open hospitably upon a furnace. Sir Richard and Lady Naylor, not saying anything, did not look at each other, for in the light of the sky they saw too distinctly" (p. 206).

It was, states David Fitzpatrick in "Ireland Since 1870", international outrage at the situation in Ireland, as well as the military stalemate that resulted in the Better Government of Ireland Act of 1920, that introduced partition between two Home Rule states (p. 250). The idea of partition was abhorrent to Republicans, however. The Act is referred to directly in one of the novels. Talking to Dan Palliser in *An Enthusiast*, Eugene Cashen speaks for Republicanism: "When I think of that Act of an English Parliament that is being forced on us now, there's only one title I'd give it – 'Mangling done here!' Before God, Mr Palliser, I'd as soon give my sister's body to be cut up in the dissecting-room as consent to such an Act as that!" Dan, however, remains confident that Ulster will seek reunification as it will not be able to survive without southern co-operation: "We can't do without Ulster, and she'll find out the same about us some day!" (p. 83).

In 1921, there was a truce between Republicans and the government forces. An Anglo-Irish Treaty followed, providing for an Irish Free State with dominion status and allowing the six counties of Northern Ireland to remain within the United Kingdom. The Dáil narrowly approved it in 1922, even though many ministers repudiated the agreement. Civil war followed with dissentients to the Treaty, Republicans, in arms against the Free Staters who had accepted it. Republicans and Free Staters established themselves in Big Houses, occasionally burning one as they moved out so that the opposite side would not be able to utilize it.

In *Bowen's Court*, Elizabeth Bowen writes about her home being occupied by Republicans. They immediately mined the avenue and also made preparations to blow the house up in case of a surprise attack. However, "propriety seemed to have governed everyone's habits". The men spent most of their days reading Kipling, and once again Bowen's Court escaped unharmed (pp. 441–42). Bowen's Court was inherited by Elizabeth Bowen after her father's death in 1930. The running of the Big House depended on what she earned by her writing. She managed to hold on to it until, in 1959, matters reached a crisis and selling became inevitable. The buyer was a neighbour who intended to live in it. However, in the end he did not find it practicable. He thought at one time of compromising by taking off the top storey, but to Bowen's relief he never did. Finally, he

[107] Bowen, *Bowen's Court & Seven Winters*, pp. 439–40.

decided that there was nothing for it but to demolish the house completely. In *Bowen's Court,* Bowen sees it as a "clean end" (p. 459), but it was an end nonetheless. Bowen's Court never lived to be a ruin.

The war between the Free Staters and the Republicans went on throughout the winter and the next spring. The Chief of Staff of the Republican forces ordered that the houses of all Senators should be burned, and many houses that had survived the Troubles were now erased, such as George Moore's Moore Hall, Horace Plunkett's Kilteragh and Lord Mayo's Palmerstown, to mention just a few. February 1923 was in fact the month with the highest number of houses burned. According to Terence Dooley's study the number was 58, nearly three times higher than the highest monthly figure recorded during 1920–21 (pp. 286–87). In *Twilight of the Ascendancy*, Mark Bence-Jones, tells of Lord Mayo's reaction to the burning of Palmerstown. When asked if he would now leave Ireland, he replied: "No. I will not be driven from my own country" (p. 233). He added that he and Lady Mayo would live in the servants' wing that had survived the fire. But many of the Anglo-Irish went away – their houses were burnt and they were heartbroken. Even when their houses had survived they left, as their friends had left before them. Some of them were undoubtedly also confirmed Unionists who did not want to live in an Ireland that was not part of the United Kingdom. Very few, however, moved across the Border into Northern Ireland, even though the Ascendancy held on to official positions there to a much greater extent than in the south. In the Free State, some of the Anglo-Irish had been nominated Senators in the second house, W. B. Yeats for example. In Terence Dooley's estimation, sixteen out of the thirty senators nominated by President Cosgrave could be described as ex-Unionists. Former landlord families were represented by such as Lord Dunraven (p. 236). In the Dáil, however, where the real power lay, there were only about half a dozen deputies with Anglo-Irish background during the first decade.

Those of the previously powerful landlord class who stayed in Ireland now had to come to terms with being ruled by the Free Staters who had founded the Cumann na nGaedhael party in 1923. In 1926, de Valera left Sinn Fein and founded the Fianna Fail party, which took the majority of the seats in 1932, and the former Unionists were faced with the prospect of being governed by those who had fought on the Republican side in the Civil War. De Valera lifted the ban that had been placed on the IRA. However, after Admiral Boyle Somerville, Edith Somerville's brother, was shot, allegedly by the IRA,[108] the ban was imposed again and no further outrages against the Ascendancy followed.

[108] Boyle Somerville had retired as a vice-Admiral to Castletownshend. Answering a knock on his front door on a night in March 1936, he was shot dead by a shadowy gunman. It has been suggested that applications to the Admiral from local boys, who wished for certificates of good character to enable them to join the Royal Navy, were built up by political extremists into accusations that he was engaged in recruiting (Powell, p. 208).

At this time, the term Ascendancy is no longer applicable. The formerly so powerful Anglo-Irish landlords had seen their position slowly but surely eroded since the introduction of the first Land Acts, but particularly since the agrarian agitations became increasingly effective. The Anglo-Irish landlords were now landless, if not homeless. Their political connection with Britain was broken and no matter how Irish they considered themselves to be, the Irish thought of them as intruders. This feeling of being outsiders was nothing new. As early as 1171, the Anglo-Norman knight Maurice Fitzgerald expressed what many Anglo-Irish felt more than 700 years later: "Such in truth is our lot that while we are English to the Irish, we are Irish to the English. For the one island does not detest us more than the other".[109] When reading the novels outlined in this chapter, it is clear that there is an ambivalence about identity among the Anglo-Irish characters which seems difficult, not to say impossible, to overcome.

[109] Edmund Curtis, *A History of Medieval Ireland* (London: Methuen, 1938), p. 55. Quoted in Moynahan, p. 32.

2 Religion

Religious affiliation was a major source of division between the people of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ireland. Generally speaking, the Protestant Ascendancy had been established by way of confiscation of land owned by Catholics. Until the last few decades of the eighteenth century, the political scene in Ireland was under the tight control of a few thousand Church of Ireland landlords whose power was based on their almost total domination of the landed property. The Anglican established church, the Church of Ireland, and its small minority of the Irish population represented the official religion of the state.

For the members of the Protestant Ascendancy to be able to uphold their position, it was essential that the majority Catholic presence in Irish life was contained, and with this in mind a series of repressive laws were introduced. In 1695, acts were passed restricting the rights of Catholics in education, arms-bearing, and horse-owning. The Catholic clergy were banished. In 1704, further legislation was introduced with the intention of restricting the rights of Catholics to hold public office and in relation to landholding. In 1728, the right to vote was specifically removed from Catholics; the Parliament now formally represented Protestant opinion alone. These Penal Laws, as they came to be known, put the Catholic Irish firmly in their place and also, to a lesser extent, the Protestant dissenters, since it was necessary to belong to the Church of Ireland to be admitted to any role in public life.

Despite all these penalizing measures, there were still some Catholic gentry in the country. However, many of the Catholic families holding land in the eighteenth century 'conformed' to Protestantism, and those who kept their faith tended to become impoverished compared to any Protestant branches of the families concerned. In her memoirs, the Countess of Fingall recounts how the 12th Baron of Dunsany became a Protestant in the Penal Days in order to keep his horse, at a time when no Catholic might keep a horse of more value than £5 (p. 104). The figures for Catholic landholding given by, for example, George Boyce show just how dominant the few thousand Anglo-Irish landlords were: by 1703 the Catholic landholding share had fallen to fourteen per cent, but eventually it was to fall to a mere five per cent.[110]

A gradual repeal of the Penal Laws was started in 1772, when a relief act allowed Catholics to lease bogland, but more radical liberalizing measures were

[110] George Boyce, *Ireland 1828–1923: From Ascendacy to Democracy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. 3.

slow in coming. For England, being such an overwhelmingly Protestant country, the idea of allowing Catholics in Westminster was a difficult one to accept, particularly as many English as well as Irish Protestants considered Roman Catholics to be disloyal and treasonable. The slow progress towards full emancipation had far-reaching repercussions on Irish and British politics. The frustration in Ireland resulted in forceful agitation led by the Catholic lawyer and landowner, Daniel O'Connell. He used the issue of emancipation to build a mass movement, and great public demonstrations were mounted to put pressure on the government. Finally, in 1829, full Catholic emancipation was achieved. This was a serious setback for the Anglican Irish, who had been on the defensive ever since the relaxation of the Penal Laws in the latter half of the eighteenth century had begun to undermine their authority. The outward signs of the Catholic emancipation were immediate: churches, schools, seminaries, monasteries and convents rapidly appeared all over the country, provided for by subscriptions and dues from the Catholic community. With such a decisive and visible manifestation of Catholicism, the Protestant minority became increasingly aware of its minority status.

Catholic emancipation was only one of many setbacks to affect the Anglican Irish in the nineteenth century. In *Ireland Since the Famine*, F. S. L. Lyons points to the violence waged by Catholics in the 1830s against paying tithes to the clergy of the Church of Ireland as another severe blow to them, as well as the passing of the Irish Church Temporalities Act in 1833. The act suppressed ten episcopal sees altogether, while the remaining twelve had their revenues reduced. This happened in response to radical and Catholic pressures and was in a way the beginning of the end of the special status that the Church of Ireland had held in the country. Although its descent was slow – complete disestablishment had to wait another thirty-six years – it was as predictable as it was inevitable, particularly because of the geographical distribution of Anglicanism in Ireland. According to the 1861 census, nearly two-thirds of the Episcopalian Protestants, or Anglicans, were concentrated in Ulster while the majority of the rest were in Leinster, close to Dublin. The small Protestant minority was thus very thin on the ground in large areas of the country.

When the Irish Church Act of 1869 finally disestablished the Church of Ireland, it brought a new sphere of influence for Protestant landowners. No longer a Department of State, the Church was controlled by an Ascendancy-dominated Synod responsible mainly for ecclesiastical appointments. Nonetheless, disestablishment was fiercely opposed in Ascendancy circles. One possible reason for this is suggested by Mark Bence-Jones in *Twilight of the Ascendancy*. He claims that High Churchmen, like William Bence-Jones, feared that the disestablished Church would be taken over by the Evangelicals (pp. 16–17). The legal break between Church and State was certainly not taken lightly by the Anglo-Irish. In *Wheel-Tracks,* Edith Somerville remembers it as one historical

event that made a deep impression on her as a child. She was acutely aware that her parents, grandfather, uncles and aunts – strong Churchmen and women all – considered Gladstone's Irish Church Act as "an almost incredible sacrilege, a felon stab that hit them harder even than the measures that thenceforward ended by stripping them not only of their property, but also of the political and civic influence that their consciences could assure them they had exercised only for good" (p. 69).

However, apart from breaking the legal connection between the Church and the State and making of the Church of Ireland a voluntary body, the Irish Church Act also brought material changes. Property of the Church was confiscated and vested in a Temporalities Commission, set up to administer the revenues accumulated. Martin Ross's comments on the disestablishment of the Irish Church alludes to these material changes: "The Disestablishment of the Irish Church came in 1869, a direct blow at Protestantism, and an equally direct tax upon landlords for the support of their Church [...]".[111] Another intention behind the act was to facilitate the purchase of church lands by their tenants with state aid. However, this happened on a small scale only and in many cases it was local landlords themselves who bought out the church lands.

The symbolic significance of the Church Act went far beyond its immediate effects. It was now obvious to the Protestant Ascendancy that they were vulnerable to the new harmony between English Liberalism and Irish Catholicism. "In future", Cardinal Cullen reported to Rome after the passing of the Church Act, "the Protestants will find themselves without any privileges [...] The poor Protestants are all very irritated. They never did imagine that England would have abandoned their cause".[112]

The shattering experience that the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland was to Anglicans must be considered against the background of the dimensions of the Catholic majority. The size of that majority was not reliably calculated until in the Census of 1861, when it was shown that Catholics accounted for approximately 77.7 per cent of a total population of 5,800,000. Anglicans were the most numerous group amongst other denominations with a share of just under twelve per cent, while for the Presbyterians the Census of 1861 recorded slightly more than nine per cent.[113] Fifty years later, when the population had shrunk to 4,400,000, the percentages were similar. However, not only did Catholics vastly outnumber Protestants in the country; the Catholic Church also became increasingly powerful and better organized as time went by.

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[111] Quoted in Lewis, *Somerville and Ross*, p. 27.

[112] Edward R. Norman, *The Catholic Church in Ireland in the Age of Rebellion, 1859–1873* (London: Longmans, 1965), p. 382. Quoted in Lyons, p. 146.

[113] *Thom's Irish Almanac and Official Directory* (Dublin: Alexander Thom, 1863), Table IV, p. 725. 1861 was the first occasion on which the subject of religious affiliation formed part of the decennial census.

In *Modern Ireland 1600–1972*, R. F. Foster states his view that the confessional basis of Irish politics had in fact become highly accentuated as early as the 1830s. It was reinforced by the boom in Protestant evangelicalism from the early nineteenth century, epitomized by organizations such as the Hibernian Bible Society (1806) and the Religious Tract and Book Society (1810). This "Second Reformation" was hailed in a torrent of pamphlets, tracts and sermons. One of the novels of my study, Mabel S. Madden's *The Fitzgerald Family* (n. d. [1910]), was in fact published by the Religious Tract and Book Society. Foster claims that the actual state of the Church of Ireland bore little relation to "the fervent ideal of a civilizing mission in the steps of St Patrick (who was appropriated by Protestant antiquarians as an atavar of the Reformed Irish Church). As with Protestant politics, the psychology was that of a minority on the defensive" (pp. 302–03). The time had come for the Catholic Church to act on the offensive.

According to F. S. L. Lyons, Catholic priests were scarce before the Famine, and folklore as well as pagan belief tended to mingle with Catholic doctrine. Cardinal Cullen, who was appointed Ireland's first cardinal in 1866, initiated the building of a great number of churches; but, more importantly, he disciplined the clergy, and through them a new mentality began to permeate Irish Catholic society. This development was abetted by a steady increase in the numbers of priests, monks and nuns. In 1900, states Lyons, there were over 14,000 priests, monks and nuns for a Catholic population of 3 1/3 million while in 1850 the number has been estimated at only about 5,000 for a Catholic population of five million (p. 19). The implications for the Protestant Anglo-Irish whose church had lost its special status were profound. They no longer dominated Irish society; instead, a Catholic lower-middle-class establishment became, to quote Emmet Larkin, Ireland's nation-forming class.[114]

There is general agreement that a "devotional revolution" took place in the course of the nineteenth century in Ireland and that this, in turn, was a major factor in the development of what was to become traditional Catholic Ireland. In Larkin's view, Catholicism came to replace language as the defining characteristic of national identity, and to him the decline of the Irish language was the main reason for the flourishing of orthodox Catholicism.[115] Not being a Catholic made it more difficult to qualify as being Irish, at least in the eyes of the section of Irish society that was (1) Gaelic in language and cultural tradition, (2) peasant in social origin, (3) republican in politics, and (4) Catholic in religion.

[114] Emmet Larkin, "Church, State and Nation in Modern Ireland" in *The American Historical Review*, 80 (1975), 1244–76.

[115] There are other theories as to why this "devotional revolution" took place. In "The Great Hunger and Irish Catholicism", *Societas*, 8 (1978), 137–56, Eugene Hynes suggests that it came about, and was so successful, because aspects of orthodox Catholicism coincided with the economic interests of the dominant section of Irish society, the middling farmer class (farmers who held more than thirty acres of land).

In *Dancing to History's Tune*, Brian Walker admits that rivalry between denominations was not new to Irish politics in 1885 but nevertheless sees the elections of 1885 and 1886 as crucial for the religious/political divide in Ireland. In Walker's view, the political scene in Ireland in the 1850s and 1860s was still dominated by the liberal and conservative parties, which accepted the United Kingdom framework. It was not until the general election of 1874 with the appearance of the Home Rule movement that constitutional Nationalism became an important political force. The Home Rule party won largely Catholic support, even though in 1874 and 1880 there were considerable numbers of Protestant Home Rule MPs. From 1885–86, however, the conflict over the Nationalist issue was largely based on a Protestant/Catholic divide; that divide remained at the centre of Irish elections right up to 1921 and affected the politics that emerged after 1921 in Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State (pp. 15–17).

It was in this context that Protestant women wrote their novels. As I have already mentioned, these novelists were Protestants of various shades. Even within the Church of Ireland, as well as the Church of England, there were several religious groupings. The three principal groups – High, Low and Broad – were further divided into intricate "grades".[116] Edith Somerville was High Church.[117] Erminda Rentoul Esler, on the other hand, was not even Episcopalian but Presbyterian.[118] However, as I have chosen not to make any distinction between the different Protestant churches, both are 'Protestant' only in my study. The internal strife among the different Protestant churches no doubt became less urgent when the power of the Catholic Church increased. Brian Walker noted that in the 1885 election, Presbyterian and members of the Church of Ireland, in Ulster and in the rest of Ireland, came together in support of the union while in earlier elections there were sharp divisions in voting behaviour between Presbyterians and members of the Church of Ireland in Ulster (pp. 19–20). The divide in Irish society was predominantly Protestant/Catholic, and religious denomination brought political connotations.

[116] In an essay, "Church Parties", in 1853, W. J. Conybeare makes the following division between the different groups and grades: *Low Church*: Normal Type ("Evangelical"), Exaggerated Type ("Recordite"), Stagnant Type ("Low and Slow"). – *High Church*: Normal Type ("Anglican"), Exaggerated Type ("Tractarian"), Stagnant Type ("High and Dry"). – *Broad Church*: Normal Type (subdivided into "Theoretical" and "Anti-theoretical"), Exaggerated Type ("Concealed Infidels"), Stagnant Type ("Concealed Infidels"). Cited in Margaret M. Maison, *Search Your Soul, Eustace: A Survey of the Religious Novel in the Victorian Age* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1961), pp. 12–13.

[117] Gifford Lewis writes of the Somervilles that they had been High Church Episcopalians on their flight from Scotland and that they took but half-heartedly to the lowness of Church of Ireland worship. In Edith Somerville's generation and that following, the temperament of the more thoughtful among them was to lead them to Anglo-Catholicism (*Somerville and Ross*, p. 23). Bence-Jones points out that the inhabitants of Castletownshend differed from most of the Ascendancy in that they were High rather than Low Church, p. 154.

[118] In an episcopal church structure, bishops – regarded as the successors of the original twelve apostles – are responsible for the pastoral care in their dioceses. Presbyterianism is a more independent church system with liberty for the individual congregation.

As can be expected, most novels portray Catholic as well as Protestant characters. Generally speaking, it is possible to deduce, or at least guess, to which religion a character belongs, even when it is not clearly stated. If one is not a Protestant one is a Catholic, and certain defined habits and social attitudes seem to pertain to each. The general stereotype has been of Catholics as superstitious, naïve, wasteful and incompetent while their priests are deluding, crafty and greedy. Protestants on the other hand have tended to consider themselves as hard-working, intelligent and responsible people.[119] Often it is in the interplay of these two groups and in the portrayal of them that religion features in the novels.

Except for five of the novels, to be discussed under the heading "Religious Novels" on page 132 – Erminda Rentoul Esler's *The Trackless Way* (1904) with the subtitle *The story of a Man's Quest of God*, Eleanor Alexander's *The Rambling Rector* (1904), Rosamond Langbridge's *The Stars Beyond* (1907), Mabel S. Madden's *The Fitzgerald Family* (n. d. [1910]) and Mrs H. H. Penrose's *Denis Trench* (1911) – none of the novels dealt with in this study could be considered a 'religious novel' in the sense that it deals with religion or existential issues in a dominant way. According to Margaret M. Maison's *Search Your Soul, Eustace*, "[t]o the Victorian Reader religious novels meant 'theological romances', 'Oxford Movement Tales', novels of religious propaganda designed to disseminate a variety of forms of Christian belief, and assorted spiritual biographies in fiction, including converts' confessions of all kinds from apologies of ardent agnostics to the testimonies of Catholic 'perverts'".[120] This definition is wide and rather vague; it certainly covers the five novels mentioned above. Annie M. P. Smithson's novel *Her Irish Heritage* (1918) could also be seen to belong among them; in this case, however, I have chosen to look at it in the context of "Mixed marriages and conversions". In several novels apart from the ones mentioned above, religion – or rather differences in religion – plays a part in the plot.

Religion and religious issues permeated Irish society, and in many of the novels comments are made in passing on Catholics and Protestants, comments which deserve to be noted. The fact that the novels by the Protestant Anglo-Irish novelists of my study were, with few exceptions, published in Britain and mainly

[119] These perceptions have been strongly rooted, particularly in the North. Edward E. O'Donnell in *Northern Irish Stereotypes* (Dublin: College of Industrial Relations,1977) found that the stereotype that Protestants had of Roman Catholics was that they were ordinary enough people, but Irish-Nationalist-Republican. They were seen as being brainwashed by their priests, having too many children, and being superstitious and bitter. Not surprisingly, Catholics described themselves differently. The words they used about themselves (in order of frequency mentioned) were: Irish, long-suffering, ordinary people, insecure, decent, deprived, unfortunate, fine people, Nationalistic, reasonable. The way Protestants saw themselves was above all as British loyalist ordinary people who were determined, decent people. They also regarded themselves as industrious, as Orangemen, as conservative and as power-holders. The choice of words used by Catholics about them has some important differences: power-holders, bigoted, loyalist, Orangemen, British, bitter, ordinary people, brainwashed, determined, murderers.

[120] Margaret M. Maison, *Search Your Soul, Eustace: A Survey of the Religious Novel in the Victorian Age* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1961), p. 1.

written for a British audience makes it particularly interesting to note how their Catholic fellow countrymen are portrayed. Is any disassociation or distancing discernible by way of religious denomination? In "Catholics and Protestants", I look at how the religious denomination affects the presentation of characters. I then deal with "Mixed marriages and conversions", that is to say marriages and romantic relationships between Catholic and Protestant characters as well as conversions from one religion to the other. Priests, of different religions, are fairly common in the novels; they feature in "Priests and nuns". Novels which deal with religion or existential matters to a greater extent than others are looked at in "'Religious' novels".

Catholics and Protestants

The majority of the novels deal with religion in passing only. However, religious issues were contentious at the time and imbued society to a considerable extent. Even occasional passages afford some insight into how Catholics and Protestants could be viewed by Anglo-Ireland. James H. Murphy claims that the Catholic intelligentsia's version of Catholicism had a great deal in common with the general Protestant charge of Catholic "vulgarity in manner and a transparently self-interested boorishness in action", more so than it had with the evangelical tradition which equated Catholicism with superstition (p. 52). To what extent is this criticism of Catholicism on social and religious grounds respectively discernible in the novels of my study? And, if Catholic characters are seen as 'vulgar' as regards behaviour and appearance and 'superstitious' as regards faith and religious practice, what characteristics are ascribed to Protestant characters?

There are a large number of 'vulgar' people who are Catholics in the novels by the Protestant women novelists. The criticism levelled at them on social grounds by these writers seems to be occasioned by complaints similar to those found in Catholic intelligentsia fiction. Since Catholics had been disadvantaged in Irish society for a long time, it is not surprising that proportionately fewer Catholics had reached the echelon where they were able to nurture 'refinement' only. Money or education does not exempt a character from being presented as 'vulgar'; and if such a character's deviation from accepted upper-class behaviour is too pronounced, the criticism directed against him tends to associate his 'vulgarity' with his religion. This is how Dr Mangan in *Mount Music* (1919) by Somerville and Ross is perceived, and similar complaints apply to Baby Bullet, or Mr Coyne by another name, in another Somerville and Ross novel, *An Enthusiast* (1921), as well as to Magrath in Ella MacMahon's *The Job* (1914). What all these three Catholic men are censured for is their reckless pursuit of material advantages, and it is mainly in this trait that their 'vulgarity' consists. They will all feature as 'grabbers' or 'gombeen-men' in Chapter 4, "The New Irish and 'The Ould

Stock"'. However, Catholic characters may be ostracized on other grounds as well. Dr Mangan's daughter Trish in *Mount Music* is castigated as "a highly coloured peacock butterfly" (p. 130). Similarly Birdie Roe, daughter of the master of a tournament at the 'cassel' in *The Job,* is described in the following way:

> Birdie Roe was an undeniably pretty girl in a somewhat underbred style. Big and inclined to corpulence, her eyes were dark, handsome, and sparkling, and her colour good. She had a pink and white skin, ripe lips and a full bosom. Her feet were large, and her hands likewise, while the latter betrayed their owner's devotion to outdoor pursuits rather too prominently to be pretty – and would have been the better for a course of manicure (p. 146).

In general Catholic girls are not 'visible' in the novels, and it is in this deviation from the norm that the 'vulgarity' of Trish and Birdie consists. They are "highly-coloured", "sparkling" and very visible indeed. Furthermore, they are tainted by being their fathers' daughters.

'Vulgarity' is by no means restricted to wealthy Catholics in rural Ireland only. The setting in Ella MacMahon's *Fancy O'Brien* (1909) is Catholic lower-middle-class Dublin. The titular hero is a young man who has just lost his parents. The maid, Bridgie, is pregnant by him; but Fancy wants to marry Julia Corcoran's money. Despite being haunted by the priests who advise him to marry Bridgie, Fancy cannot make up his mind and is eventually killed by Bridgie's father. Fancy is a weak and selfish protagonist. The Catholic lower-middle-class society he represents appears petty and 'vulgar'. It is interesting to note that Ella MacMahon, according to several sources, converted to Catholicism.

However, while there are many 'vulgar' Catholics in the novels, the number of 'vulgar' Protestants is also quite considerable. Prime examples are Tim in Jane Barlow's *The Founding of Fortunes* (1902) and Charlotte in *The Real Charlotte* (1894) by Somerville and Ross, both in reckless pursuit of material advantages like their Catholic counterparts.

As for the connection between superstition and Catholicism, it is of course well-nigh impossible to ascertain whether, or to what extent, that which is presented as superstition is connected with religious affiliation, race or class.[121] Every country and every people have their folk customs and superstitions, but the Irish were thought to have more than most. Their superstitions took many forms: there were charms, spells, potions, incantations and rituals which were said to have the power to heal the sick, predict good or bad luck and much more. One thing all these superstitions had in common was that they chiefly seemed to be concerned with the helplessness of the human condition, a reason, perhaps, for the prevalence of superstitions among the Irish. As R. F. Foster points out in *Modern Ireland*: "the rich and varied rural lore of fairies, charms, banshees, superstitions, 'special days', rituals, sympathetic magic and amulets could and did live

[121] Superstition will also be dealt with in Chapter 3, "Race", p.164.

alongside the particularly Irish Christianity of the countryside, and could even be assimilated into it" (p. 208). The status of Catholicism as 'unofficial' religion for so long undoubtedly contributed to this development. However, during the second half of the nineteenth century, a more organized Catholic church saw to it that the increasing number of priests was better disciplined to be able to channel the people into more orthodox religion, leaving as many of the previous superstitious features behind as possible.

There are times when a novel seems close to equating Catholicism and 'superstition'. A case in point is *Grania* (1892) by Emily Lawless, which tells the story of a strong and independent woman who lives on Inishmaan, one of the Aran Islands. Her perspective is the dominant in the novel. In *The Irish Novel*, James M. Cahalan calls *Grania* "a rare proto-feminist gem" and describes it as a "tragic, naturalistic story of a woman's attempt to establish her own identity" (p. 82). The islanders, including Grania, are said to experience vague presences which are "unseen but realisable – survivals of a whole world of forgotten beliefs, unfettered by logic, untouched by education, hardly altered even by later and more conscious beliefs, which have rather modified these earlier ones than superseded them" (pp. 113–14). Grania's sister Honor is well known to everybody on Inishmaan for her devout religious faith. She is very ill but thinks of the pain she has to endure as all joy and sweetness, ardently wishing that Grania, too, will in some mysterious way benefit from her sufferings. Her diligent efforts to impart religious instruction to her sister are in vain. When Honor fervently expresses the hope that she and Grania will meet again in heaven and be separated no more, Grania cannot "even pretend to respond to the sick woman's eager longing. She would have done so if she could, but it was impossible" (pp. 135–36). Honor's devoutness is unnatural to her unconventional sister. The contrast between the two may have contributed to giving a perception of Honor's belief as indeed unnatural, even to the extent of being cloying. The *Freeman's Journal* (13th May, 1892) had this to say:

> When the spiritual life of such a character as Honor O'Mally [*sic*] is accepted at best by the authoress as the outcome of a refined form of superstition, it is, of course, unnecessary for her to dwell at considerable length on the explanation of why such very tangible and self-sacrificing results issue from the hypothesis stated, a curiously inadequate course. To the Catholic reader, of course, no such difficulty of interpretation exists, and he will read the interpretation offered with a feeling of ingenious futility (p. 2).

Grania is different both as regards religion and superstition. Some of the islanders accuse her of totally disregarding fairy rings and of not even crossing herself when walking past a red jackass on the road. The professional storyteller of Inishmaan knows what happens to strong and independent girls like her and recounts a story of a proud young woman who had her baby substituted for the devil by the *sidhe* (fairies). There are many examples of how superstition manifests itself among the people of Inishmaan, and it is made clear that Grania is exceptional

in her disbelief. She even mocks her lover, Murdough, when he admits to having been afraid in case the *Fear Darrig* (red man) appear in the lonely spot in the dark where he waits for Grania.

In Lawless's *Hurrish,* too, the superstitious nature of the mere Irish characters and their closeness to the otherworld is emphasized. Particularly in remote regions like the "stony-hearted Burren", the setting of the novel, demon-worship is said to die hard. Alley, Hurrish's young niece, is one of the characters who are deeply influenced by their surroundings. "Her pure, singularly transparent spirit seemed to float away in visions of faith and tenderness, which her very ignorance – if you will superstition – only made the wider and the more embracing" (p. 78). However, even Maurice Brady, who has always "set his face against [...] the rubbish fellars go on with about ghosts, and fetches, and such like oldfashioned talk", has to accept that he is no different from other people. He has a shattering experience, which is in fact a premonition of his brother's death (pp. 86–87). Hurrish himself meets the death-spirit (p. 169) and has a firm belief in O'Brasil.[122] Not to believe in O'Brasil would have been tantamount to atheism in his view, the omniscient narrator tells us (p. 152). It is out towards O'Brasil that Hurrish looks on his death-bed; but it should be noted that Father Denahy is there to give him the "last offices of the Church" (p. 192).

Father Connolly, the parish priest in F. E. Crichton's *The Blind Side of the Heart* (1915), is a fictional priest who tries hard to combat the manifestations of his parishioners' superstition. He has to come to the rescue when Dick, the engineer from Scotland, finds it difficult to get the work carried out that is the purpose of his visit to Ireland. The superstition of his workmen causes the project to come to a standstill. Dick's foreman, Michael Donovan, is convinced of the power of the fairies and refuses to fell a so-called fairy-tree, even though it is necessary for the work to progress. Dick himself is forced to fell it, in secret at night. The next morning Michael Donovan is found dead in his bed and Dick falls seriously ill, with the consequence that the men do not want to work on the project at all any more, lest they, too, risk punishment by the fairies. Father Connolly is always very friendly towards Dick and does his utmost to help him. In his view, the old beliefs in fairies often exist alongside Christianity, and he has no hesitation in considering his people true Christians; their faith is only "wider". By opening "a chink of that other door" to let them "smell brimstone", Father Connolly manages to persuade the "lazy warm-hearted children" to go back to work and Dick is able to accomplish his task in Ireland (p. 227). The Catholic priest represents a sensible outlook on 'superstition' and uses religion as a tool to combat it.

As with vulgarity, superstition is an affliction which is not limited to the

[122] O'Brasil or Hy Brasil (Brasail) – an Elysium somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean [Ir. *I Breasail*]. Hy Brasail is one of the *Insulae Purpuraricae* described by Pliny; cartographers were so convinced of its existence that it was shown on some charts as late as 1853. It is sometimes identified with the most famous mythical island, Atlantis. Wall, *A Dictionary & Glossary for the Irish Revival,* p. 85.

Catholic characters in the novels by the Anglo-Irish women novelists. Eithne Blake in the same novel by Crichton is a Protestant and alternates with her family between England and Ireland. She has been very much influenced by her surroundings in Ireland, we are told, and is considered 'otherworldly'; she believes in fairies and cures the sick by charming away their pains. O'Brasil/Hy Brasil features in this novel as well as in Emily Lawless's *Hurrish.* Eithne is upset when she has seen the magic isle because it is supposed to bring sorrow. Father Connolly has rather a low opinion of Eithne's meddling with the beliefs of the Irish peasants and expresses views which are not articulated by any of the Anglo-Irish characters in the novel:

> I think there is a great difference between Miss Blake's beliefs and those of the peasant. With the poor people, I believe they are like wall-paper in the rooms where they were born, their natural, inevitable surroundings, but hers are like pictures deliberately chosen and hung up with her own hands [...] I don't think she is consciously insincere, but she is full of romance, and she worships what is picturesque. I haven't much patience with it myself. To be born in a dim, limited world like the peasants, is one thing, but to walk with open eyes into the twilight, and hide there with a lot of dreams is quite another. (p. 230)

This could, perhaps, be seen as a disparaging remark directed towards the writers associated with the Celtic Twilight. Generally, belief in the otherworld, spiritualism and the occult – with many sub-divisions – was quite common among the Anglo-Irish during the period. R. F. Foster claims that the superstitiousness of Irish Protestants was legendary, and he indicates a possible reason for it: "For a Catholic, religious authority provided the arbitrary; an Irish Protestant had to look elsewhere.Yeats found it in magic".[123]

The interest that Protestants like Lady Gregory, Douglas Hyde and W. B. Yeats displayed in collecting legends about miracles, holy wells and burning bushes is ironic considering that, at the same time, the Catholic clergy was working so hard to at least subordinate all this into more orthodox theology. Mythology, folk-beliefs of all kinds, spiritualism, mysticism and occultism were interesting phenomena to many of the Anglo-Irish. W. B. Yeats's occult connections were as intricate as they were overlapping and Irish occultism was often identified by Yeats, for public purposes, as part of the "Celtic mind-set".[124] Edith Somerville was not associated with Yeats or the Literary Revival, but she too believed very strongly in spiritualism. In *Wheel-Tracks*, written a year after Martin Ross's death, Somerville tells of having had messages from her, unexpected and unsolicited, and thinks it "the most natural thing in the world, that Martin's mind, blended

[123] R. F. Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch*, p. 122.

[124] For Yeats's membership in for example the Dublin Hermetic Society, Madame Blavatsky's Theosophical Society, and the Hermetic Society of the Golden Dawn see Richard Ellmann, *Yeats – the Man and the Masks* (London: Penguin, 1979 [1948]), pp. 42–44, 58–66 and 94–100.

with mine, no less now than in the past" (p. 273) would help and make suggestions, taking, as ever, a full share in the task at hand.

In chapter xxvi of *Wheel-Tracks*, "A Memory and an Acknowledgment", Edith Somerville goes on to tell of her cousin, Constance, who lived in Castle Haven Rectory. The Rectory was the focus and gathering-place for enquirers, headed by Uncle Joscelyn, into the mysteries of spiritualism, and Constance was the source from which the energizing power flowed. There were times when the manifestations from the unknown became so persistent that Constance, of whom the little table had rapped out that she was "The Darling of the Spirits", became frightened and decided to withhold her occult powers. One Somerville and Ross novel, *Mount Music* (1919), tells of Christian Talbot-Lowry, who seems to have powers similar to Constance's. Even as a little girl Christian hears voices:

> Before she could speak, it was told of her eyes that they would quietly follow some visitor, invisible to others, but obvious to her. Occasionally, after the mysterious power of speech [...] had come to her, she had scared the nursery by broken conversation with viewless confederates, defined by the nursery-maid as "quare turns that'd take her, the Lord save us!" (p. 9)

As an adult, the extra-worldly endowment of her childhood no longer manifests itself in an external way but seems to turn inwards. The power of hearing what others cannot hear fades, but subtlety of mind and clarity of perception take its place. Throughout the novel Christian lives up to her name – she is a true Christian.

Julia Duffy in *The Real Charlotte* (1894) is another Somerville and Ross Protestant character – although the result of a mixed marriage – said to have occult powers (p. 37). She is different from Christian in all other respects, as she is old as well as poor and socially ostracized. Miss Duffy does not go to church, and we are told that "[a]s in a higher grade of society, science sometimes steps in when religion fails, so, in her moral isolation, Julia Duffy turned her attention to the mysteries of medicine and the culture of herbs" (p. 37). The people believe in her knowledge and her powers, but there is no liking in the belief. When they speak of her, however, they call her Miss Duffy, in recognition of her occult powers.

Mount Music and *The Real Charlotte* are not the only novels by Somerville and Ross to touch on superstition and the otherworld. The supernatural, hauntings and phantom carriages play a role in *An Irish Cousin* (1889), where Uncle Dominick raves deliriously about "the hackney carmen who make it a practice to drive past the house at all hours of the night, despite the lodge gates being locked" (p. 268). Phantom carriages are omens of death in the Sarsfield family (p. 144). More traditional Irish peasant superstition runs through *The Silver Fox* (1898). In this novel, the Irish consider it bad luck to interfere with a certain parcel of land and to use it as filling for Tully Lake. But this is just what has to be done; the gravel is needed where the new railway-line is to cross the corner of the

lake. The narrative voice enters the Anglo-Irish Slaney's consciousness at an early stage. She is portrayed as an intelligent girl. It is her view that the beliefs and the views of the Irish should be respected. The consequences of not doing so can be dire – see Chapter 3, "Race", pp. 165–66.

Although Annie M. P. Smithson was a Protestant who converted to Catholicism, Angel, the little Catholic girl in *Her Irish Heritage* (1918), is similar to Emily Lawless's characters Honor and Alley in her simplicity and unselfishness. However, Angel's otherworldliness mainly manifests itself in 'visions'. She 'hears' Mary Carmichael calling her and is convinced that Mary is in grave danger. Angel's brother, Tom, takes her 'vision' seriously and goes out to look for Mary, who has been deserted by her fiancé and is in deep shock. She has gone to a restaurant with a male friend from her 'wild' days in London. She is tempted to have a glass of champagne but hesitates as she imagines hearing Angel calling "Oh, Mary! Mary! Don't", and Tom finds Mary just in time. He persuades her to come away with him, and thanks to Angel's 'vision' Mary is 'saved.'

In *Hurrish* as well as in *Grania* by Emily Lawless, there is mention of churches, oratories and crosses being dilapidated. The impression this may convey to a reader is that religion – only the Catholic religion is relevant here – is in a similar state of decay on the island as its physical representations. As I have already mentioned, there is no resident priest on Grania's island, and folklore and superstition abound. In two novels by C. M. MacSorley, *An Irish Cousin* (n.d. [1901]) and *Nora* (n.d. [1908]), published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, there are church ruins and dilapidated crosses, too. The feelings this church decay evokes in the little girl, Nancy, are ecumenical. She muses about the old Irish Christians who used them. However different they were in many ways, she thinks of them as her brothers and sisters. "They belong to Him too", is her conclusion (p. 28). And when "the Family" has to leave their house in *Nora,* the ecumenical spirit prevails again; the old Roman Catholic priest stands at the gate of his little presbytery to say "God bless you and God speed you" to the travellers while the Protestant rector stands beside him (p. 82). The message towards Catholics in these two novels is conciliatory.

As far as religion is concerned, the tone is also conciliatory in B. M. Croker's *A Nine Days' Wonder* (1905). Mary Foley is an only child. She and her family are Catholics; but it later emerges that Mary is not really Mary Foley at all but Joseline, the daughter of an earl taken as a replacement for a dead daughter by her wet-nurse, Mrs Foley, soon after birth. The earl is a Protestant but does not seem overly concerned about the fact that his daughter has been brought up a Catholic. He goes as far as expressing his gratitude that she has any religion at all because religion "is an uncommon possession today". Mary's parish priest, Father Daly, is equally tolerant. He is very eager for Mary to accept her birthright and her duties towards her Protestant father and not at all worried about their

religious differences.

In some novels there are throwaway derogatory remarks on Catholics and Catholicism, such as the remark by the shoemaker, Macky, in Letitia MacClintock's *The March of Loyalty* (1884): "Catholics do very well for soles, but it is a mistake to put them in for uppers" (p. 84). There is in fact a great deal of resentment from both sides in the novel. The so-called Orange rector, Mr Boyd, accuses Roman Catholics of being animated by two hatreds – hatred of the English Government and hatred of the Protestant faith. Catholics in the novel show their hostility towards Protestants at 12 July celebrations in a violent manner, while Protestants take pleasure in displaying their principles to all the world by placing orange lilies, given the place of honour in every Protestant garden, in a mug or bowl on their window-sill (p. 24). Macky's vitriolic comment is not characteristic of the novel as a whole. The Rector's daughter, Minna, is upset about the hatred between Catholics and Protestants and tries to bring the people from the two religions together (p. 101). Furthermore, the novel highlights the bickering between the clergy of different Protestant shades, which does not give a favourable impression of Protestantism.

The Orange Order is also mentioned in F. E. Crichton's *The Soundless Tide* (1911), and hatred between the two religious communities in Co. Down is rampant. Catholics are, in the words of one of the Protestants in the novel, "the sweepin's of hell", while the Catholic feeling towards the Orangemen is said to be "full of passion and hatred". However, criticism is expressed against the Orange Order by a Protestant as well. As Colonel Gilchrist's wife considers the Orange Order a hypocritical alliance between the old fighting instinct and the boastful good behaviour of Ulster, she refuses to attend the celebration on the twelfth of July. To her the Orange flags are there for one reason only: to drape the Orangemen's love of bloodshed.

Servants are often the ones who provide the Anglo-Irish characters in the novels with an opportunity to comment on Catholics. As Somerville and Ross point out in *Wheel-Tracks,* while Protestantism was generally "the established religion for the higher officials of the servants' hall", the great majority in most houses were undoubtedly Catholics (p. 22). However, even when some criticism is expressed, extenuative circumstances are often quoted in defense of the erring Catholic Irish. In Erminda Rentoul Esler's *A Maid of the Manse* (1895), one of the servants is accused of stealing by one of the sons in the Hamilton household, but Mrs Hamilton is defensive: "My son, they are all alike, [she] said gravely; they don't earn quite enough to live on, and they steal what makes the difference" (p. 150). Mr Venner in Rentoul Esler's *The Trackless Way* is another a character who has come to terms with his countrymen of the other persuasion, but he has come to a different conclusion from Mrs Hamilton. He used to think that Popery was an immeasurable evil; now he realizes that there are virtues in every

Catholic known to him – more virtues, now and then, than on the Presbyterian tree which he has watered so carefully. His reason for favouring Catholic servants is that they are honest. His daughter agrees with him and suggests that this is due to the confessional. She has heard that it is always the Protestant servants who filch from the larder, because Catholics do not consider it worthwhile to steal an egg or two when they have to confess and restore. In *The Real Charlotte*, Edith Somerville and Martin Ross include a Protestant servant who is, contrary to custom, low within the servant hierarchy. Louisa, Charlotte's house and parlourmaid, is "a small and sullen orphan of unequalled sluggishness and stupidity" (p. 17).

That social disadvantage may adhere to Catholics in higher social circles is suggested in N. M. Chastel de Boinville's novel *O'Reilly of the Glen* (1918). The O'Reillys are a very old and distinguished family, but they are socially isolated in their castle. However, it would seem that their isolation is a result of politics as much as of religion; Nationalist politics have come naturally to the Catholic O'Reillys. Rosamund Rynd, a Protestant visitor from England, falls in love with 'The O'Reilly', Pierce. Rosamund's mother is said to have had a mysterious past and it transpires that it is connected with a close friend of Pierce's father, Bryan Daly. Rosamund's mother, Pierce's father and Bryan Daly are all long dead but Rosamund learns that her mother, a Protestant, was very much in love with Bryan, a Catholic. She was not allowed to marry him because he was a Catholic Nationalist.

There is no doubt that some of the Protestant women novelists occasionally portray Protestant characters equally – or indeed more – unfavourably than Catholic characters. Tim Galvin, later Tim Vittie, in Jane Barlow's *The Founding of Fortunes* (1902) is no less 'vulgar' for being a Protestant. He is as common, coarse and gross as any of the Catholic 'vulgar' characters mentioned on pages 100–01; like them, he will feature in chapter 4 as a 'grabber' and 'gombeen-man'. Tim Galvin seems to have every vice conceivable from an early age. Even as a small child he steals money from his grandmother. It is obvious that Timothy is his mother's son. She is as reckless in her pursuit of self-interest as Timothy. Being able to deceive customers in a convincing manner, she is an able helper to her son when he becomes a grocer. Despite being accustomed to describing herself as "a respectable Protestant woman", she does not seem to be either one or the other. She has generally lived beyond easy reach of any place of public worship other than Catholic churches, and as these are more impossible for a person like her to frequent than a Synagogue, she does not go to any church. She does not mind this deprivation at all; on the contrary, she experiences a feeling of superiority and security at the sight of her neighbours "setting off to their superstitious rites on Sundays and Saints' Days. With so many heathen Papists about, it would be strange indeed if a respectable Protestant woman did not

enjoy special favour and protection from above!" (p. 124). Her lack of religious conviction, in combination with her feeling of being superior because she is a Protestant, does not make her less 'vulgar' than her other characteristics have revealed her to be.

Tim is as proud of being a Protestant as is his mother. He is very prone to professing strong Protestant principles, for "as long as his path lay in circles no loftier than middle class, he found pronounced evangelical sentiment both appropriate and useful" (pp. 134). However, having left Ireland and on his spiral way upwards in English society, he discovers that his jokes about "penances, pilgrimages, the Pope's toe, and other pious observances" are coldly received. In fact they cost him access to one or two very desirable houses, "in the days before he has grown quite too rich to be snubbed by anybody" (p. 134). It seems that an approximation to Rome as close as can be made without actually quitting the Anglican Church is 'good form' in religion. Even what Tim has not yet unlearnt to call "Black Popery" is by no means unfashionable, being generally regarded as a peculiarity which, though not perhaps what one would like for oneself, seems picturesque and interesting in others. Moreover, it tends to run in the oldest families. Tim begins to realize that he has handicapped himself, and missed an opportunity, by not making his entrance into high society as the last of an ancient Catholic Irish line. As a compromise, he invents the old Roman Catholic Vittie line but casts his father as a convert to Protestantism.

It cannot be denied that the Catholic characters in the novels by the Anglo-Irish novelists of my study sometimes come close to the common stereotype. Catholics are 'vulgar' and 'superstitious', but it does not seem as though these characteristics are directly connected with their religious affiliation but rather with social class. Protestant characters too – at least those initially low on the social ladder – are 'vulgar' and 'superstitious'. The most 'vulgar' and unpleasant character in any novel is, without doubt, the Protestant Tim Galvin Vittie. In contrast to the 'superstition' of the mere Irish in Lawless's *Grania* which seems rather picturesque and genuine, the superstition displayed by the Protestant Eithne in F. E. Crichton's *The Blind Side of the Heart* gives the impression of being artificial as well as psychologically unsound. Emily Lawless may have upset contemporary Catholic critics with her depiction of Catholicism in *Grania,* and to some extent in *Hurrish*; but while a certain distancing by the narrator can be perceived, it is difficult to find any overt hostility in it. Where a character expresses hostility towards Catholics, as in Letitia MacClintock's *The March of Loyalty* and F. E. Crichton's *The Soundless Tide,* another character intervenes with a view from the other side. The tone is more often than not conciliatory, and there is a fair amount of tolerance displayed by some characters, such as the Protestant earl and the Catholic priest in B. M. Croker's *A Nine Days' Wonder.* "[S]ince religious toleration is still regarded in Ireland more as a difficult virtue

than as an inevitable feature of civilization", Edith Somerville writes in *Wheel-Tracks* when discussing servants at Drishane, "it shall be put on record that so long as the retainers of all degrees went regularly to their respective churches, it was a matter of indifference to their rulers to which communion they belonged" (p. 22). There is no doubt that the novels try, and generally manage, to give a fairly balanced view of Catholics and Protestants. It would seem that the difficult virtue of tolerance was not limited to the Somervilles of Drishane.

Mixed marriages and conversions

In his chronicle *Twilight of the Ascendancy,* Mark Bence-Jones claims that the general run of Protestants mixed easily with those of their class who were Catholics (p. 56). After all, to have refused to have known Catholics would have meant cutting oneself off from society at Dublin Castle in the early 1880s, when several of the staff were Catholics, such as the Chamberlain, the Gentleman Usher and the Ulster King of Arms. The State Steward was also a Catholic, Lord Fingall, who, after a whirlwind romance, married Daisy (Elizabeth) of the Catholic Burkes of Danesfield. She gives a lively account of her life in *Seventy Years Young,* where she sketches many Protestant as well as Catholic influential figures of turn-of-the-century Ireland and England. Religious affiliation made little or no difference at the level of society where the Fingalls moved, and one of their closest friends was, as I have already mentioned, the Protestant Horace Plunkett. Only in so-called borderline cases, where a family barely qualified as gentry, was Catholicism a hindrance; such a family would have been accepted in society if Protestant but not as Catholic. The age and distinction of the family tree seems to have been of far greater importance than religion. In her "Memories" Lady Fingall, recently married, recalls being asked by an old county peer the date of her "creation". She claims that she would not have known the answer to his question, but thinking that he wanted to find out her age – and not that of her family – she retorted that she could not see what the date of her creation had to do with him (p. 76).

However, no matter how tolerant people were in social life in general, it was a different story when it came to mixed marriages and conversions. During the eighteenth century, marriage to a Catholic was cause of disinheritance for a Protestant and mixed marriages continued to be frowned upon long after that; a Protestant who married a Catholic would certainly have been considered to marry beneath him or her. There were consequences also for the children when a mixed marriage had taken place. In *Twilight of the Ascendancy*, Mark Bence-Jones tells of Christopher St George of Tyrone House in Co. Galway who was married to a Catholic, Honoria, by a Catholic priest, in the days when mixed marriages were legally invalid unless a Protestant priest had performed the act. The couple had ten of their twelve children before a Protestant marriage followed, and these

ten children were illegitimate in the eyes of the law (p. 130).

There were of course mixed marriages that were successful as well as perfectly happy. Martin Ross seems to have had one of these in her family. The Martins of Ross had remained Catholic until the middle of the eighteenth century, longer than most Norman gentry families. Her grandfather, Robert, married a Catholic lady. The rites of her church were celebrated at Ross without hindrance and yet all their children, and the children of the generations to come, were baptized and raised as Protestants. By courtesy of the Catholic foster mothers, a secret baptism at the hands of a Catholic priest usually followed after the official one, as was also the case with Martin Ross and her siblings.[125]

In the case of another novelist, May Hartley (née Mary Laffan), her parents' mixed marriage seems to have been less successful, at least as far as their daughter was concerned. Her father was a Catholic Custom House officer of Blackrock, Co. Dublin and her mother a Protestant; their daughter was raised a Catholic. In 1882, the daughter married the Protestant Walter Noel Hartley and became May Hartley. Walter Noel Hartley was a distinguished chemist who lectured at King's College in London and was knighted in 1911. In *Catholic Fiction and Social Reality in Ireland, 1873–1922,* James H. Murphy writes of May Hartley's novels as a sustained attack against Irish Catholic respectability. He suggests that her assault on Catholic social inferiority was her way of distancing herself from the Catholic part of her heritage while emphasizing the Protestant part (p. 28). In one of her early novels, *Hogan M.P.* (1876), a successful Irish Catholic MP wishes to marry an heiress of the Ascendancy; but Catholics are, according to the novel, too handicapped by their lack of education and breeding to be accepted in Victorian society. The novel concludes with a reference to Hogan's mother-in-law who decries mixed marriages "as bitterly as the Cardinal himself". The critics received *Hogan M. P.* with hostility, and as a result Hartley is said to have suffered a nervous breakdown.[126]

A later novel by May Hartley, *Christy Carew* (1880), was, according to Stephen J. Brown, "[w]ritten in spirit of revolt against Catholic discouragement of mixed marriages" (p. 132). Miss Christy Carew has been born and bred a Roman Catholic, and "[p]erhaps the believing faithful, the Roman citizens by birthright, are sometimes a little jealous of the attentions and honours, not to say pettings and spoilings, so lavishly heaped on [the] late comers to the vineyard, who idled all their forenoons in the sunny places of the market" (p. 10). Christy's stepmother is one of "the late comers to the vineyard" and zealous like all converts, although spasmodically so. "She would attend forenoon mass if it thundered and hailed, and then grumble at having to eat fish on Friday, and vote the Church retrograde

[125] Edith Somerville and Martin Ross, *Irish Memories,* p. 8.
[126] http://www.pgil-eirdata (The Princess Grace Irish Library, Monaco), May Hartley.

in matters intellectual and scientific; and again next day she would command a universal novena for her intention [...]" (p. 12). Christy's relationship with her stepmother is not a close one. Christy's brother, Lanty, is sent to a Protestant school to acquire a "good" accent, even though he will be in danger of losing his Catholic faith there (p. 238). Despite the tensions adhering to mixed marriages, a second one takes place in the Carew family: Christy and Lanty's tutor, of Huguenot descent, fall in love and get married. As to the possible success of this marriage, it is impossible for the reader even to hazard a guess.

May Hartley's own mixed marriage ended in separation. She died in an asylum in 1916, after having lost her son at Gallipoli. Hartley and Martin Ross were brought up with different religions and seem to have had different family experiences of mixed marriages. May Hartley's novels express a great deal of bitterness. How, then, are fictional marriages and liaisons between men and women belonging to different religions portrayed in novels by the Protestant Anglo-Irish novelists?

The Soundless Tide (1912) by F. E. Crichton deals with this problematic issue. The rather simple love story is complicated by the interposition of religious feeling. The principal characters are Protestant country-folk. One of them, Mrs Brady, has disgraced her family by marrying a Catholic and hence been cast off by them. Her niece, Mary Ellen, the only one who stands by her, finds it easy to sympathize with her aunt as she herself has fallen in love with a Catholic, Michael Dempsey. Although the lovers meet in secret, Mary Ellen's mother seems to sense the danger and warns her daughter not to lose her heart where she "ca't go afther it wi' credit" (p. 21). She reminds Mary Ellen that her grandfather was a Jordan and an Orangeman, and that the name Michael Dempsey would be Roman enough to make him turn in his grave. She has another presumptive husband lined up for her daughter, a good fellow of the right religion, called Robert Dunwoody; but Mary Ellen loves Michael Dempsey and will not consider anybody else. Mary Ellen and Michael have severe difficulties with their families over their relationship. In addition, Michael has to cope with Father Hogan's displeasure. The only way out, as Michael sees it, is for Mary Ellen and him to get married and then go to America where no one would care about their religion.

Mary Ellen blames religion for the tension between people of different faiths, whereas her aunt sees this tension as more of a political problem and tells her niece that "it's the confoundin' o' religion wi' politics that has this counthry desthroyed" (p. 61). When the "Twelfth" (of July) approaches, the atmosphere in the area becomes tense as, judging by the events of previous years, rows between Catholics and Protestants can be expected. The Market Square is alive with people. Orangemen are mustering in great force. Fresh contingents keep arriving at the roll of the drums. A few police hover discreetly on the outskirts of the gathering and more are posted at the ends of the so-called Catholic

streets, in anticipation of a possible raid on the drums. It is at this juncture that Mary Ellen begins to realize the deep division of her whole nature that her love for a Catholic man has caused. Through Michael Dempsey, she feels that she has a share amongst those who war against all her inherited traditions. She does not know for certain that Michael is in town, yet she feels very keenly that he is "on the other side".

By choosing to describe the 12 July celebrations, the novel secures an opportunity to display the difficulties involved for Catholic and Protestant lovers in a very palpable way. Back home again after the march, Mary Ellen and her mother hear a sudden sound of broken glass and a stone comes through the window. They see the big drum covered in blood as well as some women, "blind with passion and inherited hatred", trying to tear the Orange flags. Robert Dunwoody, Mary Ellen's Protestant suitor, staggers towards their house, dazed and ruffled. From nowhere Michael Dempsey, "the red fire of hatred in his eyes", springs on him like a tiger and fells him to the ground. The drama ends with Robert seriously injured and Michael arrested. Mary Ellen is astounded and shocked at the way Michael behaved and cannot in any way condone what he did, yet she decides to stand by him. He later dies in prison, however, and the novel indicates that Mary Ellen's mother may have her way as regards her daughter's future husband after all. Relationships between Catholics and Protestants are not advocated.

In N. M. Chastel de Boinville's *O'Reilly of the Glen* (1918), two generations of Protestant women from the same family fall in love with Catholics. Again, however, the possible mixed marriages do not materialize. The suggestion is, of course, that mixed marriages are difficult and undesirable. As I have already mentioned in "Catholics and Protestants", Rosamund's mother is forbidden by her father to marry a Catholic Nationalist. Soon after this has happened her father is murdered. The lover is wrongfully suspected of the murder, flees and subsequently dies while his beloved goes to England, marries a Protestant and gives birth to Rosamund. Many years later Rosamund meets Pierce O'Reilly, another Catholic Nationalist, in Ireland; but he dies in the 1916 Rising before any marriage can take place. There is, however, a happy ending of sorts because Rosamund inherits his family's castle. In his will, Pierce has asked her to name her son, if she has one, O'Reilly. In this way, we are left with the possibility of a future O'Reilly able to take his place with his peers in the neighbourhood, as he will presumably be of the right religion as well as politically 'correct'.

In some novels a mixed marriage has actually taken place. In E. C. Jeffreys's *An Irish Landlord and An English M. P.* (1890), Dr Daly is a Protestant married to a Roman Catholic woman. Husband and wife have remained faithful to their respective religious denominations; but "the family went with the mother, as is usually the case under these circumstances" (p. 19). There is little else to be said about the family; it is not sufficiently prominent in the novel for an assessment

of whether the marriage is a success or a failure. Jeffreys herself, née Rufford and daughter of an Anglican clergyman, converted to Catholicism.[127] In contrast to another convert, Annie M. P. Smithson in *Her Irish Heritage*, Jeffreys does not make religious denomination a feature of her novel. However, there is some – under the circumstances somewhat surprising – criticism against two Catholic priests, which I will revert to in "Priests and Nuns" (p. 123).

Mount Music (1918) by Edith Somerville and Martin Ross is another novel where a mixed marriage has taken place. St Lawrence (Larry) Coppinger's mother is a Catholic and his father a Protestant. The couple meet in India, far away from Ireland, the latter being said to be a country where "[r]eligion, or rather difference of religion, is a factor of infinitely more potency than it is, perhaps, in any other country" (p. 17). Being so far away from Ireland may have facilitated Larry's father's conversion; he converted "to please [his wife], and for the sake of a quiet life" (p. 17), as he wrote apologetically to his relations and friends back home. In this novel, the characters move in high social circles. As I have already mentioned, such circles mixed across religious denominations with greater ease than the rest of society; and in *Mount Music* the Catholic Larry of Coppinger's Court will be so well off that his aunt Isabel does not suppose that his Catholic religion will be too much of an obstacle in his life. In Larry's case there is a further mitigating circumstance; he is, as he overhears in a conversation, only an R. C. "by accident". After his parents' early death, Larry is put under the joint guardianship of Major Richard Talbot-Lowry of Mount Music and the Major's sister, Frederica, both Protestants. Frederica moves in with Larry at Coppinger's Court. His cousins at Mount Music, Richard jr, Christian, Judith, Jon and Georgy, are thrilled with their new neighbour. They have no religious scruples; but the subject of Larry's religion is to some extent marked 'dangerous' among them, and they are intensely curious about what he says when he goes to confession. The situation is less simple for the Major and Frederica. To them, Larry's being the result of the mixed marriage, presents certain problems. The Major is shocked and outraged at the thought that Larry will have to go to Mass with the servants and would have liked to do something about it. On the other hand, Frederica is vehement that she cannot possibly interfere with Larry's religion. Despite her refusal to meddle, she does mention "the disaster of Larry's religion in her prayers, but she [does] so without heat, leaving the matter, without irreverence, to the common sense of Larry's creator, who, she felt, must surely recognise the disadvantage of the position as it stood" (p. 23). Frederica thus clearly finds Larry's Catholicism and its social implications unpalatable, too.

The servants of Coppinger's Court are not too comfortable with their master

[127] http://www.pgil-eirdata (The Princess Grace Irish Library, Monaco), Elizabeth C. Jeffreys.

going to chapel either. They simply cannot subdue the feeling of incongruity at the fact of Master Larry and themselves worshipping together. The great majority of the servants are Catholics because they are much easier to find than Protestants – who are not only scarce but also, one of the characters tells us, inconveniently proud of being Protestants and expecting admiration for it (p. 31). Evans, the butler at Mount Music, is one such Protestant; so is Mrs Dixon.[128] Mrs Dixon is particularly disgusted by "jumpers", that is to say people who change their religion. However, as Larry was born the way he is, she does not consider him a "jumper". In fact, Larry is popular with all parts of society, at least before his political aspirations make him *persona non grata* with his uncle at Mount Music.

After a fall during a hunt, Larry is brought to Dr Mangan's house where he stays for a lengthy convalescence, encouraged by the doctor. Larry's aunt Frederica is not pleased with the arrangement under the prevailing circumstances: "If he were a Protestant it wouldn't matter so much; but as things are, for *him* to be thrown among these second-rate, Nationalistic, Roman Catholics — !" (p. 77). The consequences are as disastrous as she fears; Larry becomes very friendly with the Mangans and is encouraged in his Nationalist leanings by Dr Mangan's son.

Larry's irregular Mass attendance is a matter of some concern for Father Greer, a close friend of Dr Mangan's. As the Catholic priest greatly deplores mixed marriages, his concern increases considerably when the rumour reaches him that the Major's Protestant daughter, Christian, and Larry are in love. To prevent a possible union between the two, Dr Mangan and Father Greer discuss the possibility of Larry's becoming a Nationalist candidate at the forthcoming election. Dr Mangan is convinced that the Major would never allow his daughter to marry a Nationalist. This plan may also be beneficial to Dr Mangan's family, as Dr Mangan has plans of his own for Larry when it comes to matrimony. In fact, through skilful manipulation, he manages to get a rather reluctant Larry very close to marrying his daughter. The daughter Tishy, however, is a force in her own right and runs away with a previous boyfriend just before her wedding to Larry is due to take place. At this stage, Larry has lost the election and there is no political objection from the Major for Larry and Christian to come together again. The difference in religion between the two seems to be of no hindrance at all to the cousins themselves. On one occasion, when the couple discuss the matter and Larry wonders if Christian does not think that being a Protestant is "a bit – well – stodgy – and respectable – no sort of poetry?", Christian professes to like "stodge" (p. 113). However, throughout the novel it is made clear that Christian is a Christian first and foremost rather than a Protestant. The novel concludes

[128] In *Wheel-Tracks,* Somerville and Ross write that Mrs Dixon and Evans are "a presentment" of the cook, Mrs Kerr, and the butler, Travers, at Drishane, Somerville's home in Castletownshend, and that the representation is faithful as far as it goes. Travers and Mrs Kerr came from the North and were Protestants (p. 22).

with Mrs Twomey, the Coppinger's Court dairywoman, expressing her pleasure at the idea of marriage between Larry and Christian. To her mixed marriages are permissible, at least when the two parties come from the same social class. The servants never liked the idea of an association between "the Riff-Raff of Cuhir", the Mangans, and the heir to Coppinger's Court. Social class clearly matters more here than religion.

It is interesting to compare Larry's fate with that of Jack Hazlitt, mentioned by James H. Murphy, in Richard Baptist O'Brien's *Jack Hazlitt: A Hiberno-American Story* (1875 [1874]). Jack, too, is the product of a mixed marriage. His mother is a zealous Catholic, his father an indifferent Protestant. Jack runs off to America with a girl, is involved in crime and ends up being sentenced to death. One of the causes suggested for this sad development is Jack's mixed background. "Whin wan is a 'protestun' and' th' other a 'Roman', the childher are nothin' at all," says one character (Murphy, p. 56). Jack's position on the social scale is, in my view, less decisive for his fate than the fact that his creator Richard Baptist O'Brien was a Catholic priest.

By far the most hostile reaction towards the idea of a mixed marriage is displayed in *Priests and People* (1891) by an anonymous but clearly Protestant author. Eileen, a Catholic landowner, falls in love with Hugh Woodward, a Protestant soldier. The people on Eileen's estate frown on the idea of their relationship, and Fr Carnegie vows that Eileen and Hugh will never marry. Eileen feels threatened and runs away to hide with Hugh's colonel's wife until the ceremony can take place. However, the priests, including her cousin Maurice, find her. She is kidnapped and imprisoned in a convent.

In Somerville and Ross's *The Real Charlotte* (1894), it would seem that religious affiliation is above all a determinant for social class. There has been a mixed marriage between Julia Duffy's parents. Her father, John Duffy, was a hard-drinking Protestant farmer who married his own dairywoman, a "dirty and thriftless" Catholic. Julia is the tenant of Gurthnamuckla, a house and a farm which have become as dilapidated as Julia herself. Initially Julia sides with her father's religion. However, when he is dead and she can no longer afford the bonnet necessary for church visits, she refuses to don a hood or a shawl and go to chapel like her poor relations. Despite the entreaties of her mother's priests and her own parson, she decides to have "nothing of either chapel or church, and stay[s] sombrely at home" (p. 37).

Julia is unconcerned about the theological aspects of religion but aware of the social implications. The same applies to Mrs O'Toole in Rosamond Langbridge's *The Stars Beyond* (1907). Mrs O'Toole has been a Catholic, but has converted to Protestantism "partly because a certain constitutional sourness bent her naturally that way, but chiefly as a business speculation. By adherence to the Church of Ireland, she received a class of lodger which paid well, conveyed prestige to her,

and was scrupulous in handing on her respectability" (p. 132). In Mrs H. H. Penrose's *Denis Trench* (1911), Dinny Riordan turns Protestant to get custom for his business from the gentry; and although he is an unpleasant character and a drunkard, his business improves. A better man converts to Catholicism and loses business.

However, a conversion is not always a matter of convenience. In Erminda Rentoul Esler's *The Wardlaws* (1896), the Protestant priest William L'Estrange is a convert. He comes from an old, distinguished Catholic family but decides to convert from Catholicism to Protestantism after having been educated at Trinity and become estranged from his old faith. As a result, his family has cut all contact with him. He is a lonely man and not very popular among his parishioners, who are suspicious of his religious background. Margery Wardlaw, impoverished local Ascendancy lady, seems to be his only friend. Even after his death, the hostility against him continues. Several years later, a rector puts up a window in the church to commemorate him, but some disapproving parishioners promptly smash it because, in their view, it is dedicated to a "Papist" and a "Jesuit" (p. 132).

It is interesting to note that several early novels depicting converts were written by anonymous novelists. Among those listed in Stephen J. Brown's *Ireland in Fiction* are *The Protestant Rector* (1830) and *The Outcast: A Story of the Modern Reformation* (1831). In both cases the conversion is from Catholicism to Protestantism. In *The Outcast,* the conversion causes the mother of the convert to die of a broken heart. Later novels generally appeared with the author's name; and often the conversion is to Catholicism.

In Annie M. P. Smithson's novel *Her Irish Heritage* (1918), Clare Castlemaine is the result of a mixed marriage. Her mother, a Catholic from Ireland, dies young and Clare grows up to have no religion at all. After her father's death, she looks into "the subject" but finds it confusing. There are so many different churches: "High Church, Low Church, Broad Church – all totally different in belief and practice, and that within the Established Church alone, without mentioning the dissenting sects multiplying every day" (p. 11). Jokingly, she tells the housekeeper, Webbie, that she may in fact enter a convent and live in dungeons behind iron bars "like the girl we heard about at those 'No Popery' lectures you dragged me to once". But Webbie is not amused. When Clare is invited to go to Ireland, she is deeply worried in case Clare will imbibe any of the religious beliefs of her Irish cousins.

Clare's Irish family is a large one and a religious one. One of her cousins, Ursula, is soon to enter the Poor Clare Order as a novice. Clare admires her cousins and feels a certain hankering for their religion, particularly as they always look so refreshed and happy when they come home from Mass. The novel follows Clare's development from agnosticism to curiosity and then to an interest in Catholicism and how it affects believers. Mary, the eldest girl in the family, has a friend,

Mary Carmichael, who is a nurse and a convert. She has been a convert to the Catholic church for the last five years, "but before that time, religion of any kind had been a dead letter to her, and she had lived her life her own way, only trying to get the best out of it [...]" (p. 37). With the zeal of the convert, she is now a daily communicant, a Child of Mary and a temperance pioneer. During Lent she wants to sacrifice the pleasure of seeing her boyfriend, Dr Delaney, and suggests that they should not meet between Shrove Tuesday and Easter Sunday. When the time comes for them to meet up again after Lent, Dr Delaney has found a new girlfriend.

Clare herself has fallen in love with a Catholic man, Anthony O'Farrell. It becomes essential for her to try to find the Catholic faith for herself, to come into "her Irish heritage". She decides to make the break-up between Mary and Dr Delaney her test; if Mary Carmichael can keep her faith as strongly as ever despite her disappointment, Clare will know that there is something worthwhile in Catholicism. Initially, it looks as though Mary is in danger of losing her faith. She is deeply shocked and disappointed, not only with Dr Delaney but with God, too. She does not go to Mass and she falls into bad company. When Mary decides to leave Dublin behind to go to Co. Clare, Clare joins her friend with the intention of "watching" her "spiritual condition". After "a spiritual experience" on Christmas morning, Mary feels reconciled with God again and Clare no longer has any hesitation as to what her future should be. As no-one, we are told, can understand a convert's point of view – their difficulties and trials, their doubts and fears – so well as another convert (p. 161), Clare is lucky to have Mary to help her prepare herself for the act. On the 15th of March, Clare is baptized and on St Patrick's Day she takes her First Holy Communion. It is highly unlikely that the Ides of March is of significance in the choice of date for Clare's conversion; the Irish national day for her Communion takes precedence. Not having had any religion to give up, Clare is able to look forward to her life as Anthony's wife and as a Catholic, without any regrets.

Many of Annie M. P. Smithson's novels were clearly built around elements of her own experience as a convert and a district nurse in Dublin. She was, however, not alone among novelists to convert. Apart from Ella MacMahon (whose conversion is 'probable') and E. C. Jeffreys (who wrote *One Road to Rome or Recollections of a Convert* in 1927), several others became Catholics. Charlotte Grace O'Brien, daughter of William Smith O'Brien, the Young Ireland leader, and aunt of Stephen Gwynn (see footnote 30), converted to Catholicism towards the end of her life. Her novels *Dominick's Trials* (1870) and *Light and Shade* (1878) are too early to be relevant in this survey. Mrs William O'Brien (born Sophie Raffalovich in Paris), whose husband was a Catholic and long edited *United Ireland*, converted, too. She wrote *Rosette: A Tale of Dublin and Paris* (1907) about the life of a Parisian bourgeois family as presented by the diary of Rosette, whose re-

ligious development is worked out in detail. Another convert was Emily Hickey, daughter of Canon Hickey of Co. Wexford, who wrote potboiler stories which were published in the *Leisure Hour*.[129] She was received into the Catholic Church in 1901. All these conversions were from Protestantism to Catholicism.

Margaret Anne Cusack, better known as the Nun of Kenmare, on the other hand converted from Protestantism to Catholicism to Protestantism. She was born into the society of Episcopalian upper-class Dublin in 1829. She was, in her own words, of strong Protestant stock and was related to many of the leading families in Ireland.[130] Her fiancé died and she became an Anglican sister in London. However, the sisters did not, as she had expected, spend all their time visiting the poor, bringing them comfort and practical relief from their hunger and squalor. Instead, they had to embroider various items for the chapel of the convent. Cusack became bored and bitter and converted to Catholicism in 1858, joining the Poor Clare Nuns in Co. Down. When she found it difficult to come to terms with the control exercised by the Catholic hierarchy in matters of canon law over religious women, she 'jumped' again and reverted back to Protestantism. She wrote two autobiographical books *The Nun of Kenmare* (1889) and *Story of My Life* (1893), which are attacks on the bishops who disagreed with her. Two novels published in the 1870s were written while she was still a Catholic and are strongly religious in tone. The Protestant religion is compared with the Catholic faith to the former's disadvantage. In *The Case of Ireland Stated: A Plea for My People and My Race* (1881), Cusack accuses England of being ignorant of Ireland historically as well as socially and places herself firmly on the side of the Irish tenants.

The year that Cusack converted to Catholicism, 1858, another novelist did the same, Mrs Cashel Hoey (née Sarah Johnston). Stephen Brown claims that she wrote more than 27 volumes but only lists *No Sign* (1876), about a murder case on Ireland's Eye in 1852. Many of her novels were written in the 1870s and are not of interest here.

It should be pointed out that male novelists were not immune to changing their religion. William Carleton, who was born in 1794 and therefore belonged to a different generation from the novelists of my study, is one of the best-

[129] See Enid Dinnis, *Emily Hickey: Poet, Essayist-Pilgrim* (London: Harding & More, ca. 1927). Dinnis states that the novel she attempted was never completed, and I have not been able to trace the novel by Hickey listed by Brown, *Lois* (1908). In *Ireland in Fiction* (vol. 1) he writes of it: "Lois's career is traced from her childhood in the quiet refined rectory in Wexford to her death. But the writer's concern is not so much with the outward events of Lois's life, though these are fully dealt with, as with two main matters, first her literary aspirations and their outcome; secondly the story of her soul, which passes from a vague Protestantism through phases of unbelief, to an intense and fervent Catholicism. This latter vibrates through the book, but it is without a shadow of bigotry. At ch. xii. the heroine leaves I. for London, and she does not return till near the close" (p. 136).

[130] Irene ffrench Eagar, *Margaret Anna Cusack: A Biography. One Woman's Campaign for Women's Rights* (Dublin: Arlen House, 1979 [1970]). Introduction. Personal details about Cusack and details about her religious strife with the Catholic Church can be found in this study. In it, Eagar proves that Cusack died an Anglican in 1899.

known early examples. George Moore, born 1852, who was a landlord as well as a novelist, publicly renounced Catholicism in 1903 in *The Irish Times*.[131] It was his conviction that Roman Catholicism stunted the development of moral conscience by leaving its management too much to the priests, who – apart from taking confessions – also interpreted the scripture and the moral law. Having no children of his own, Moore tried to have one of his brother's sons brought up a Protestant. Incidentally, Moore was very supportive of Gerald O'Donovan, a Catholic priest who left the priesthood following disagreements with Bishop Thomas O'Dea. With a letter of introduction from Moore, O'Donovan went to London where he started to work in publishing and wrote several novels. He married an Anglo-Irish Protestant woman and wrote of the social ostracism of a Catholic who marries a Protestant in his novel *Waiting* (1914).

It cannot be claimed that any particular animosity is expressed in the novels at the thought of mixed romances or marriages – the couples are generally presented with sympathy – but it is made clear that they are in a difficult position. Indeed, the position is represented as being so difficult that none of the novels featuring the possibility of a mixed marriage actually shows it taking place. In N. M. Chastel de Boinville's *O'Reilly of the Glen* and in F. E. *The Soundless Tide* natural causes intervene and the Catholic lovers die before there can be any marriages.

In some novels, there was a marriage in the past. In the two novels by Somerville and Ross these take place in a generation previous to the one with which the novels are concerned: between Julia's parents (*The Real Charlotte)* and Larry's parents (*Mount Music*). Neither of these marriages is an unqualified success. Julia's Protestant father is an alcoholic and Larry's parents die early, leaving a son with a religion different from the one of the aunt who brings him up. In *Mount Music*, we are led to believe that a future marriage will take place between the Catholic Larry and the Protestant Christian, after the two have overcome a great many obstacles.

Converts in the novels, such as Erminda Rentoul Esler's Protestant priest L'Estrange in *The Wardlaws* and Larry's father in *Mount Music,* are also portrayed with sympathy; but they face many difficulties and a great deal of hostility from their families and other characters in the novels. Undoubtedly, "religion plays the devil with Ireland" in many ways, as Larry expresses it in *Mount Music* (p. 92). The novels by the Protestant Anglo-Irish novelists admit to the sharp division that existed in Ireland between Catholics and Protestants. Little bigotry or intolerance is openly displayed. However, the non-realization of several possible mixed marriages may perhaps be taken as a certain unwillingness to accept them. The fact that a number of fictional conversions take place for social reasons reveal as much about Catholics as about Protestants. The frequency of conversions

[131] See Bence-Jones, *Twilight of the Ascendancy*, p. 102, and Robert Welch, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Irish Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), p. 375.

among novelists themselves, however, would seem to indicate that conversions were recognized as less than extraordinary events.

Priests and nuns

The first loyalty of the leaders of the Catholic Church in Ireland was, or should have been, to Rome; but it must be remembered that Irish bishops were also Irish men. As K. H. Connell points out in *Irish Peasant Society*, the bishops generally had their social origins in the farming and trading community. Therefore, it would have been surprising had they not sympathized with many of the national aspirations of their people, even though they did not wish to take part in, or condone, any acts of violence.[132] In fact, most bishops were, as F. S. L. Lyons claims in *Ireland Since the Famine,* almost by definition opposed to violent and radical change and there were reasons, political as well as pastoral, for them to condemn violence and to exercise caution in commenting on the political situation. However, in villages and in the countryside around Ireland, many priests who lived closer to the people than the bishops actively sided with their countrymen from early on, thereby avoiding a rift between laity and Church (p. 21).

One such priest occurs in Violet Powell's *The Irish Cousins*. The parish priest of Ross was a fanatical Land Leaguer with contempt for the hierarchy of his church. Reprimanded by his bishop for political extremism, he appealed to Rome in person but lost his case. Dispossessed of his parish, when he returned he was nevertheless "met by a brass band, which, leading his parishioners in procession, accompanied him to his home fifteen miles away. [...] For many months afterwards, Martin Ross wrote, the majority shunned the chapel of the newly accredited priest, setting out in the opposite direction to hear the Mass of the rebel, in the green and white Land League Hut [...]" (pp. 26–27).

As time went by, the bishops too were prepared to be more outspoken on political issues. In a joint statement issued by them in 1920, the blame for the "state of anarchy" in Ireland is squarely put on England. The opportunity is taken to point out that the Irish people "were a great Christian nation when pagan chaos reigned across the Channel" and that Ireland's relations with England had always been "a terrible misfortune".[133] The Most Reverend Dr Fogarty, Bishop of Killaloe, used still stronger words in his pastoral, which was subsequently quoted in

[132] K. H. Connell, *Irish Peasant Society: Four Historical Essays* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), pp. 123–26, 148–49.

[133] "Statement issued by the cardinal primate and the archbishops and bishops of Ireland on the present condition of their country" (Dublin: Brown and Nolan, 1920). In this statement the hierarchy also accuse "the government classes across the water" of discouraging the Ulster Unionists from coalescing with the rest of the country, having used that part of the country "for centuries as a spear-head directed at the heart of Ireland. More potent than even the rule of brute force, in reducing Ireland to anarchy, has been the grossly partial course taken by the British Government in regard to the North-East" (p. 6).

a Sinn Fein pamphlet:

> When all the world is talking of freedom, Ireland, which has not had one years [sic] peace since greed and plunder brought a foreign power amongst us 700 years ago, is being tortured and harassed by that alien rule to a point of exasperation which has become almost unbearable. In their insane attempt to extinguish the unquenchable fire of patriotism they have given us martial law for government, and turned our country into a prison.[134]

In a letter written to the Chief Secretary for Ireland in the House of Commons in London, the Bishop of Galway, Thomas O'Dea, denounced "all crime from whatever side". However, he indicated that the Government outrages were much worse than those on the other side because the risks involved when a government perpetrated crimes were far greater than when individuals did the same, or, as he expressed it, "[i]f the government's armed forces themselves terrorize and murder unoffending and unarmed civilians, the very well-springs of order are poisoned". O'Dea was prepared to excuse, or at least understand, Irish atrocities on grounds of injustices suffered during the long suppression of the freedom of the country, but he could see no such excuse for the actions of the government. When one of his priests, Father Griffin, was murdered, O'Dea knew whom to blame, pointing his finger at the government as "[t]he people of Ireland do not shoot their priests".[135]

The prevalence of fictional priests in the novels of the time may be taken to reflect the steady increase in the number of priests in Irish society during the second half of the nineteenth century. The dictatorial parish priest Father Carnegie and his debauched curate Father Dwyer in the anonymous novel *Priests and People*, set in the period after 1886 during the Plan of Campaign, were something of Protestant stereotypes of Catholic priests. The novel firmly attacks the criminality of the Land War and the corrupting influence of the Catholic Church. In *Catholic Fiction and Social Reality in Ireland, 1873–1922,* James H. Murphy notes that Father Carnegie and Father Dwyer form a link in a chain of clerical types stretching from William Carleton's roguish peasant clerics to Brinsley MacNamara's brutal Father O'Keefe and Gerald O'Donovan's caddish Father Burke, and he claims that these essentially Protestant stereotypes were adopted by members of the Catholic intelligentsia in their combat with Catholic Ireland (p. 52).

Do these clerical types also appear in the novels by the Anglo-Irish women novelists, and how is the ultimate representative of religion presented by them? Occasionally Catholic clergy are accused of co-operating with the Land League

[134] "Irish bishops on English rule" (Sinn Fein, 1919). In this pamphlet Sinn Fein claims that it can safely be assumed that the bishops err on the side of moderation in their statement of the wrongs suffered by Ireland at England's hands, as bishops are known to be anti-revolutionary and only mention secular matters when faith and morality are affected.

[135] Letter dated 25/11/1920, from a collection of pamphlets including Michael Logue (Cardinal Archbishop of Armagh), "Cardinal Logue and the Terror in Ireland" (London: Peace with Ireland Council, 1920).

and of inciting violence. In Letitia McClintock's *A Boycotted Household* (1881), there is fear amongst the inhabitants of Ardnamona House lest the priests should encourage the Land League in their part of the country. In the same novel, Father Frank neglects giving the last sacraments to a dying woman in order to be able to reside at a meeting of the Land League, "where his flock were being incited to sedition and murder" (p. 127). In Mrs H. H. Penrose's *Burnt Flax* (1914), the priests are accused of being associated with the Land League, too. It is one of the characters, the colonel, who is suspicious of them; but his accusation is not left uncontradicted. His nephew, Maurice, is very defensive of the local parish priest, Father O' Riordan, who does his utmost to discourage the Land League meeting in Castlebeg as he has a very low opinion of people who preach "bloody murdher, an' arson, an' cattle-maiming" (p. 104). He tries to protect one of his parishioners from committing the mortal sin of killing his landlord at the request of the Land League, but he is also concerned about the welfare of the landlord. By appealing to him to save his tenant from becoming a murderer, Father O'Riordan manages to persuade the colonel to leave the area. The attitude to the clergy in this novel is clearly sympathetic.

The priests portrayed in E. C. Jeffreys's *An Irish Landlord and An English M. P.* (1890) are very different from Father O'Riordan. This is how the narrator describes them:

> Old Father Ward did not believe much in modern education, having more faith in the free use of the stick. The new priest, Father Dan Roche, was tempestuous. A patriot, an orator, and needless to say an agitator, he came to sow the seeds of discontent and rebellion, unsettling the ignorant minds of the hot-headed people with high-flown speeches, opening up wrongs of a past which they never knew of, and doing nothing to ameliorate the present evil, or lighten the load of poverty to which, alas!, the masses are born in the sterile and over-populated districts of the Emerald Isle. (p. 7)

In *Ireland in Fiction* (vol. 2), Stephen J. Brown and Desmond Clarke call attention to the "old-fashioned 'High Tory'" standpoint throughout this novel. The Catholic priests are not prominent; but as we see, one is authoritarian and the other exploits the ignorance of his parishioners for dubious reasons. He clearly has no genuine compassion for them. As for Protestant priests, there is no longer a Protestant clergyman in the dilapidated local rectory, and the English M. P. reminds the Irish landlord that the Protestant Church is "an alien church" (p. 54). Religion does not feature as a solution to the problems in Ireland. As I have already mentioned, E. C. Jeffreys, the daughter of an Anglo-Irish clergyman, converted to Catholicism later in life, a fact impossible to deduce from her novel.

Unusually, Emily Lawless's novels *Grania* (1892) and *Hurrish* (1886) contain mere Irish protagonists and one might therefore believe that Catholic priests would have some considerable presence in the novels. However, this is far from being the case. In *Grania*, the priest is in fact conspicuous by his absence. Father

Flood, who serves the island from the mainland, never appears; he is only discussed by Grania and her sister. In *Hurrish,* though, Father Dehany, the parish priest of Tubbamina, does appear in person. The Land League is very active in the neighbourhood, but there is no mention of Father Dehany having anything to do with it. Father Dehany may well be regarded as representing a priest of the interfering kind. However, his interference seems limited to spiritual matters. He meets Maurice Brady, the informer, and takes him to task for not having been to confession for a long time. He is helpful to Hurrish's niece Alley and to Hurrish himself during the ordeal of the trial. The description of the priest is fairly benign:

> He was a big heavy-jawed man, with cheeks somewhat upon the pattern of those of a cod-fish. At the first glance he looked exactly like all the rest of the order, who to an outsider seem often as difficult to know apart as the individuals of a flight of crows. Closer observation, however, disclosed a peculiar kindliness, a sort of exuding benevolence in the loose-lipped mouth, and small, round, keen-looking eyes. He had a warm heart, a sharp temper, and a Johnsonian capability for his political enemies, but his kindliness was all given to his flock (pp. 128-29).

We never meet Father Dehany in the company of any political enemies; but he is quite capable of handling Maurice Brady, one of those "advanced Irishmen" who "abjure all priestly authority" and "deride the presumption of one of that order pretending to interfere in politics or anything else – strictly sacerdotal matters, of course, excepted" (p. 130). It is clear that Father Dehany's sympathies are with Hurrish and not with the informer. When Brady accuses the priest of being partial, and hints that this may have something to do with the chickens and turkeys that have a habit of finding their way into certain quarters, he is told that he is a "black-hearted miscreant" and false to his Church and his friends. As Maurice Brady is so obviously cast as a villain in the novel, it is difficult to find fault with Father Dehany's upbraiding of him.

Another well-meaning priest is presented in N. M. Chastel de Boinville's *O'Reilly of the Glen* (1918). Father Murphy is a cousin of Mrs O'Reilly's and very unpopular with Dermot O'Donnell, her children's tutor. O'Donnell considers Father Murphy to be a humbug, a danger and a traitor; and through his tutor's hostile influence, Pierce O'Reilly has begun to scoff at religion. Father Murphy, who is to be made a bishop, is suspicious of O'Donnell and fears that he has involved Pierce in dangerous Nationalist affairs. He tries to persuade Pierce to come to Rome with him, and initially Pierce seems willing to go. However, he comes to realize that he has other commitments for Easter (1916) and declines the offer.

In *Mount Music* (1919) by Edith Somerville and Martin Ross, there are three Catholic priest characters. Pastoral care does not seem to be the main concern of any one of them. Father Hogan is the stock riding-to-hounds parson. He is

said to be the most popular man in the county with all classes and creeds. Stating the reason for this, the Major at Mount Music reveals as much or more about himself as about Father Hogan. The Major boasts that "He, in His country, had the best priest in Ireland! A real good man. Kept the farmers civil and friendly. Managed a district for the Fowl Fund. And a topper to ride – always at the top of the hunt!" (p. 47). The other Catholic priests in the novel are not quite so biddable from an Anglo-Irish point of view. Father Greer, the priest most actively involved with the Catholic characters of the novel, reveals his bigotry as well as his political involvement and influence when Dr Mangan seeks his support for Larry's candidacy in the forthcoming election. It would appear that his influence reaches far beyond the boundaries of his country. He has had messages from the continent about Larry's 'misbehaviour' there; Larry played the piano at a Protestant service (p. 105). For this reason as well as because of Larry's poor Mass attendance, Father Greer has doubts about Larry's religious faith and consequently refuses to canvass for him in the election. The only priest who does canvass for Larry is his own parish priest, Father Tim Sweeny, who unhesitantly announces himself as being in Larry's camp. In actual fact this is no particular recommendation of Father Sweeny, because he has rather a low opinion of Larry. However, he is susceptible to Larry's charms – especially since these charms are combined with substantial proof of the young candidate's interest in the decoration of the new chapel, for the site of which Father Tim also owes thanks to young Larry (p. 249). Father Hogan tends to side with Father Sweeny, but the outcome of the election is clear to Dr Mangan as soon as he realizes that Father Greer is against Larry. Father Greer is more influential than the other priests, and he sees to it that the antagonistic view of Larry's candidacy by the Church in general is made known to the people. Without the support of the Church, Larry does not stand a chance of becoming the Nationalist MP for the district.

In another novel by Somerville and Ross, *An Enthusiast* (1921), the Protestant Dan Palliser of the gentry feels very close to Father Hugh Macnamara. Father Hugh has not much in common with the three clerical types mentioned above. He is a young priest who has recently arrived in Eskragh. It would be hard to find anybody more unlike Dan Palliser than Father Hugh: Dan's vision is distinctly practical, whereas Father Hugh's is spiritual. Nevertheless, the two have met only half a dozen times when they mutually realize "a link of spirit; almost (which is a rare thing) a similar outlook upon the very distracted world in which they both found themselves" (p. 38). Dan feels alienated from his Anglo-Irish family and appreciates the discussions he and the Catholic priest have about their visions of the future for Ireland – even though they are very different.

While the number, education and conditions of the Catholic priests in the country had steadily improved during the latter part of the nineteenth century, the opposite applied to Protestant priests. The Church of Ireland of the eight-

eenth and early nineteenth century had offered the younger sons of the Ascendancy a lucrative career, but this was no longer the case after the tithe war and disestablishment had had an impoverishing effect on it. Protestant church-going was not what it used to be, and this is reflected in a letter from Martin Ross to Edith Somerville after a visit to a church in Co. Galway in 1912:

> I was driven off to a little desolate awful church, to which the Ardrahan clergyman drives out. I have *never* been at anything so wretched – the little church quite well built, but coated with mildew and damp, the decaying old prayer books stuck to the seat with fungus. The clergyman came out and dusted a pew for me before he allowed me to sit in it – I, a young man, and a policeman, were the congregation. The parson gave out a hymn, started it very well; I struck in, and he and I then sang a duet. When he found that I was well set, he sang an *excellent* bass in a low baritone. The youth and the policeman listened reverently to this unique performance.[136]

It goes without saying that the Protestant characters in the novels have their own clergy to see to their spiritual needs. When Denis in Mrs H. H. Penrose's *Denis Trench* (1911) comes back to Ireland, after having spent a number of years in England, he seems to have little regard for the representations of his Church;

> The rector he had known in his youth – a good man and a generous man, however provincial and bigoted – was there no longer and his successor was an absolutely featureless man, being proclaimed Low Church by his growth of hair on his face, old and round-shouldered, seeming chiefly bent on sparing his voice and getting through the service with as little exertion as possible. (p. 173)

The chief characteristics of the rector, Mr Fetherston, Aunt Frederica's confidant in Somerville and Ross's *Mount Music,* are listed as "unmarried, in age about sixty; tall, stout, red-faced, of good family, a noted wood-cock shooter and a salmon fisher, a carpenter and an incessant pipe-smoker". He entered the Church at a time when it was a vocation suitable for a gentleman, and "one in which they could indulge without any taint of professionalism being laid to their charge" (p. 77). In other words his stature is far from impressive, and the best that can be said for him is that he is "harmless". Frederica is said to have a very special regard for him, close to veneration, inculcated in her youth by the school of Irish Low Church Protestantism to which she belonged. Two other Protestant priests are mentioned in the novel, both in connection with Larry who tries to win their support during the election period. The Reverend Matthew Cotton (stiffened by Mrs Cotton) refuses to enter the hustings for a Home Ruler, of any variety. The Reverend Mr Armstrong, Pastor of the Methodists, admits to a preference for an "All-for Irelander", as opposed to an Official Nationalist. With what seems to be a richly ironic touch by the narrator, he evades the responsibility of a promise of support by saying that he will lay the matter before the Lord and come back

[136] Lewis, ed., *The Selected Letters of Somerville and Ross*, p. 294, letter of March 18th, 1912.

later (p. 249).

There is a wide variety of Protestant clergy in Letitia MacClintock's *The March of Loyalty* (1884), too. Donald Galbraith is Nichola Deverell's father's curate. Nichola has a high opinion of Donald and thinks that he is more serious about religion than most of the other clergymen of the locality. Donald "cares only for the *souls* of men; he is in earnest about *salvation*", while the others, in her view, "care for a special hobby of their own" and get excited about "foolish outward things". Mr Lagrange, for instance, is High Church, "[a]nd likes very much to have his church beautifully neat at all times, and decorated with flowers at Christmas and Easter; and his choir clad in surplices". Mr Mathews is Low Church; "he abominates these innocent practices, and calls them rags belonging to the scarlet woman, and he wears a tumbled surplice, and has no choir" (p. 166). Mr Bond, "the Orange rector", is above all concerned about forwarding the Orange cause. He does not even mind Methodists, we are told, as long as they are good Orangemen, while Nichola's father gets angry when he hears of his people going to listen to Methodist preachers. Lagrange is even more hostile to Methodists than Mr Deverell and considers them subversive of all ecclesiastical discipline. The impression the novel gives of religion is very much one of inter-Protestant bickering.

The Protestant characters in *The March of Loyalty* do not disagree only about the way to celebrate mass; education is another matter creating discord. Education was a contentious issue in Ireland during the nineteenth century. The launching of a national primary-school system through the National Board in the 1830s was intended to correct previous deficiencies and to provide for "combined moral and literary and separate religious education", thus enabling Protestant and Catholic children to come together in the same schools.[137] Protestants objected to it because the government refused to allow Bible teaching except from a book of uncontroversial extracts, while Catholics, by contrast, initially tended to have a favourable attitude towards the experiment of mixed education. Part of the reason for this may be revealed by Cardinal Cullen's realistic comment on the system, quoted in R. F. Foster's *Modern Ireland*: "very dangerous when considered in general, because its aim is to introduce a mingling of Protestants and Catholics, but in places where in fact there are no Protestants this mingling cannot be achieved" (p. 341). In Letitia MacClintock's novel, Minna Deverell explains the National Board as a system of secular education established by the Government, in the vain hope of pleasing and satisfying the Roman Catholics. The Bible is not read except at a stated hour, and then a bell is rung to make it known that all the Roman Catholic children must be sent out of hearing. The Church Education keeps up rival schools, supported entirely by those of the

[137] Lyons, p. 83.

clergy and gentry who object to the system of the National Board. Mr Bond is a staunch objector, but the local squire, Mr Verschoyle, who is "as anxious to pacify Young Ireland as the Government can be, goes in for the other thing [...]".[138] Mr Deverell would yield to the squire, but Donald "saves him from that error" (p. 77). The Protestant clergy are as divided on education as on the celebration of mass.

Donald is very charitable and spends money of his own on his parishioners. He has a class of farm servants every Tuesday and Friday evening – boys and young men who have not had the time to go to school. Despite his stance on the school question, he is said to make no difference between Protestants and Catholics; "he is father and mother to all poor people" (p. 25).

The difference in outlook on the celebration of mass is alluded to in *Killeen: A Study of Girlhood* (1896 [1895]) by E. O'Connor Morris, albeit in less detail than in MacClintock's novel. Nesta Dillon is a young orphaned girl in England who works hard for her church, St Saviour's. Before she leaves for Ireland and her mother's family, Mr Claughton of St Saviour's warns her that it may be harder "to strive for the life of the Crucified, the life of consecration to Christ's service, in her new home [...]" (p. 22). Her new home turns out to be a splendid Big House, the Hall. Nesta visits the poor of the estate but would like to make a contribution to her church, too. She pays a visit to the rector to offer her services; but he is terrified of changes and at first does not welcome Nesta's suggestions of a choir and a Sunday school, although he later relents and allows Nesta to go ahead with her schemes (p. 93).

Letitia MacClintock's *The March of Loyalty* is set in a rectory in Northern Ireland as well as in a neighbouring Big House. Several other novels are set in rectories: *A Maid of the Manse* (1895) and *The Trackless Way* (1904) by Erminda Rentoul Esler and Rosamond Langbridge's *The Stars Beyond* (1907), to mention just a few. Two of these novels, *The Stars Beyond* and *The Trackless Way*, will be dealt with in "'Religious' Novels" (p. 132). Erminda Rentoul Esler's *A Maid of the Manse* is set in the little village of Ballylant. The novel is a romantic story without any obvious religious bias. The religion of Ballylant is chiefly Episcopal, the rural population is almost altogether Presbyterian while the servant or labouring class is Roman Catholic. The people of the different persuasions live their lives side by side without any apparent disagreements. The only controversy referred to is in fact an inter-Presbyterian one; in 1747 there was a division of the Presbyterian Church in the parish and "as is the Irish way Kincraigie regarded its differences as

[138] Young Ireland was established in 1842 and is mainly remembered as the first group to make language and culture central to national identity. One of its leading members, Thomas Davis, genuinely attempted to advocate a non-sectarian nationalism. The movement became increasingly politicized and was divided into a conservative wing, trying to attract the Protestant gentry back to the nationalist cause, and a wing with radicals such as Fintan Lawlor who wanted to mobilize the rural masses.

altogether beyond the reach of reconciliation" (p. 6). The characters of the novel are the inhabitants of the manses of First and Second Kincraigie; the Hamiltons are elderly and poor while John Wedderburn is young and rather rich. These differences do not prevent friendships between them from developing. When the eldest Hamilton boy has religious doubts, possible even in a rectory, and does not want to take over after his father, it is John Wedderburn who manages the reconciliation between father and son. The local Presbyterian Church may still have two manses, but their differences have been overcome.

In another novel by Erminda Rentoul Esler, *The Wardlaws* (1896), there is a Catholic as well as a Protestant priest among the characters. The new Catholic priest, Father Fletcher, comes to Killyveagh after Father Diver. Father Fletcher is unusually skinny. As a rule, the Killyveagh Catholic clergy are all of the same type, portly of person and of a ruddy countenance. It is habitually said by the faithful – and without a suspicion of irony, the narrator tells us – that priests were rotund and ruddy because of their frequent fasts. That a good many of their flock fast perforce without the same physical effects is supposed to be "due to the difference between fasts undertaken for spiritual reasons and those due to mere necessity" (p. 34). The conclusion of the narrator is that Father Fletcher could not have fasted to much purpose (p. 37).

Though Ireland is referred to as "the so-called priest-ridden land" in the novel, Padeen, the boy Father Fletcher compassionately adopts, has never seen a priest of his own denomination before. Father Fletcher has been educated in Rome, and yet "[e]very Protestant clergyman in the place might have been present at Father Fletcher's initial service without hearing a syllable that would have shocked his sensibilities" (p. 37). The Protestant priest William L'Estrange has converted from Catholicism to Protestantism. The two priests have a great deal in common: their youth, their loneliness and their education. But "Father Fletcher taught what Mr L'Estrange had rejected, and not from habit but conviction, and that one circumstance placed a barrier wide as the sea between them" (p. 69) – at least as far as Father Fletcher is concerned. L'Estrange would gladly seek Father Fletcher's company while Father Fletcher cannot accept the friendship of his Protestant colleague. In his opinion, there are only two men in the deepest depths of hell forever – Judas Iscariot and Martin Luther; and "friendship with Martin Luther's modern imitator" is out of the question (p. 114). And yet L'Estrange is the first to help him and his parishioners when a flood damages the chapel and kills Padeen. Father Fletcher's lack of ecumenical spirit is unrelenting, but both priests are endowed with many favourable features.

The distance the Catholic priest keeps from his Protestant colleague in *The Wardlaws* does not apply universally. In other novels, there is some cooperation between priests of different denominations. In B. M. Croker's *A Nine Days' Wonder* (1905), Father Daly and the Protestant Rector cooperate for a charity

concert. When Mrs Doran is to pay over the money it has raised to Father Daly and the Rector, she deducts enormous amounts for decorations and other costs. It is indicated that most of these costs are invented. Father Daly is the one who challenges her and threatens to publish her less than charitable behaviour in the papers.

In *Twilight of the Ascendancy,* Bence-Jones claims that Catholic clergy of sound political views – presumably not too Nationalist – were received in Protestant as well as Catholic country houses, and he tells of Father Healy, the popular parish priest of Bray, who was invited even to the Viceregal Lodge (p. 56). In the novels, Protestant priests mix socially with the Anglo-Irish characters, but Catholic priests are not as likely to be invited for dinner to the Big House as their Protestant colleagues. Aunt Frederica in Somerville and Ross's *Mount Music* is determined to do her best for Larry in the unfortunate circumstances that have arisen from his divergent religious affiliation. She informs her brother, the Major, that she intends to have the Catholic priest for lunch as soon as she and Larry have settled down at Coppinger's Court. The Major is quick to notice that she draws the line at having a Catholic priest for dinner (p. 23).

While priests, Protestant as well as Catholic ones, are common among the characters in the novels, nuns are less so. Nuns were, of course, more isolated in society than priests at the time, and it is not likely that Anglo-Irish women novelists would have opportunities to meet with many of them. In their novels there is more talk about nuns, and more references to nuns-to-be, than there are actual nuns. Emily Lawless's character Honor in *Grania* (1893) dreams of becoming a nun. She has chastened, reposeful and serene eyes that have, the narrator tells us, an expression hardly ever seen beyond the "shelter" of the convent. In Lawless's other novel, *Hurrish* (1886), Alley Sheehan is as mild and meek as Honor but more inclined to live her life in the outside world. Honor would never marry while Alley has considered getting married, to Maurice Brady. When that option is no longer open to her – she could not marry Hurrish's informer – she joins her sister in a convent in Galway, where "[h]er gentle soul, too tremulous for a world so full of harsh surprises, finds its repose in the fulfilment of a small and very simple routine of well-defined daily duties" (p. 195). After Hurrish's death, there is nobody to look after his youngest child. Fortunately, little Katty has been allowed to accompany Alley to the convent and in this way Alley is able to fulfil her services to the living as well as the dead.

In *Naboth's Vineyard* (1891) by Somerville and Ross, the convent also serves as a shelter from the world. Their nun-to-be, Mrs Harriet Donovan, is no innocent young girl. She is a married woman who wishes to have an affair with a previous boyfriend, Rick O'Grady. When her husband dies and O'Grady rejects her, she has no way out of her predicament but to become a nun, and "to sink into the anonymity which the Church of Rome offers to those who have found their own

part in life rather more than they are able to play". However, it may be doubted whether "the Sisters of Mercy would have considered Mrs Donovan a very suitable inmate for the religious quiet of their establishment, had they seen her, late on the last night of her liberty [...] weeping fierce unsatisfied tears, with Rick O'Grady's photograph pressed to her lips" (p. 278). There is no religious inclination involved in Mrs Donovan's decision to enter the convent, as is the case with Alley in Lawless's *Hurrish.*

Kathleen in N. M. Chastel de Boinville's *O'Reilly of the Glen* (1918) is another character who does not seem to have many options as to what to do with herself. Her family have long been isolated amongst their gentry neighbours because of their Catholicism, but above all because of their Nationalism. Kathleen's brother's participation, and death, in the 1916 Rising is not a factor conducive to making Kathleen more popular amongst them. She escapes the world and enters a convent.

Nuns are seen as dangerous temptresses of young Protestant girls by Mrs Cotton in *Mount Music* by Somerville and Ross. A friend of Mrs Cotton's, a clergyman of private means, has been forced to sell his lovely house in haste because the end of its garden borders on a nunnery. His daughters had developed the dangerous habit of slipping over to it and to the nuns who were very refined women, "well able to deceive young girls!" (p. 148). The clergyman regards Catholicism as a definite danger. The Protestant practice of seeing Catholicism as a menace is also alluded to in Annie M. P. Smithson's *Her Irish Heritage* (1918), where young Clare is taken to "No Popery" lectures by the housekeeper. Similarly, Uncle Charles in *The Silver Fox* (1898) by Somerville and Ross gives scripture lessons to the pantry boy who has to learn "Plain Reasons Against Joining the Church of Rome" (p. 59).

In one novel, Mrs H. H. Penrose's *Denis Trench,* Catholicism is used as an actual threat by a Protestant father against his daughter, Stella. If Stella does not marry before the summer is over, he will see to it that she becomes a Roman Catholic and a nun. There is no detail given as to how he intends to manage this, but the threat is taken seriously by Stella who promptly locates a husband.

Nuns may not be prevalent in the novels, but even so there is more mention of nuns than of monks or brothers. In Jane Barlow's *The Founding of Fortunes* (1902), there is a brief reference to a young man called Bernard joining the brotherhood. After many years, he has met up with the tormentor of his childhood, Tim Galvin Vittie, and he is in a dejected frame of mind. Father Heany, the parish priest, brings Bernard on a visit to the Superior of Knockallen Abbey, and this is a turning-point for the boy. Bernard is much impressed by the celebration of High Mass and by the chapel but above all by the music, and he decides to join the brotherhood (p. 333).

While there are some novels that portray politically involved Catholic priests,

such as Father Greer in *Mount Music* who seems to be able to determine the outcome of an election, the majority does not. Undoubtedly there are some unpleasant Catholic priests, the ones presented in E. C. Jeffreys's *An Irish Landlord and an English M. P.* being a case in point. However, many Protestant priests are presented in a way that is less than flattering as well, several of them appearing in *Mount Music* by Somerville and Ross and in *A March of Loyalty* by Letitia MacClintock. Kind and helpful Catholic priests are not uncommon. Many of them are equally kind and helpful towards Protestants; Father O'Riordan in Mrs H. H. Penrose's *Burnt Flax* cares about his own flock but also about the colonel, while Father McNamara and Dan Palliser in *Mount Music* by Somerville and Ross become friends despite their different backgrounds. It would seem that the Anglo-Irish novelists of my study did not slavishly adopt the essentially Protestant clerical stereotypes of Catholics favoured by the Catholic intelligentsia, mentioned by James H. Murphy in *Catholic Fiction and Social Reality in Ireland, 1873–1922.* In general they preferred the *soggarth aroon*,[139] the lovable, selfsacrificing clerical type which Murphy claims was promoted by lower-middle-class Catholic Ireland (pp. 51–52).

The portrayal of nuns is less circumstantial, but then nuns are not as prominent as priests in the novels. The novels seem to portray the nunnery either as a shelter for those who cannot continue with their lives as they are, or, from a Protestant point of view, as alluring and therefore threatening. Generally speaking, while some ignorance may be displayed there is little if any hostility.

'Religious' novels

The Oxford or Tractarian Movement of the 1830s and 1840s was a reaction to the general decline in religious discipline and the development of liberal theology by some members of the Church of England. The aim of the movement was to restore some of the ideals of the pre-Reformation church; its dominant interest was in the Church's ritual. One of the main proponents of the movement was John Henry Newman, who converted to Catholicism in 1845 and was made a cardinal in 1879. These events left the Church of England, as well as the Church of Ireland, deeply divided on High, Low and Broad Church partylines from the 1850s on. Anti-Papist feelings ran high among some sections of the Church following the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy in England and the elevation of Nicholas Wiseman to the archbishropic of Westminster in 1850. His appointment provoked "the papal aggression" crisis and the passing of the Ecclesiastical Titles Act (1851), which forbade the assumption of territorial titles

[139] From the Irish: soggarth – priest [< Ir. *sagart*]. Aroon – beloved [< Ir. a rúin]. Richard Wall, *A Dictionary & Glossary for the Irish Revival*, pp. 119, 32.

by the Catholic hierarchy in England.[140] Many of the burning issues in Victorian Britain were religious controversies, and these issues are addressed in some of the fiction of the time. At the same time, strict moral standards and regular church attendance remained the norm of most middle-class families.

The Anglo-Irish section of Irish society belonging to the Church of Ireland was exposed to, and influenced by, the controversies in England. However, Ireland was different from England in that the majority of its people were Catholics. The religious divide between the two sections of Irish society was accentuated by social and educational divisions, a fact which was emphasized by the Anglo-Irish landlord and politician Horace Plunkett in *Ireland in the New Century* (1904), where his criticism of Catholic education and the reliance of Catholicism on authority earned him many enemies.

In this section, I want to examine how the religious controversies are reflected in the novels by the Anglo-Irish women novelists of my study. Are Protestant-Catholic issues dominating? The boundaries of religious fiction are difficult to draw. Margaret M. Maison's definition of what a Victorian reader meant by a religious novel is, as I have already mentioned, wide. While a novel may not be classified as 'religious fiction' in the sense of it being about a specific religion, it may still be a strongly 'religious' novel in that its polemics are rooted in Christian social ethics or Christian socialism. In the five novels I have chosen to study here as 'religious' novels, the 'religious' tone disseminating a variety of Christian beliefs appears of greater urgency than the plot or the setting: Eleanor Alexander's *The Rambling Rector* (1904), Erminda Rentoul Esler's *The Trackless Way* (1904), Rosamond Langbridge's *The Stars Beyond* (1907), Mabel S. Madden's *The Fitzgerald Family* (n. d. [1910]) and Mrs H. H. Penrose's *Denis Trench* (1911).

Eleanor Alexander's *The Rambling Rector* is set among various classes of Church of Ireland people in Ulster, but the rambling rector of the title is in fact a rose. Few of the characters are lay people. The Reverend Geoffrey Owen has remained a curate longer than most of his colleagues because he has written hymns which are considered to have "Romish" tendencies. When Owen finally gets his own parish, Mullymoyer, few people welcome him. His difficulties with his parishioners become critical when one day they find the church adorned with flowers and crosses. It results in Owen being locked out of his church. The door bears a note: 'No Popery'.

One of Owen's main opponents is Colonel Hayes. However, Colonel Hayes's niece, Lady Laura, greatly admires Owen's "Hymns from the 'Imitation'" and assures him that they have done much for her inner life. She confesses that it was she who decorated the church. Her view of religion is very romantic and when she falls in love with Owen, it seems to be with his vocation rather than

[140] Lyons, p. 116.

with Owen himself. Through her manipulations, Owen somehow finds himself engaged to her, even though he takes the view that the highest ideal for a priest is celibacy. Owen finds Lady Laura's religious sentimentality repulsive and is relieved when he is jilted for admitting to being evangelical in doctrine. In Lady Laura's view, this is an "awful dreadful thing".

A wealthy parishioner named O'Loughlin, recently returned from America, decides that he wants to spend some of his money on a big Christmas party for everybody in Owen's parish, irrespective of religious affiliation. Father Dennis and the Presbyterian clergyman turn up and quite a few people come for the meal, but the party can hardly be considered a success. The schoolteacher queries O'Loughlin's motive: "All sorts of queer people were asked that you would not meet elsewhere. Was that for his pleasure or ours?" (p. 236). Mullymoyer society appears strictly sectarian. However, it should be pointed out that the only religious strife of consequence in this apparently realistic novel is an internal one in the Church of Ireland.

Religion is of great importance to the Fitzgerald family in Mabel S. Madden's novel *The Fitzgerald Family,* published by the Religious Tract Society. Here the quarrel is not between different sections of the Church of Ireland but rather between those who hold on to their religious faith and those who lapse from it. The family is left very poor on the death of the father, a Church of Ireland clergyman. The attitude of Mrs Fitzgerald is that "when all human aid fails, there is still One above to whom we may turn – One who never fails, Who is All-wise, All-loving, as our frail earthly companion can never be" (p. 86). Mrs Fitzgerald and her ten children have to leave the rectory when a new rector is appointed, but luckily they own a small cottage in Cork. The twins in the family, Barry and Moyra, are good-looking and extrovert, and when their rich and worldly aunt Mrs McFetridge offers to adopt them, their mother is obliged to accept. The two eldest children, Dan and Agatha, are deeply religious and read their father's last sermon repeatedly. The twins have different inclinations; Barry thinks of the motorcars and Moyra of the singing-lessons which their new life will bring.

After a few years, Agatha travels to the twins' eighteenth birthday party. She travels third class and is reproved for it by Moyra on arrival. Moyra is ashamed of her sister's poor luggage, too. Agatha on her part feels uncomfortable with the fashionable people coming to the party. She is shocked to see her sister play bridge for money and later to bet at the races. To make matters worse, Moyra gets engaged to Sir Bevan, a man disliked by Agatha as well as by Mrs Fitzgerald. When we are told that Moyra no longer prays before laying herself to rest, retribution seems inevitable. It comes in the shape of a car crash. Barry drives the car and survives; Moyra is killed in the accident. Sir Bevan feels personally responsible; he has scoffed at religion, and God punished him by taking Moyra (p. 301). With the help of a transformed Sir Bevan, Barry and his aunt start up an orphan-

age to commemorate Moyra. The moral of the novel is more than clear.

The other three 'religious' novels are different from Alexander's and Madden's novels in that the protagonists move away from orthodoxy to their own faiths. Scepticism and unbelief have always existed. Margaret M. Maison points to the dethronement of orthodoxy in the Victorian age as a major event of far-reaching consequences at the time, adding that "the reverberations from this mighty crash were minutely and accurately recorded in contemporary writings" (p. 209). The title of Penrose's novel, *Denis Trench,* is followed by a subtitle: *A Plotless History of How He Followed the Gleam and Worked Out His Own Salvation*. It is misleading to call the novel plotless; the plot is very complicated and winding. The Trench family lives in Guernsey but is of Irish extraction. The father, Desmond Trench, is a Protestant clergyman, but he has disappeared in some mysterious way. His children Denis and Kitten do not know, and are not to know, the circumstances of his disappearance. The reason for keeping the children in ignorance is that their Irish blood is "a dangerous asset", as their mother expresses it, and "a terrible thing to be reckoned with" (p. 9). After their mother's death, an aunt, Mrs Bowen, brings the children to Conmore in Ireland. She is not a wealthy lady, and she speaks with a brogue, but she looks after the children well and does her best by them. The children soon learn that they cannot mention Roman Catholicism to their aunt as she, "like other Protestants living in a Roman Catholic country, has been brought up to treat the differences of religious opinion without any regard to proportion or common sense" (p. 14). There is a strong element of criticism in this comment; later in the novel it will transpire that the children's father has found his own solution to the problem. Their aunt is bigoted, a "Black Protestant", with a fervent hatred of Mr Gladstone for "something" he did to the Church of Ireland. Denis is rather confused about this and has the audacity to point out to his aunt that Mr Gladstone is a Protestant. He also wonders why she, with her strong antipathy against Catholics, has Catholic servants. When it comes to servants, however, Catholics are to be preferred because Protestant servants "presume", Mrs Bowen explains.

The children grow up and leave for England, where Kitten is adopted by Lady Lawrence while Denis works as a journalist. Lady Lawrence's previous heir, Captain Varian, is a scoundrel who reckons that if he marries Kitten he will still get hold of Lady Lawrence's fortune. He persuades Kitten to elope with him, but Father Desmond saves her. Father Desmond is a Catholic priest who has committed himself to charity and no longer practises as a priest. He emphasizes the importance of letting one's obvious duty stand first and never to neglect it for the care of one's own soul. It soon transpires that Father Desmond is Desmond Trench, and there is a reconciliation between the children and their father.

A Protestant clergyman before he became a Catholic priest, Desmond Trench in his spiritual quest has now come to the conclusion that "[t]he sole test of a

man's status is not what he believes but what he does" (p. 162). Good deeds are hence more important than religious affiliation. In contrast to two antagonistic churches, the Protestant and the Catholic, an Ethical Church seems to be advocated in the novel. Desmond Trench has chosen to work for the Ethical Church together with a Mr Wainright. They put their efforts into practical use by building a nursing home, Critchley. In his summary of Mrs H. H. Penrose's *Denis Trench* (1911) in *Ireland in Fiction*, Stephen Brown points out that "[t]he Authoress seems quite unacquainted with Catholic practice" (p. 253), an accusation not uncommon in his criticism. Whatever the level of knowledge of Catholicism, Penrose's novel is not unduly biased. Protestantism as well as Catholicism is deemed unsatisfactory.

Denis Trench is a romantic novel with a strong religious-cum-ethical message. *The Trackless Way,* subtitled *The Story of a Man's Quest for God*, by Erminda Rentoul Esler is less focussed on romance than on the quest for God. However, Esler's novel, like Mrs Penrose's, is critical against conventionally 'religious' people. In *The Trackless Way*, the characters live in two neighbouring Presbyterian manses in Ulster. Mr Gideon Horville, the incumbent in one of them, is a thinker who has religious and existential problems. When he remarks that there is a great deal to think about in the world, Mrs McMinn, the wife of his colleague, promptly retorts: "I would never begin [...]. The road our fathers trod is good enough and broad enough for us" (p. 22).

Mr Horville is too unconventional to suit his parish, and the McMinns are always the first to find fault with his unorthodox ways. When he says prayers over a dead bird to comfort a little girl whose pet it was, his parishioners and the McMinns upbraid him. When Mr Horville marries Lilias, a motherless girl who has had a convent education in France because her aunt considered such an education beneficial for any girl irrespective of denomination, the McMinns are very suspicious and doubtful about the new Mrs Horville's religious purity. In fact, Lilias's father Mr Venner is also worried about his daughter in case she has become a Catholic. He, however, is reassured when Lilias tells him that she was always brought to the Protestant Church in Paris. The McMinns are less easy to satisfy and much more rigid than Mr Venner in their views as to what is right and wrong when it comes to religion. They come to the conclusion that Gideon Horville is a heretic and take steps to get him expelled from his Church. Despite appealing to the Synod, Horville has to leave.

The message in *The Trackless Way* is that orthodox religion, particularly the Presbyterian variety, falls short of what is needed in the world. An explicit mouthpiece for this view is Lord Tomintoul. Having withdrawn from his life as landlord on his estate, he appears as Mr Black, a common stone-breaker, in the novel. In his discussions with Mr Black and Mr McMinn, Gideon Horville defines and articulates his position on questions of doctrine. Mr Black feels that the

present ecclesiastical system hides God and never goes to church. To Horville, however, churchgoing has a value beyond the mere acquisition of information. "It is like answering our names to the roll call. It shows to what regiment we belong, and for whom we fight," he says (p. 40). Despite being considered a heretic by the McMinns, Horville has some traces of orthodox religion left in him and and a need to affirm his Presbyterian affiliation. However, Mr Black is convincing. Horville, himself the victim of inter-Presbyterian strife, is increasingly inclined to agree with Black's view that "it is citizens who are summoned, and not soldiers – citizens who believe that the real business of the King is best done peaceably and quietly" and that "fisticuffs of rival regiments when they meet, not only are not service to the King, but are subversive to his laws" (p. 40). Horville seems to be speaking along these lines when he tells Mr McMinn that their missions are established along the lines of farce. He deeply shocks his colleague when he expresses his doubts about the ability of "the weaklings and futilities of our colleges" to teach "Chinamen in their own country, Jews on the continent or Catholics in Ireland and France" higher ideals (p. 257).

Mr Black eventually reveals that he is not in fact the simple stone-breaker that everybody has been led to believe, and he employs Horville on his estate. The two men set up a school, or what they call a garden, to teach children the essence of religion, that is to say the religion of conduct. Here the children learn, "not only theoretically, but practically, the ugliness of selfishness, the abomination of tyranny, the meanness of falsehood, so that in time evil inclinations [will be] regarded as disease, and the patient [...] treated with as much sorrowful consideration as if afflicted with a weak spine or too short a leg" (p. 463). Together Lord Tomintoul, Horville and Lilias set about trying to rid the world of sectarianism and to introduce true 'religion' as they see it.

Religion is very prominent in Rosamond Langbridge's *The Stars Beyond* (1907) as well. Langbridge was the daughter of Reverend Frederick Langbridge of St John's in Limerick, also a novelist, who published his *Mack the Miser* the same year as *The Stars Beyond* appeared. Langbridge's father's vocation did not prevent his daughter from being highly critical towards the Protestant clergy in her novel, which deals with an unsuitable marriage between a wife and husband with the symbolic names Verity (Ambershine) and (Grant) Virtue.

Verity is one in a long line of fictional female doubters, the three best-known, according to Margaret M. Maison's *Search Your Soul, Eustace* (pp. 230–31), being the heroines in Olive Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm* (1883), "Rita's" *Sheba* (c. 1889) and Mrs Humphry Ward's *Helbeck of Bannisdale* (1898).[141] They are all rebellious, sceptical, impulsive, idealistic young girls – and they all meet with tragedy. At the start of *The Stars Beyond,* Verity is nine years of age. She is

[141] "Rita" is the pseudonym of Eliza Margaret J. Gollan Humphreys (see http://www.nli.ie – the online catalogue of the National Library of Ireland).

an only child and lives in a rectory somewhere in Ireland. Her parents, who are very conventional, are disappointed with her and she with them. Verity always tells the truth, also when it is not suitable or polite. When she is twelve years old, the father of a distant relation dies and Grant Virtue, fourteen years old, comes to stay with the Ambershines. Verity and Grant get on well despite having a dissimilar outlook on life: Grant tries above all to conform and to please. He wants to become a clergyman and goes to Oxford; Verity studies and travels in France and Italy with a friend before returning to Ireland. When Verity meets Grant in clerical garb, she bursts out laughing. Oxford and the clerical garb are more in line with her parents' expectations of him than with hers. But despite Grant's conforming to Mrs Ambershine's expectations, Verity's mother does not think Grant quite acceptable socially and points it out to her daughter. "I should hope not! Would you reduce Grant to the level of that kind of curate who minces with an English accent at the tea parties of spinsters – whose half tea-cake stands soaking ten minutes in his saucer before it is correct to finish it," is Verity's unexpected reaction (p. 69).

On one occasion when Verity is having dinner with her parents, they are interrupted by a poor Protestant who wants the Canon, Verity's father, to visit a dying woman. Initially the Canon refuses even to go to the door, but eventually he relents. However, when he comes back to the table he is furious. He has no intention of giving up his dinner for a poor man reeking of whiskey. Indignant at her father's lack of compassion, Verity points out that he reeks of whiskey himself. Having told her parents the truth once too often, she is asked to leave the house. Verity has no place to go but to Grant's lodgings, where the two discuss the situation and decide to get married.

After their marriage Verity and Grant lodge with Mrs O'Toole, a convert to Protestantism for business reasons. Verity does her best to adapt to being the wife of a priest and is persuaded by her maid to get dressed and go to Church on the first Sunday after her marriage, even though she would rather stay at home. Her husband's sermon does not appeal to her in any way. The second Sunday she does stay at home. The third Sunday Verity is persuaded to go to Church again, but she takes her seat in the last pew – the wrong one for the rector's wife. Grant is shocked at her behaviour. He is even more shocked when Verity admits to having no faith and promptly pours out her vehement and long-held dislike of Sundays. These are, of course, undesirable views for the wife of a priest to express and to hold. After a sleepless night, Verity realizes that she cannot continue to live with Grant and she decides to leave him, despite being pregnant.

Several years and many strange events later, long after Verity's and Grant's baby has died, Verity meets a woman who, it later transpires, is married to Grant Virtue. The explicit allegory continues, the woman's name being Mrs Wise. She does not belong to any religion or sect but believes solely in the power of

thought, and she has tried her best to cure Grant from "his troubles". She thinks he may still love Verity. After a great deal of soul-searching, Verity, out of character, tells a lie and Mrs Wise wisely chooses to believe her. As a result, Grant stays with his second wife – without having known that Verity was ever in the room next door. Verity has great admiration for Mrs Wise and thinks that she was sent to complete Grant's soul.

As a character, Mrs Wise in *The Stars Beyond* has a similar role to those of Mr Black in Erminda Rentoul Esler's *The Trackless Way* and Mr Wainright of the Ethical Church in Mrs H. H. Penrose's *Denis Trench.* These characters all act as mentors to people of Protestant background and they have all rejected established Protestantism as well as Catholicism for something else, for instance the power of thought, socialism or the 'Ethical Church'.

Another novel which I have not included among the 'religious' ones has a similar message. Andrew Gilchrist in F. E. Crichton's *The Soundless Tide* (1911) is an additional representative of the mentor type. However, his role in the novel is peripheral. *The Soundless Tide* is set amongst the gentry and cottagers of Co. Down. The majority of the characters are Protestants, as is Gillian, wife of Colonel Ward of Connswater. She is not a main character, and therefore Gilchrist's presence and influence on her do not constitute the essence of the novel. After her husband has died, Gillian thinks that her cousin Randal has fallen in love with her, even though it is quite evident that he loves Patty, the much younger niece. Patty oversees Randal picking up Gillian from a swoon of sorts and mistakes it for an embrace. She leaves Connswater while Randal moves into the agent's house to escape from Gillian's attentions. With the help of Andrew Gilchrist, Gillian is able to overcome her bitterness at being rejected, and after a long struggle she writes to Patty to ask her back to Connswater and Randal. Andrew Gilchrist, despite his priestly bearing, makes it clear that he does not belong to any religion. "I call myself by the name of no church, because I only lay stress on the one great necessity of union with God, but I believe that all the churches will surely find their way. I can worship everywhere with the same glad uplifting of the heart, but I like to go to church because there I feel the warmth enfolding me of others' love and prayer and praise" (p. 301). Andrew Gilchrist differs from Mrs Wise, Mr Black, Mr Wainright and Denis Trench in that the church, any existing church, still has a meaning for him, albeit rather a minor one. He sees no need to develop a philosophy or 'religion' of his own but is satisfied with an all-embracing Christianity.

When characters experience sectarian strife, religion is sometimes temporarily rejected. Mary Ellen, also in Elizabeth Crichton's *The Soundless Tide,* is a Protestant cottager and therefore much lower on the social scale than Gillian and Andrew Gilchrist. She has suffered personally from the religious divide in Ireland and sounds less accepting of the churches than Andrew Gilchrist. To her religion

is "quare", and she will have nothing to do with it. In conversation with her mother she cries out passionately; "There bes more sthrife a' canker over religion than over anny wan other thing in the world! When people can conthrive to love God without hatin' others while they're about it, A'll mind me religion – but not till then" (p. 60).

Larry in *Mount Music* (1919) by Somerville and Ross is of a similar mind. As a Nationalist candidate he travels from town to town, meeting so much religious bitterness that he is taken aback. He has spent the four most recent years on the continent, where religion seemed to "have no existence". But here he finds that in "these little Irish towns, the question of a man's private views on a matter that might be supposed to concern only himself, [appear] of paramount importance" (p. 251). He listens to denunciations of Protestants over and over again until he feels that "for tuppence" he would "change over himself". Then in some sections of the rival camp he hears to weariness of the bigotry and errors of Romanism. He is brought, "as many people more God-fearing than he have been brought, to debate the question as to whether a common atheism were not the only panacea for the mutual hatreds that, as appeared to him from his present point of view, ruled the Island of the Saints" (p. 251).

Summarizing this chapter, it cannot be claimed that the Anglo-Irish women novelists distanced themselves from their fellow Irishmen with regard to religion by virtue of the ways in which they depicted Catholicism in their novels. While Catholic stereotypes are sometimes adhered to, there is more tolerance than hostility in the way Catholics are portrayed. Unpleasant Catholic characters, lay and clerical, appear in the novels; but there is a great number of repellent Protestant characters, too. A balance is struck between the different denominations. The scarcity of mixed marriages in the novels may indicate an unwillingness to accept them, or simply a realistic insight into the difficulties encountered by a husband and wife belonging to different churches. Fictional conversions take place for a variety of reasons, and there is no lack of conversions among the Anglo-Irish novelists themselves. As regards priests, some Catholic priests in the novels are politically involved in the Land League; but more often than not Catholic clerics are benign figures and not in any way more unfavourably portrayed than their Protestant colleagues. *The Soundless Tide*, *Mount Music* and *Denis Trench* allude to Protestant-Catholic strife. However, internal Church of Ireland and Presbyterian differences are depicted as well. There is no general bias against Catholicism. Three novels, *The Trackless Way*, *The Stars Beyond* and *Denis Trench*, reject all orthodox religion, Catholic and Protestant.

3 Race

One of the very earliest stereotypings of the Irish 'other' was recorded in 1187 and was clearly an effort to justify the English campaign of colonial conquest. The writer Giraldus Cambrensis (Gerald of Wales), a member of Prince John's invasionary expedition to Ireland, stated his view of the Irish people: "They are a wild and inhospitable people. They live on beasts only and live like beasts. They have not progressed at all from the primitive habits of pastoral living [...] For given only to laziness, they think that the greatest pleasure is not to work".[142] Furthermore, Cambrensis accused this "filthy people" of wallowing in vice and condemned them for their lack of religious instruction and for their barbarian behaviour in general.

The designation of the Irish as inferior savages was to continue right up to the nineteenth century. In 1836 Benjamin Disraeli, later to become Prime Minister of Britain, stated: "The Irish hate our order, our enterprising industry, our pure religion. This wild, reckless, indolent, uncertain, superstitious race has no sympathy with the English character".[143] Some years later, in 1860, the Anglican clergyman and writer Charles Kingsley visited Ireland, and in a letter to his wife he wrote: "I was daunted by the human chimpanzees I saw along that hundred miles of horrible country [...] to see white chimpanzees is dreadful; if they were black one would not feel it as much, but their skins, except where tanned by exposure, are as white as ours".[144]

The notion of race is as problematic from a scientific as from a social point of view. According to *OED*, "race" is, among other things, "a tribe, nation or people, regarded as of common stock" (2b), and "one of the great divisions of mankind having certain physical peculiarities in common" (2d). It is, however, rather an unspecific term and has often served as a 'blank' to encode a culture's, or an individual's, unacknowledged preoccupations. In diverse Victorian discourses and fora, the idea of 'race' was remarkably persistent and would generally

[142] Giraldus Cambrensis, *The History and Topography of Ireland* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982 [1951]. Translated by John O'Meara from the 12th century original), p. 171. Quoted in Richard Kearney, ed., *The Irish Mind: Exploring Intellectual Traditions* (Dublin: Wolfhound, 1985), p. 7.

[143] This is part of a letter from Disraeli to *The Times* quoted in Watson, *Irish Identity and the Literary Revival*, p. 16.

[144] Quoted in L. P. Curtis Jr, *Anglo-Saxons and Celts: A Study of Anti-Irish Prejudice in Victorian England* (Connecticut: University of Bridgeport, 1968), p. 84. Charles Kingsley (1819-1875) was one of the first clergymen openly to support Charles Darwin, whose ideas he partly incorporated into *The Water Babies* (1863). Two other immensely popular novels by him were *Westward Ho!* (1855) and *Hereward the Wake* (1866), both of which have a distinctly anti-Catholic bias.

cover what we today understand as 'nation', 'language-group' or sometimes just plain 'group'. In *Victorian Attitudes to Race*, Christine Bolt claims that "race" together with "civilization" were in fact the two greatest catchwords during the middle years of the nineteenth century among those Victorians who concerned themselves with events outside Britain.[145] Science, too, was important to the Victorians. Research, by Charles Darwin and others, revealed the close relationship between man and nature – and between man and apes. Suddenly, people in England were confronted with the unpleasant notion of having an 'animal' within. By denigrating one group, the 'others', as simple and savage, it was possible to make an advantageous comparison with one's own advanced state of civilization. Racism and class prejudice thus fulfilled a psychological need as a buffer between the Victorians in England and a nature that seemed to get too close for comfort.

The vagueness in the use of the word 'race' at the time was, as Michael Banton has demonstrated in *Racial Theories*, "assisted by the upsurge in European nationalism and the readiness to see that sentiment as an expression of race, so that race was often equated with nation as well as type".[146] When the word 'race' was used about the Irish, it almost always assumed as its inevitable context an opposition between the Irish race and the English race, the Celt versus the Anglo-Saxon or Teuton. Irish identity and nationalism had in fact been inextricably linked with British identity and nationalism for centuries. The word 'identity' is derived from the Latin *idem* meaning 'sameness', but the notion of 'sameness' does not arise until an opposition is available or created. In *Postnationalist Ireland*, Richard Kearney draws an analogy between Irish and British nationalism and Siamese twins, stating that Britain has always been "obsessed by Ireland, and oblivious of it, at one and the same time. Ireland, and in particular Irish nationalism, is its alter ego, its ally and enemy, familiar and foreign. The other which defines, and undermines, its very identity. The double which haunts and fascinates. Its phantom limb".[147] Racism did not, however, merely fulfil a psychological need for the English; it also served as an agent of political power.

Victorian science – including pseudo-sciences such as physiognomy – and popular literature assigned similar characteristics to the Irish, 'negroes' and members of the lower classes. Physiognomy, dealt with in some detail in L. Perry Curtis's *Apes and Angels*, purported to demonstrate that cephalic measurements, facial angles and jaw formation revealed the character of an individual as well as the race to which he belonged.[148] The Anglo-Saxon was said to be orthognathous,

[145] Christine Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes to Race* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), p. ix.
[146] Michael Banton, *Racial Theories* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987), p. xiv.
[147] Richard Kearney, *Postnationalist Ireland: Politics, Culture, Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 9–10.
[148] L. Perry Curtis Jr, *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1971), pp. 1–15.

while the Irish and the Welsh were prognathous. One of the most influential race theorists of the time was Dr John Beddoe, author of *The Races of Britain* (1885) and President of the Anthropological Institute between 1889 and 1891. According to Curtis, Beddoe believed that colour of hair and eyes was the key to racial identity. He developed an "Index of Nigrescence" which was supposed to determine the amount of melamin in the skin, hair and eyes, while implying that one end of the scale was preferable to the other. The darkest and most prognathous Celts, whom Beddoe met while travelling in Ireland, caused him to speculate on their possible African origin and to use the term Africanoid to describe them. Curtis points out that the position of the Celt in Beddoe's hierarchy was very different from that of the Anglo-Saxon (pp. 19–21). The racial comparison most frequently made about the Irish during the second half of the nineteenth century was with 'negroes', as in Kingsley's letter to his wife quoted above.

Paolo Mantegazza's ideas about the hierarchy of different races were illustrated by way of morphological, aesthetic and intellectual trees where the more advanced races, such as the Aryans, the Semites and the Japanese, occupied the branches at the top of the tree while 'negroes' were very close to the bottom.[149] These ideas were not confined to a few madmen on the scientific fringe but were widely disseminated in society and spread in the popular daily and periodical press. In an 1862 satire in the magazine *Punch,* it was suggested that the Irish might provide the 'missing link':

> A gulf certainly, does appear to yawn between the Gorilla and the Negro. The woods and wilds of Africa do not exhibit an example of any intermediate animal. But in this, as in many other cases, philosophers go vainly searching abroad for that which they could readily find if they sought for it at home. A creature manifestly between the Gorilla and the Negro is to be met with in some of the lowest districts of London and Liverpool by adventurous explorers. It comes from Ireland, whence it has contrived to migrate; it belongs in fact to a tribe of Irish savages: the lowest species of the Irish Yahoo. When conversing with its kind it talks a sort of gibberish. It is, moreover, a climbing animal, and may sometimes be seen ascending a ladder with a hod of bricks.[150]

The colonial campaign of vilification was pursued in *Punch* for a number of decades. In the notorious *Punch* cartoons, the Irish stereotypes are constantly associated with drink, excessive ingenuity and bigotry. There are countless Irish jokes based on misspellings and misapprehensions in the magazine; but these stereotypes were, as R. F. Foster has found in *Paddy and Mr Punch*, no worse than those of the Scots and the French (p. 173). From the mid eighteenforties, however, with the rise of the extreme Nationalist, distinctly Anglo-phobic

[149] Paolo Mantegazza, *Physiognomy and Expression* (London: Walter Scott, 1904 [1890]), pp. 312, 314, plates 2 and 4. Shown in Vincent J. Cheng, *Joyce, Race and Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995), p. 28.

[150] Quoted in Curtis, *Apes and Angels*, p. 100.

wing in Irish politics, Young Ireland, *Punch* lost the sympathy it had sometimes displayed for the starving Irish. By 1848, open scepticism about Irish suffering was expressed and the discovery was announced that the Irish were all mad, and that the cure for their distress was wholesale incarceration in lunatic asylums.[151] However, the Irish were still portrayed as essentially human. In *Apes and Angels*, L. P. Curtis claims that it was not until the 1860s that "the era of acute mid-facial prognathism began to turn into the age of the simianized Celt" (p. 35). This coincided with the advent of Fenianism, the republican movement whose members were sworn to free Ireland from British rule by any means. During the Land War, English comic artists turned 'Paddy' even more thoroughly into an ape-like Caliban.

L. P. Curtis writes that allusions to Irish ape-men are not often found in the diaries and letters of the Anglo-Irish gentry. However, he notes that occasionally the gentry of Ireland did indulge in the ape-like metaphor and the simian simile, at least if we are to believe the allusion in *The Big House of Inver* by Somerville and Ross:

> [...] high on Ross Inver stood the tower, tall and square, that, since the time of his Norman ancestor who built it, had guarded the Prendevilles from those whom they and their companion adventurers called, with soldierly arrogance, The Wild Irish – as who in later days, should say The Gorillas. (p. 7)

Curtis sees this as more than a hint, while admitting that it is less than an irrefutable piece of evidence with which to prove that Anglo-Irish landowners shared the same compulsion as those comic artists who turned Paddy into a gorilla with a few strokes of a pen (pp. ix–x).

Punch was read not only on the English side of the Channel but also in Ireland, and it was impossible for the Anglo-Irish to remain unaware of the simian simile. This does not necessarily mean that they agreed with it. In *Wheel-Tracks*, Edith Somerville remembers her mother administering volumes of *Punch* to her children "at times of stress, such as whooping-cough, or the interregnum between governesses" and declares that "a more intensive educator for the young than Mr. Punch could hardly be found". Apart from copying the drawings in pen and ink, she maintains that she learnt what little she knew of Victorian politics from Tenniel's cartoons. However, Somerville was obviously taken aback by the hostility towards the Irish in the eighteen-forties, as she expresses her surprise that anyone persisted in buying *Punch* at that time. Apart from the "aridity of its contemporaries", the only possible reason she can find for her family's continued support of the magazine was her grandfather's inability to break a habit once it had been formed (pp. 15–16).

In the theatre, where an English audience was presented with many Irish characters, the rudimentary image of the stage Irishman had long been firmly rooted.

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[151] *Punch*, Volume 14 (January–June, 1848), 29, 47. Quoted in Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch*, p. 180.

Already Captain Macmorris in Shakespeare's *Henry V* displays many stage Irish characteristics, not least expressed in repetitious mispronunciation: "O, tish ill done, tish ill done! By my hand tish ill done!" (Act III, scene ii). In general, the stage Irishman was passionate, ineffectual and bellicose; he drank endlessly, swore wildly, and spoke a broken but colourful English full of Gaelic exclamations. In the eighteenth century, new images were added; the Irish began to carry a shillelagh (stick), eat endless amounts of potatoes and appear with at least one pig. Their speech was full of 'bulls' – clumsy sentences but full of implication.[152] The Irish stage image did not improve in the coming century and, needless to say, the stage version of the Irishman was considerably more popular in Victorian England than real-life Irishmen.

These stereotypes and pictures of the Irish do not include much in the way of extenuating circumstances, nor is it easy to find anything in them which can be interpreted in a favourable manner. There was, however, some expression of colonial prejudice that, on the surface at least, seemed more complimentary. In *The Study of Celtic Literature,* Matthew Arnold drew on Ernest Renan and claimed that the Celtic genius has "sentiment as its main basis, with love of beauty, charm and spirituality for its excellence, ineffectualness and self-will for its defect" (p. 97). The Celt is "*always ready to react against the despotism of fact*" (p. 85, Arnold's italics), and Arnold claims that it was this rebellion against fact that had lamed the Celt in the world of business and politics, for "as in material civilization he has been ineffectual, so has the Celt been ineffectual in politics" (p. 89).[153] As the Celt was also supposed to be "peculiarly disposed to feel the spell of the feminine idiosyncrasy" (p. 99), Arnold was able to utilize this patriarchialist discourse to justify the hegemony of the masculine Teutonic English. Irish 'femininity' was contrasted with English 'masculine' virtues, Irish 'emotion' with English 'reason' and Irish 'poetic' attributes with English 'pragmatism'. All these images tended to appeal to Ireland's resident Teutons, the Anglo-Irish, and conveniently seemed to support the idea that the Irish needed guidance from more mature and more developed people than themselves.

From the early nineteenth century, there was a steady flow of translated material from the Irish language, particularly of poetry but also of other texts. As knowledge of Gaelic literature – and through the literature also of Gaelic culture and society – improved, a wave of Celticism broke out in Ireland in the 1890s.[154]

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[152] J. O. Bartley, "The Development of a Stock Character: The Stage Irishman to 1800", *MLR* (1942), 438–47. Quoted in Declan Kiberd, "The Fall of the Stage Irishman", p. 39 in Schleifer, ed., *The Genres of the Irish Literary Revival.*

[153] Matthew Arnold, *The Study of Celtic Literature* (London: J. M. Dent, 1932 [1867]). The contents of this study formed the substance of four lectures given by Arnold in the chair of poetry at Oxford.

[154] A previous Celtic revival began in the 1750s and 1760s with the poems of Thomas Gray, James MacPherson and others. This had relatively little to do with Ireland, being mainly Scottish and Welsh in orientation. The Celtic revival of the late 19th century, however, was very Irish in content and quite nationalist in tone.

Celticism became a feature of Irish Nationalism as the Irish began searching for their own native origin, in order to posit a countering notion of the Irish character to combat the English stereotype of it. Buying into the terms of the Us/Them distinction, Irish Nationalists fabricated their own mythology of racial and cultural superiority and simply reversed some of the derogatory terms that had been used against them, as can be seen in some of the cartoons in the Dublin comic weekly *Pat,* for example.[155]

This wave of Celticism in Ireland led, among other things, to the founding of the Gaelic League in 1893. The League had the revival of the Irish language as its main concern. However, it also had an active policy of editing and translating Gaelic texts as part of its strategy to increase the knowledge of Gaelic literature, culture and society. Of all the factors that influenced the rise of the new sense of nationality at the end of the 19th century, the foundation of the Gaelic League in 1893 has come to be regarded as one of the most significant. The President of the Gaelic League was Douglas Hyde, a Protestant and a member of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy. He was also the President of the National Literary Society, which he had set up in 1892 together with another Anglo-Irish Protestant, W. B. Yeats. At a Society meeting Hyde delivered an influential address on "The Necessity for De-Anglicizing Ireland", in which he stated that there was an indissoluble link between a nation's language and its culture, and therefore it must be seen as a sign of cultural weakness to mimic the English. The Irish should abandon English books and turn to the works of Thomas Moore and Thomas Davis – precursors of the type of Anglo-Irish literature to which Hyde himself was committed. This did not please the Irish-language enthusiasts who wanted an Irish literature in Irish, and it was to cater for them that the Gaelic League was founded in the following year. The role of this new organization was to be propagandist, and it was to be independent of any particular group.[156]

W. B. Yeats was no more pleased than the language enthusiasts with Hyde's speech, as his view of what a distinctly Irish literature should contain differed from Hyde's. For Yeats, who did not speak Irish and did not take much interest in the revival of that language, it was the Celtic heritage and lore that was of importance. In an increasingly industrialized world, the Celts and other so-called primitive peoples, who were thought to have possessed instinctive knowledge and understanding, became the focus of attention of a great number of people. Yeats's *The Celtic Twilight* (1893), a collection of supernatural writings based on his own research in folklore and conveying his belief in the otherworld and in

[155] *Pat* was a three-penny comic weekly launched in Dublin in December 1879. See Curtis, *Apes and Angels*, pp. 69–72.

[156] Later, political neutrality became difficult to adhere to, and in 1915 Douglas Hyde resigned the presidency of the Gaelic League on this issue

fairies, reflected these 'Celtic' qualities. This influential collection gave the subsequent movement, the Irish Literary Revival, its popular name.

The social class with which Yeats was best acquainted was a Protestant middle class of merchants and parsons, but his influential preference was for an artistic and superstitious peasantry as well as for a patronizing Ascendancy class. The writers of the Literary Revival idealized and gave their attention to the Irish peasant as the antipode of progress, modernity, commercialism, realism, democracy, the bourgeoisie and industrialism – all prevalent in England. They were associated through their cultural nationalism, their preoccupation with heroism,[157] their romanticism, their interest in folklore and the occult, and their abhorrence of things English. The image they helped to create was one of a pastoral and mythic Ireland where spiritualized consciousness was placed in contrast to the urban rational outlook of the nineteenth century, an outlook that emphasized the intellect rather than the soul. No doubt the power and the success of the imperial neighbour were somehow easier to accept when seen in the light of spiritual incapacity or vulgarity. The revivalists themselves, predominantly Anglo-Irish, had seen their class progressively deprived of political hegemony during the latter part of the 19th century. By way of cultural hegemony they tried to retain their right to inclusion within an Irish nation from which a romantic Nationalist definition excluded them because of their native language, class and religion as well as their ethnic origin. It was not only the identity of Ireland that was at stake during the revival years but also the identity of the individuals inhabiting it.

The Anglo-Irish women novelists of my study were, as I have already mentioned, not part of the Literary Revival, which mainly concentrated on poetry and drama and did not encourage novel-writing, but they too presented a picture of the Irish peasantry, whose origin was so different from their own. Many of their novels are romances. Yet, many novels are less of a flight from reality than the works of the revivalists, some of the work from the shared pen of Edith Somerville and Martin Ross being a case in point. Somerville and Ross thought of the Celtic revival as something that had been brought back to life with much artificial respiration and said that they were "full up" when asked to write a play for the Abbey Theatre.[158]

[157] The hypermasculinity of the heroic figures of, for example, the Ulster Cycle held strong attraction for the revivalist generation. It appealed to their aristocratic mentality and enabled them to look upon themselves as the lawful descendants of dispossessed noblemen. At the same time it allowed the members of the Gaelic League as well as Sinn Fein to assert a new kind of self-image. Increasingly, the feminine image of the Irish Celt was rejected in favour of what Cairns and Richards call "the Gael", who in contradiction to the Celt is distinctly masculine and antagonistic to the Anglo-Saxon. See David Cairns and Shaun Richards, *Writing Ireland* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1988), p. 91.

[158] Letter to Somerville from Ross in 1904, quoted in Lewis, *Somerville and Ross*, p. 110–11. Lady Gregory, initiator of the Abbey Theatre together with W. B. Yeats and Edward Martyn, was a cousin of Martin Ross's. She was interested in Somerville and Ross's work and sent appreciations of their novels as they appeared. She also sent Martin Ross her own books and those of her colleagues in the Irish

Increasingly alienated from each of their constitutive identities, the Anglo-Irish women novelists of my study had to question themselves as to their position in relation to the Irish. They did this in their writings, for example when bringing up different aspects of the lives of the peasants. In the following section, called "The Celt", I will look at the concepts 'Celt' and 'race' before examining the treatment of certain themes in an effort to establish to what extent the novels by the Anglo-Irish women novelists of my study subscribe to the English stereotype of the Celt. Do the mere Irish characters live like beasts? Are they filthy, lazy, violent, simple, superstitious and always drunk, as suggested by commentators on Ireland for centuries? Do they speak gibberish? In "The English", I will focus on the English, Anglo-Saxon, characters in the novels. My objective is to try to establish whether the novels identify with the mere Irish, the English, neither or both. Finally in "The Anglo-Irish", I will look at the presentation of the Anglo-Irish themselves.

The Celt

In a number of novels "the Celtic Race" is mentioned by name, and different aspects of what is supposed to pertain to this Celtic race are stated. Emily Lawless's novels *Hurrish* (1886) and *Grania* (1893) are especially apt to cite race together with characteristics. About the protagonist in *Grania*, the narrator tells us:

> Like every Celt that ever was born she perfectly understood these sudden unexplainable panics, more akin to those that affect sensitive animals, horses particularly, than anything often felt by more stolid and apathetic bipeds. Though not overflowing in words, as Murdough's did, her imagination was perhaps even more alive than his to those dim formless visions which people the dusk, and kept alive in the Celt a sense of vague presences, unseen but realisable – survivals of a whole world of forgotten beliefs, unfettered by logic, untouched by education, hardly altered even by later more conscious beliefs, which have rather modified these earlier ones than superseded them (pp. 113–14)

This description encompasses many of the characteristics which were considered typical of the Celtic race by the supporters of Matthew Arnold. The racial qualities of Hurrish in Lawless's earlier novel are pointed out in a very similar fashion, and "womanliness" – the "femininity" mentioned by Arnold as pertaining to the Celt – is included for this male character:

Literary Revival. Martin Ross was not always impressed, as can be seen from her letter to Lady Gregory on February 20, 1905 where she gives a very cautious critical appreciation of J. M. Synge's *Well of the Saints* (Lewis, p. 104). In an earlier letter to Edith Somerville, written on 18 October 1901, she comments on *Diarmid and Grainne*, a collaboration between Yeats and George Moore: "I may say that a more unattractive hero than Mr B I have seldom seen. In his lovemaking he moaned over Mrs B's face like a dog when a cat comes into the room. I could have thrown up. I thought *Diarmid and Grania* a strange mix of saga and modern French situations throughout [...]" (Lewis, ed., *The Selected Letters of Somerville and Ross*, p. 253).

> His was the genuine Celtic temperament – poetic, excitable, emotionable, unreasoning. Of the more brutal and cruel elements, which too often, alas! streak and disfigure that strain, he had hardly a trace. He was kindly to softness, and tender-hearted almost to womanliness. Those schemes of personal vengeance – dark, bloody, tiger-like – which, century after century, have nourished the sense of injury, while they soothed the immediate lot of many a half-starved Celt, were almost as foreign to him as that ox-like indifference which enables men of other races to submit to the dreariest of daily drudgeries, without a thought or a dream of escape. (p. 15)

Alley, Hurrish's young niece, is said to have too much of the "Celtic Eolian-harp temperament" (p. 78), while Maurice Brady, an orator by nature, experiences the west wind as the "very breath of Celtic eloquence" (p. 58). Mat Brady, Maurice's brother and the villain of the novel, is described in accordance with the common Celtic physiognomical stereotype as "unwieldy, red-faced, heavy-jawed, brutal – a sort of human orang-outang or Caliban, whose lumbering action and coarse gesture had something grotesque and even repulsive about them, as it were a parody or perversion of humanity" (p. 9). Later on in the novel, Mat, who lies in hiding hoping for an opportunity to kill Hurrish, is detected in the tiny doorway of an oratory. The face that Hurrish sees is

> the red, repulsive, baboon-like face of Mat Brady peering out as an animal's face peers from its lair, the light catching upon the barrel of a gun which he held in his hands. [...] Then, like a beast, he turned at bay, and like a beast's was the face which presented itself, – the lowering brow, the huge jaw, the mouth distorted and gnashing with rage and terror! A hideous sight – to dream of, not to tell – a man in the likeness of a beast, worse than the very ugliest variety with hoofs and claws. (p. 71, p. 72)[159]

There are a number of references to "race" and "blood" in Lawless's novels, as well as in some novels by other novelists. In general, however, it is by bringing up different aspects of the lives of the Irish peasant – such as his living conditions, poverty, 'simpleness', alcohol abuse, laziness, superstition and language as under the sub-headings below – that the supposedly racial characteristics of the Irish Celt are expounded by the Anglo-Irish novelists.

Living conditions and poverty

The living quarters of the rural Irish had vastly improved during the second half of the nineteenth century, as against the housing they had to put up with before the Famine. In the country districts, the proportion of one-room cabins made of mud or some other perishable material (Class IV houses in the Census classification) declined from about 40 per cent of the total in 1841 to about

[159] The fact that Lawless quotes Coleridge's words from "Christabel" ("a sight to dream of, not to tell", l. 253) about the unspeakable vileness of Geraldine's body invests Mat Brady with downright demonic properties.

1.5 per cent in 1901. When the first Labourers' Acts were passed in 1883 and 1885, a sustained attempt was made to raise the standard of housing for rural workers, and many good-quality cottages were built and let at a blatantly uneconomic rent. However, most labourers, if they no longer lived in mud cabins, still lived in dilapidated cottages, many of which were unfit for human habitation.[160]

The English Poor Law of 1834 had been extended to Ireland in 1838 with the result that the country was divided into "unions", in each of which a workhouse was to be established where assistance was to be administered. However, as it was necessary to surrender the little piece of land a person held to qualify for relief, only those driven by absolute destitution were prepared to move into a workhouse. During the Famine, when many people were simply too sick or too weak from starvation to be able to reach the workhouse, this rule became less rigid and so-called outdoor relief was also acceptable. In 1881, when the country was in the middle of an agricultural depression, those in workhouses numbered 364,000; but those on relief in their own homes were as many as 226,000. By 1911 both figures had shrunk considerably, to 38,000 in workhouses and 39,000 on outdoor relief.[161]

In 1904, in *Ireland in the New Century*, Horace Plunkett claimed that there was a significant void in the Irishman's conception of a home. "If he love the place of his habitation he does not endeavour to improve or adorn it [...]. He treats life as if he were a mere sojourner upon earth whose true home is somewhere else, a fact often attributed to his intense faith in the unseen [...]".[162] However, Plunkett admitted that there were other factors involved, also viewing the phenomenon he observed as the natural outcome of historical conditions.

Among the novels of my study, only Emily Lawless's *Hurrish* (1886) and *Grania* (1892) have main mere Irish characters. In Jane Barlow's *Kerrigan's Quality* (1893) and *The Founding of Fortunes* (1902), there is a mixture of social classes although peasant characters are kept in focus. The poverty amongst some of these characters is palpable. They do not live in workhouses and no mention is made of outdoor relief; but starvation is never far away.

The land that is supposed to support the hungry families is often described as barren and unsuitable for its purpose. On Inishmaan, the home of Grania in Lawless's novel, the earth is spread so thinly in the crannies of rock that even a moderate amount of sunshine makes it crack. The wells run dry, and the potatoes lie bare and half-baked on the stone before they are ready for harvesting. The beasts perish, there is nothing to send to the mainland in return for the

[160] Lyons, pp. 53–54.
[161] Ibid., p. 78.
[162] Horace Plunkett, *Ireland in the New Century* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1982 [1904]), p. 54

necessities the islanders need and there is no money to pay the rent they owe. It is no better when it rains and the wind runs over the island; the thin soil either rains or blows away. Grania and her sister are relatively well off, but beside their house is the "foul and decaying hovel in which the Shan Daly family squatted, lived, and starved" (p. 36). When Mrs Daly comes to Honor and Grania with her four children aged five and under, she does not need to speak. Her look of dumb, wistful appeal says it all. "Hunger was written there; worse – starvation; first, most clamorous of needs, not often, thank Heaven! seen so clearly, but when seen terrible – a vision from the deepest, most elemental depths, a cry to pity full of ancient primordial horrors; heartrending; appalling, impossible not to hasten to satisfy" (p. 39). Grania and Honor are always ready to oblige and little Phelim Daly, "a mere bundle of bones", comes "with the regularity of a winter-fed robin" to share their midday meal of cold potatoes and griddle-bread (p. 68).

The picture in Lawless's and Barlow's novels of how the mere Irish fight for their meagre existence is bleak. They do their best to cultivate their tiny strip of infertile land but have to fish as well to have a chance of survival. The sea is, however, no less hostile than the land. As the boats and other equipment are primitive, the poor villagers risk their lives going out on the wild and stormy Atlantic. If everything else fails, they may have to follow the example of the Mulcahy widow in Barlow's *The Founding of Fortunes,* who is often seen "gatherin' herself a dirty wisp of say-weed to boil for her dinner" (p. 33).

Poverty is common among the Irish in the novels, while dirt and squalor seem to be universal. This is pointed out in some detail in several novels. The Durane cabin described in Lawless's *Grania* is not untypical. It consists of one room. The walls have never been plastered, and the mortar between the blocks of stone has fallen out and been replaced with lumps of turf from outside. The almost total absence of glass in the small paper-patched windows and the turf-smoke contribute to making the room very dark. This is the home of father, mother, five children, a grandfather and an orphan niece, who complains about getting her face scratched by the chickens during the night. Grania and her sister are more comfortable than their neighbours and their cabin is said to be clean "for an Irish cabin" (p. 94), but it is still shared with the hens and the chickens. At times the novel distances itself from the scenes it presents by looking at them as though they were paintings, as when a turf-smoked wall has the hue of a Rembrandt or the face of Honor seems to be the face of a saint or martyr on a canvas from an Italian master (p. 94, p. 95). Furthermore, it is suggested that the archaic clothes of Grania's boyfriend Murdogh "ought to have rejoiced the inmost heart of a painter, had a painter ever thought of going to the Aran Isles in search of subjects [...]" (p. 60). On occasions like these it is easy to understand W. B. Yeats's comment that Miss Lawless differs from "the greater

Irish novelists in being only able to observe Irish character from without and not to create it from within".[163]

In *Hurrish,* the reader is addressed directly as regards what is termed one of the national Irish idiosyncrasies:

> The indifference to squalor – rather the admission of it – is not certainly the pleasantest bit of duty which falls to the lot of the modern chronicler of peasant Ireland. Cleanliness and purity are words which admit, too, of more than one meaning, it must be remembered, and some of those meanings are not necessarily compatible with well-scoured floors and furniture gleaming with hand-polish, – meanings which might even not a little surprise those uncivilised ones to whom the floor seems a far handier receptacle for rubbish than a dust-bin, and who have not squeamish prejudices against the indoor society of ducks, or a cheerful, if vociferous, nursery of young pigs. When all is said, however, we must leave the ill to work its own cure. National idiosyncrasies are hard to mend, and exceedingly awkward ones to meddle with. (p. 52)

The choice of the word "chronicler" and the qualifier "modern" before it in Lawless's novel makes for an interesting comparison with Somerville and Ross's *The Big House of Inver*, where a reference is made to the "impartial chronicler". In contrast to Lawless, whose distance to the narrator appears negligible, Somerville and Ross do not in any way suggest that they are the implied chronicler. On the contrary; the possibility of ever achieving "such a prodigy" as an impartial chronicler is queried (p. 8).

The fact that the protagonist in *Hurrish* is relatively well-to-do does not affect the orderliness or cleanliness of his cabin. His orphan-niece is said to have "a turn for cleanliness" (p. 51), which is, however, nipped in the bud by Hurrish's mother, old Bridget. When Hurrish goes to prison, he suffers not only from being locked into such a "glaring self-righteous place" as the prison-cell but also from its "self-glorifying cleanliness! The ghastly cleanliness and whiteness together nearly made him sick" (p. 116).

Emily Lawless's novels seldom refrain from mentioning that the living quarters of the Irish are shared with animals. Consciously or not, animal imagery is frequently used for the peasants, particularly in *Grania.* Grania herself is compared to a squirrel or a marmoset as well as to an affectionate kitten. She has a small dog's lips, flees like a rabbit and is also bird-like. Most of the imagery connected with the other characters refers to domestic animals such as dogs, horses, pigs, pullets, hens and turkeys; but deaf-and-dumb Biddy is a toad or a spider, and little Phelim Daly is a neglected animal as well as an ill-thriven plant. The Daly family as a whole are not even animals when they first appear in the novel

[163] From a letter to the editor of the *Daily Express* (Dublin), 27 February 1895. Quoted in John Kelly and Eric Domville, eds, *The Collected Letters of W. B. Yeats 1865–1895*, volume I (Dublin: Clarendon, 1986), pp. 442-43.

but some sort of "earth or rock emanation" (p. 38). The description of the father is particularly explicit:

> Beings of so elementary an order as that presented by Shan Daly are apt to be more or less offenders against whatever society they chance to be thrown into: nay, are apt to belong in a greater or lesser degree to what we call the criminal classes, but their criminality is pretty much upon a par with the criminality of mad dogs or vicious horses. (p. 18)

The deviant behaviour of the Irish can thus be explained and excused.

In Emily Lawless's *Grania*, then, the Irish are animal-like, and what is more they seem to know it. It is with the animal and not with the man that Grania's boyfriend Murdogh identifies himself when he witnesses an Englishman riding the horse he has dreamt of owning: "[E]very time that little yellow horse lifted its legs or twitched its legs I'd leap as if I was doing it myself", Murdogh tells Grania (p. 81).

Despite adhering closely to the English sterotyping of the Irish, *Grania* found favour amongst some Nationalist critics, too. On May 26 1892, for example, *The Nation* wrote:

> No one can read of the sweet, fierce Grania, of the saintly self-abnegation of Honor, of the bombastic selfishness of Murdoch, the noble gentlemanliness of the elder Durane, without a deeper sympathy being evoked for the Irish peasantry and their modes of thought and their lives being impressed upon the mind; and all without apparent intention or attempt to draw a moral. (p. 401)

Grania had several other favourable reviews in contrast to Lawless's earlier, more political novel *Hurrish,* in respect of which Lawless was accused of slander and of grossly exaggerating the violence of the peasants on whom she, according to *The Nation,* looked down from "the pinnacle of her three-generation nobility".[164] And yet Hurrish is a good man, while his niece Alley can only be characterized as saintly. The Nationalist reviewers focussed on the unfavourable characterizations of Hurrish's bloodthirsty mother, Bridget, and of the Brady brothers, one of whom tries to kill Hurrish while the other tries and succeeds. W. B. Yeats concurred with the negative Nationalist view and thought Lawless in "imperfect sympathy with Celtic nature". However, as James M. Cahalan points out in *The Irish Novel,* it is with Yeats's romanticized view of "the Celtic nature" that she was in "imperfect sympathy". In Cahalan's view, the peasants in *Grania* are more truthful than anything Yeats himself ever wrote about peasants; he sees the novel as a precursor of J. M. Synge's *Riders to the Sea* and later, naturalistic treatments of the peasantry (p. 81). It is interesting to note that Lawless was aware of the literary potential of the Aran Islands and published

[164] Cited in Cahalan, *The Irish Novel,* p. 81. Several reviews of Lawless's novels can be found as clippings in Marsh's library (e.g. *The Freeman's Journal,* 13 May 1892, and *United Ireland,* 20 April 1892).

Grania before Synge made his visit there. Edith Sichel claims that Lawless's first visit was in the 1880's,[165] while Padraic Fallon, in the introduction to his edition of Lawless's verse, maintains that she lived in the islands long before Synge was born, although he does not supply any source for his claim.[166] Betty Webb Brewer notes that Synge read *Grania* before he went to the islands but that he found Lawless's knowledge of peasant life superficial, particularly as regards kelp harvesting (p. 125).

In some respects, the peasant characters in Jane Barlow's novels come across as similar to those in Lawless's novels. Barlow's two novels with a number of peasant characters, *Kerrigan's Quality* (1894) and *The Founding of Fortunes* (1902), are set in the neighbouring villages of Glenore and Port Maguire. Of these two villages Port Maguire is the poorer by far. The poverty and the squalor of the cabins of the Irish are not denied but described in some detail. Bernard, the young boy in *The Founding of Fortunes*, recently arrived from Wales, mistakes the houses of Port Maguire for cattle sheds. Contrary to Maisie, the visitor from England in C. M. MacSorley's *Nora* (n.d. [1908]), who finds Mrs Brophy's cottage too dirty to enter, Bernard has no choice; Port Maguire is to be his new home. However, when he meets a pig in Mrs Galvin's house, he feels "as though he had been forcibly shown a glimpse of some horrible inferior world" (p. 60). Generally people and beasts – if the people are lucky enough to have any beasts – share what little comfort there is in the cabins. In *Kerrigan's Quality*, an explanation is proffered for the lack of house pride of the Irish peasants:

> For the painful tillage of stony places, and the patient portage of heavy burdens [...] and the hazarding of lives on wild waters for the sake of a raft-load of turf or sixpenn'orth of fish, would point irresistibly to the conclusion that a reason must be sought otherwhere than in easy-going acquiescence. Closer observation would have brought further witness in the signs of a reaching after order and amenity whenever the dead weight of sheer penury is lifted, be it ever so little: the border of whitewashed stones leading to the low, dark doorway, the screed of a muslin curtain across the deep-set pane, the high-coloured picture on the smoke-stained wall, and the drooping plant in the broken jam-pot, all enter their protest against the crushing out of sight of honest labour's blossom, which is beauty. (p. 45)

This would seem to contradict Horace Plunkett's view that the Irish do not

[165] Edith Sichel, "Emily Lawless" in *New and Old* (London: Constable, 1917), pp. 151–79. (Reprint of "Emily Lawless", *Nineteenth Century*, 76. July 1914, pp. 80–100.)

[166] Padraic Fallon, *The Poems of Emily Lawless* (Dublin: Dolmen, 1965). In Lawless's second volume of verse, *With the Wild Geese* (1902), there are some poems set on the Aran Islands, such as "Honor's Grave". The description of Honor is very similar to the one given of Grania's sister Honor in *Grania*, although in the poem she is "safe in her grave". Emily Lawless was not the only one of the Anglo-Irish novelists of my study to visit the Aran Islands before Synge did; so, in 1895, did Edith Somerville and Martin Ross. Somerville sketched but found that the inhabitants fled at the sight of a sketchbook, so she sent to her sister for her Kodak. Ross wrote an essay, "An Outpost of Ireland", about the outing to the island. This is mentioned by Gifford Lewis in *Somerville and Ross*, pp. 93, 104.

endeavour to improve or adorn their home. In Barlow's novels, the dirty habits of the Irish are a result of poverty and have no direct connection with race or religion.

In reviews of her books, Jane Barlow was generally credited with knowing the minutest details of the lives of the peasantry. The praise was sometimes reserved, however; it was pointed out that she only knew the Irish peasants "as far as an outsider can know them".[167] This was also the view that Yeats held,[168] and the one Ernest Boyd presented in *Ireland's Literary Renaissance.* Boyd felt that there was a "suggestion of patronage" in most of her work, "perhaps unavoidable in one who studies the peasant from outside" – although he claims that her evident sympathy saves it from being outright offensive. Despite his reserve, Boyd professed himself inclined to count Barlow among the prose writers of the revival, while disqualifying Lawless on account of the "aloof superiority" she displayed in *Hurrish.* However, in some of Lawless's later work – in *Grania*, for example – he seemed to detect a modification of her attitude and found that she was able to saturate her work with the spirit and colour of the West, without prejudice to her political and social convictions (pp. 375–78).

In books by other novelists, where peasants play a less prominent role than in Lawless's and Barlow's novels, there is often a detailed description of the dirt and poverty displayed in some peasant's cabin or other, as in the Sweeny cabin in *An Irish Cousin* (1889) by Somerville and Ross. When Willy, the Irish cousin, and Theo, the visitor from Canada, take shelter there, Mrs Sweeny drags forward a greasy-looking chair for Theo and another one for Willy, the discrepancy in the length of whose legs is corrected by a convenient dip in the mud floor. The cabin is, of course, also home to some of the Sweeny family's domestic animals. From a hencoop in the corner by the bed come faint cluckings, and the goose which Mrs Sweeny has been plucking lies with its legs tied beside the red earthen pan, which holds its breast feathers.

The scene painted of the kitchen presided over by Biddy in J. M. Callwell's *A Little Irish Girl* (1901) is no less detailed than the one of the Sweeny cabin in *An Irish Cousin.* Furthermore, the interior of the two kitchens is very similar. The Big House in *A Little Irish Girl*, which the young O'Briens have inherited, has been empty for some time and Biddy and her brother Tom have acted as caretakers during the absence of the O'Briens. As a consequence, it has become very 'Irish'. Anstace O'Brien, recently arrived from England and used to the neat-

[167] Brown, *Ireland in Fiction*, p. 25.

[168] Yeats excludes Barlow's *Irish Idylls* (1892) from the list of books "necessary to the understanding of the imagination of Ireland" sent to the Editor of the *Daily Express*, 27 February 1895: "I have regretfully excluded Miss Barlow's 'Irish Idylls' because despite her genius for recording the externals of Irish peasant life, I do not feel that she has got deep into the heart of things". Quoted in Kelly and Domville, eds, *The Collected Letters of W. B. Yeats 1865–1895*, volume 1, pp. 442-43. *Irish Idylls* is a series of sketches from a poverty-stricken hamlet in the midst of a waste of unlovely bogland.

ness of an English kitchen, gathers her skirts at the sight of the one at Kilfane. Only one chair in it has all its legs as well as its back. On the top rail of one of the chairs, over the back of which some articles of washing are hanging to dry, a chicken is perched, shaking out its feathers and pluming itself. Some hens have taken over a wine-cooler to lay their eggs, while the turkey prefers a cupboard for hers. The one-eyed collie licks the frying pan, and Anstace notes that some of the family antique china has been used for feeding the fowl. Biddy likes the kitchen just the way it is; she finds it convenient to have everything handy, be it a fishing net or a jug without a handle. Anstace, however, wants a thorough clean-up and would much prefer the hens to be in the henhouse. Doesn't Kilfane have a henhouse? she wonders. It has and it hasn't. Biddy informs Anstace that "the roof bin off it this long start; Tom tuk the rafthers away for firin' one winther whin the turf was scarce" (p. 68).

Anstace is so shocked at the appearance of the kitchen that she has to share her feelings with her brother. He turns out to be much more philosophical in his reaction and simply suggests that they try to get used to Irish ways as soon as possible.

A similar event takes place in E. O'Connor Morris's *Killeen* (1895). The orphan Nesta has come to her mother's family in Ireland and is shocked at the state of the cabin when visiting the O'Haras on her grandmother's estate. She has never seen such dirty and ragged children before, and the comfortless interior suggests the direst poverty; and yet the whole family looks well fed and happy. The pigs, three of which poke their snouts in the mud, and flocks of geese and turkeys – to say nothing of the humbler ducks and hens – preclude the idea of want or even very straitened means. Nesta finds it impossible to understand why the O'Haras are so dirty and ragged when they are not poor. And why are the hens kept in the kitchen? Her uncle, used to Irish ways, laughs at her. "Ah, those are your English notions [...]. Remember you are in Ireland now, my dear, and don't judge us by a Saxon standard" (pp. 71–72).

In Mrs H. H. Penrose's *Burnt Flax* (1914) it is not only the disorderliness and the dirt that are mentioned, but also the inferior structure of the cabins. They are so bad that they are more like hovels than cabins, even though from the outside they might resemble "a picture postcard". The roof of the Dears' cottage leaks so badly that the walls are green with damp. Of the McKeoghs' cabin we are told:

> The poverty that surrounded her [the young woman of the house] was of the kind that might truly be described as hideous – the kind that has no dignity to render it bearable, no seemliness, no relief in effort to make the best of things, even though such efforts were doomed to practical fruitlessness. Torrential rain had fallen at the end of a fine summer, and water dripped through a dozen holes in the sodden thatch over her head, while, at her feet, the earthen floor held, in the depressions of its uneven surface,

> pools of water slowly soaking into it. [..A]nd because it was impossible for light to come in at the right places, the door stood open to admit it, damp gusts sweeping the wretched interior, blowing peat ashes hither and thither, and causing to shiver the old people who crouched together over a miserable handful of smouldering peat. (p. 54)

One of the old McKeogh people is blind and the other deaf, while in the Dear family Bridget is a paralytic and Thady a victim of rheumatism. These old people are looked after by a son and his wife, in the case of McKeoghs, and by a daughter, in the case of the Dears. The Dears are pressed for the rent by the new owner of the estate and try hard to cope with their situation. The blame for the lamentable state of decay of the estate is placed on the benevolent, but careless, previous owner.

In a late novel by Somerville and Ross, *An Enthusiast* (1921), the Colonel's widow is convinced of her own superiority and that of her race. She is appalled at the quality of the Irish servants. In her view they are all untrustworthy, idle, unconscientious and dirty. "They don't *know* what cleanliness is! I have never yet met with an Irish servant who suffered from dirt, as a good English servant does" (p. 29). 'Dirt' and 'Irish' seem synonymous to one character in *A Nine Days' Wonder* (1905) by B. M. Croker, who finds it "impossible to dissociate the idea of mud and dirt from anything Irish" (p. 150).

Neither Charlotte nor Miss Duffy in *The Real Charlotte* (1894) by Somerville and Ross would consider herself mere Irish. Charlotte is a Protestant, Miss Duffy has attended the Protestant church with her father as a child, and both have moments of 'gentility'. However, from the description of the interior of their houses it would seem that they are considerably more Irish than Anglo-Irish in some respects. In both cases animals are kept inside, even if Charlotte's animals are somewhat more refined than the usual pigs and hens. She keeps many cats and also has a cockatoo. The kitchen at Tally Ho, Charlotte's home before she ousts Miss Duffy from hers, is very dirty even when it is at its best. Bid Sal, Charlotte's housekeeper's special "kitchen-slut", walks around on bare feet. On one occasion Miss Duffy sits on a broken chair and looks around her dreary kitchen while a party of ducks files slowly in through the open door and begins to explore an empty pot or two with their long, dirty bills. They know that Miss Duffy, though satisfied to accord the freedom of the kitchen to the hens and turkeys, has drawn the line at them and the geese, and they are very cautious.

Poverty and dirty habits are thus very common among the mere Irish characters in the novels, quite in line with the English stereotype. Some contemporary critics found Emily Lawless and Jane Barlow too patronizing in their attitude towards the peasantry, but it cannot be denied that sympathy for the hardship and suffering of the mere Irish is manifested in their novels. Jane Barlow's *Kerrigan's Quality* makes an attempt to explain the lack of homeliness in Irish cabins by pointing to the "sheer weight of penury" of the people. The difficulty of mak-

ing a living is emphasized in Mrs H. H. Penrose's *Burnt Flax*, where some of the blame for the appalling conditions of the cabins is put on the previous owner of the estate. There is little blame and a great deal of understanding expressed for the way things are among those of 'other' race in Ireland when it comes to living conditions and poverty. There are, however, some occasions when dirt and grime are not the result of poverty alone, as in J. M. Callwell's *A Little Irish Girl* and E. Morris O'Connor's *Killeen.*

'Simpleness', alcohol abuse and laziness

The frequency with which some kind of handicap occurs in the novels, albeit mentioned in passing only, is noticeable. In Mrs H. H. Penrose's *Burnt Flax,* for instance, one of the McKeoghs is blind and the other deaf; and Bridget Dear is paralytic. In Emily Lawless's *Grania* Biddy is deaf-and-dumb, as is her twin brother. Teige, their nephew, is also physically disabled. Peter Callaghan in *Mount Music* by Somerville and Ross has a daughter who is "blinded" because "God left a hand on her". Physical handicaps, however, feature less than mental disability. There seems to be an exaggerated number of village idiots amongst the Irish; but perhaps this is not so much a question of exaggeration as of statistical reality. Writings on the psychological implications of colonization have emphasized the link between social patterns which accompany colonization and the consequences of these patterns. It has been argued, by Frantz Fanon and Ashis Nandy among others, that colonial subjects may be forced to negotiate so many traumatic social and political events that they suffer a breakdown in mental health. Both Fanon and Nandy stress the ubiquity of madness as a theme in the culture of colonized peoples.[169] In *Fools and Mad*, Joseph Robins writes the history of the insane in Ireland and claims that as the nineteenth century progressed, more and more people were diagnosed as insane. While the problem was not a uniquely Irish one, Robins claims that by the end of the century it had become evident that Ireland was an extreme example. The causes were classified under two broad headings: moral and physical. The moral causes included poverty, grief, domestic quarrels, mental anxiety and religious excitement. The physical included hereditary influences, intemperance, sunstroke, venereal disease and masturbation. Some of the asylum superintendents believed that a major influence on Irish insanity lay in poor nutrition standards. Tea was seen as a particular hazard.[170]

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[169] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (London: Penguin, 1967 [1961]). Vulnerability to distress and madness is a major issue in this work, and it has been elaborated on by H. A. Bulhan in *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression* (New York: Plenum, 1985). Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (Delhi, Oxford: Oxford UP, 1983). Nandy also stresses the mental damage that is done to the oppressor.

[170] Joseph Robins, *Fools and Mad: A History of the Insane in Ireland* (Dublin: The Institute of Public Administration, 1986), pp. 111–12.

In *Hurrish* by Emily Lawless, it is stated that village idiots are scarce in England owing to the fact that "increasing civilisation or, possibly increasing dislike to people who give trouble [has tended] to cause their disappearance, or their concentration in the workhouse" (p. 23). In Ireland, on the other hand, it is said that civilization has not reached the same point and the village idiot is still a recognized member of the community. In fact, 'civilization' in this sense had reached Ireland as early as 1817, when the Lord Lieutenant was empowered to establish district asylums for the insane. By 1835, ten of these district asylums had been built in various parts of the country and between 1852 and 1869 another twelve were added,[171] but the clearly harmless village idiot could still be an acceptable part of his or her village. One reason for this according to Lawless's *Hurrish* – and here it would seem that the English reader is addressed – could be that "[t]he 'natural' only does rather better what everyone else does more or less – namely as little as possible. As a mere standard of comparison, too, and as a pleasant stimulus to complacency, he can never be other than a somewhat popular institution" (p. 23).

In the Glossary of *Castle Rackrent* (1800), Maria Edgeworth explains that an "innocent" in Ireland means a simpleton, an idiot (p. 108). There are many alternative names for this type of character in the novels written some hundred years later; but irrespective of whether they are 'natural', 'simple', 'innocent' or 'idiots', they are all similar. These characters are not looked down on or unfavourably commented on by other characters in the novels, although Paddy Cuddihy in Jane Barlow's *The Founding of Fortunes* is teased by some of the children in the village. Instead, they are generally treated in quite a kindly manner and nobody seems frightened of them. Sometimes they attach themselves, like a pet dog or a mascot, to one of the main characters. "The thoughts of an idiot are mysteries", the narrator in *Hurrish* states, but it is clear that there is no fire in the neighbourhood of Tubbamina to which Thady-na-Taggart gravitates with so unhesitating a readiness as to Hurrish O'Brien's. Poor Thady has "a dumb passionate affectionateness that is to be found in hardly any perfectly sane citizens, and only in a few exceptionally natured dogs" (p. 23). He would cheerfully have walked into fire or into the sea if Hurrish had requested him to do so. He saves Hurrish's dog, Lep, on one occasion, and Thady and Lep are both faithful to their master to the bitter end. At Hurrish's death-bed the two lie together in a heap on the floor and when Hurrish dies, Thady is again likened to a dog: "[Father Denahy] expected to hear another voice join in at the responses, but there was none, till poor Thady, springing suddenly to his feet with a cry like a dog giving tongue, broke in with some sort of strange inarticulate idiot's Latin of his own" (p. 193).

[171] Lyons, p. 77.

In Lawless's *Grania* it is the 'natural', little Phelim Daly, who accompanies Grania on her last voyage. Grania tries to enlist the help of her boyfriend to row over to the neighbouring island in thick fog to collect the priest to give the last sacraments to her dying sister, but Murdogh will not leave his drinking companions. Instead faithful little Phelim – whose father is busy with Murdogh – joins her. He soon becomes incapable of serving even as a watcher. Like some "utterly fear-minded animal" he moans and whimpers helplessly until they are lost in the fog-filled space in front of them.

Mrs H. H. Penrose portrays a character similar to Emily Lawless's Thady and Phelim in her novel *Burnt Flax*. Timsy is able to understand what animals say to him, and the "Good People" (the fairies) are his friends. However, people who speak of Timsy as an idiot are very much mistaken, we are told. "There was nothing idiotic about Timsy, but he was assuredly what Kilryan called 'touched', and that was quite a different thing" (p. 117). Timsy can hardly "wriggle through a hedge without meeting a leprechaun on the other side", and there is not an animal with any originality of character on the whole estate whose friendship Timsy does not cultivate. It is suggested that the real world has a good many discomforts in it and no particular use for him, but this matters less when he has an unreal world of his own to retire into at will (p. 35). Paddy Pinafore (Fogarty) in B. M. Croker's *Beyond the Pale* (1896) is another Timsy. He is very close to and good with animals, too, but he is said to be "mad" as well.

Mad Moll in *An Irish Cousin* by Somerville and Ross is in the habit of pirouetting before the house at night, with curtsies and dumb prayers, and she is as mad as her name suggests, even though her madness may have been brought on by her circumstances. The secret sins of the past are so secret that not even the reader is quite sure of the truth, but Mad Moll is clearly involved in a number of them. It is, as I have already mentioned, suggested that she might be cousin and mistress of the landlord, as well as foster-mother and mother-in-law of his son who may be his wife's half-brother!

In *Wheel-Tracks*, Somerville and Ross devote a chapter to beggars ("Chiefly Concerning Beggars"), and Nance the Fool is one of the many beggars named in it as frequenting Edith Somerville's home in Castle Townshend (pp. 94-95). She appears in the novel *The Real Charlotte*, where she is described as a bundle of rags with a cough in it. Billy Grainy is also labelled a beggar in the same novel, but Nance the Fool and Billy come across as 'simple' as well. Billy Grainy faithfully follows the coffin of his adopted mistress, howling his lamentation with "his bloodshot eyes redder than ever, his mouth dribbling like a baby's and the smell of whisky poisoning the air around him" (p. 337).

Vulnerability to psychological stress and madness among the inhabitants is only one of the features said to be symptomatic of a colonial society. Frantz Fanon also relates drug usage and drug dependency, depression and anti-social

tendencies to the oppressive features of the colonial environment, and, as with Billy Grainy, there are times when alcohol and madness seem closely connected in the novels. In another Somerville and Ross novel, *The Big House of Inver*, for example, the girl who is endangering Pindy's plan for her half-brother's future has a mother in the County Asylum and a father who has destroyed himself with drink. This, we are told, is not surprising as "[t]he people in this village have been marrying and intermarrying in a vicious circle since the day of Adam [...] and those that aren't mad are bad, and mostly they are both" (p. 180). There are sixty public houses for the refreshment of some two thousand "bodies" in *The Big House of Inver* (it is pointed out that "bodies" is a more suitable term than "souls" in this instance) and the trade is, in a literal sense, roaring (p. 99). In *Irish Peasant Society*, K. H. Connell points out that it did not require much to set up licensed premises in Ireland; as early as the 1830s, the country was "deluged with low inferior establishments". The licensees have "but little property, being most commonly broken down farmers or petty tradesmen [...] they have no character to lose, and deal without scruple in the illicit article" (p. 17).

Many contemporary commentators on the use of alcohol believed that people in Ireland were peculiarly prone to drink because of the climate or their disposition or because of the wretchedness of their lives – the frustrations of poverty, hopelessness and boredom. The "demon drink" was seen to be the curse of the Irish. In 1838, Fr Mathew founded the Temperance Movement in Cork, advocating total abstinence. In *Father Mathew: Temperance and Irish Identity*, Paul A. Townend argues that Fr Mathew's crusade was the single most extraordinary movement that occurred in pre-famine Ireland.[172] The movement spread rapidly, particularly through the southern half of Ireland, during the first few years and the consumption of legally distilled spirits fell considerably. Fr Mathew saw temperance not only as a personal and social ideal but also as a religious one. Unfortunately, the Church and Fr Mathew did not always see eye to eye. He once argued that many priests were themselves in the grip of an alcohol problem and therefore of no use to the organization. Townend claims that a large number of priests exploited Fr Mathew for the funds he brought to their parishes by his massively-attended "charity sermons", and that it was partly due to financial mismanagement that the movement lost its momentum after a couple of years. Alcohol was still a big problem in the country.

Illicit distilling was much more common in Ireland than in Britain. Many Irish peasants had the resources to make an occasional brew of poteen, and these amateurs probably accounted for most of the output. In *Irish Peasant Society*, K. H. Connell claims that poteen-making was seen as a subsidiary occupation, and as by-work of any kind was scarce, particularly for men (for women there

[172] Paul A. Townend, *Father Mathew: Temperance and Irish Identity* (Cork: Irish Academic Press, 2002).

were, for instance, lace-making and knitting), it was appealing. The fact that it was illegal made it more so, for the earnings could not be estimated and claimed by the landlord (pp. 25–26). In J. M. Callwell's *A Little Irish Girl*, the mine has been closed down and the men in the neighbourhood have not had any income for some time. They have, however, found alternative occupation and are making poteen up in the mountains. It is a risky business, but they feel that there is something patriotic in it as they are cheating the English of the excise. Norah, the little Irish girl of the title, overhears the local R. M. talking about a "seizure" and goes to warn her Irish orphan friend, Lanty, who is helping the men. She gets to them in time, and the poteen is poured out so there is nothing illegal for the R. M. to find. Norah does not mind about the English not obtaining the excise, but she does mind what poteen-drinking is doing to her friend, and she makes him promise never to get involved with it again.

Norah in *A Little Irish Girl* is Anglo-Irish and Emily Lawless's Grania is mere Irish, but the two girls express similar views on alcohol. Grania speaks for her class when she finds a barrel of whiskey hidden behind some furze-bushes in a remote corner outside the dilapidated villa which serves as a shebeen-house (illicit drinking establishment) for the island:

> Like most Irishwomen of her class – at all events till age, sympathy, possibly till mere abounding patience and pity break them in – this was to her the sin of sins; the sin that meant starvation, clamorous children, misery of all sorts, shame and the horrors of the workhouse at no very remote future [...] What ails them all, my God? Weary upon that drink, but it is the curse of the world! (p. 206)

Alcohol occurs in several novels, but as an atmospheric backdrop only. In none does it play as active a part in the plot as in Lawless's *Grania*, where Murdogh, the man Grania is meant to marry, drinks too much alcohol too often to be the support she needs.

In *Hurrish,* the titular hero of the novel is an unusual Irishman. He is said never to have drunk alcohol in his life – a statement to which is added the observation that it constitutes such a large demand on credulity that one can only express it with some hesitation (p. 56). Hurrish's neighbour and enemy, Mat Brady, is more true to type and habitually soaks himself in whiskey. The shopkeeper in Jane Barlow's *The Founding of Fortunes* partly blames the lack of business on the fact that "the men drink what they drinks below at Sweeney's"; and that whatever income is brought home by the men who go to England to help with the harvest is spent on drink (p. 20). Drink and foul language are said to be two of the few cheap luxuries available to the Irish.

Another characteristic of the Irish peasant often referred to by the Anglo-Irish novelists is his laziness. In Emily Lawless's *Hurrish*, the landlord, Pierce O'Brien, has tried again and again to get a fair day's work in return for a fair day's wage by arguing, pleading and bribing, but he has had to give up. One of

the characters in *A Boycotted Household* (1881) by Letitia MacClintock maintains that small farmers would never work at all if they could "get the plainest food without it" (p. 90). This, however, is said to be true of peasants of Celtic origin only. As another character is quick to retort, Ulstermen of Scotch and English race should be excluded and not classed with idle people. In F. E. Crichton's *The Blind Side of the Heart* (1915), it is Father Connolly who points out, on several occasions, that the people, "the lazy warm-hearted children", are too indolent for any kind of reform (p. 77). When Mr Kerrigan comes back from Australia in Barlow's *Kerrigan's Quality,* the poor people of Glenore initially give him the impression of being lazy as well as thriftless and dissipated, because in Australia only the "good-for-noughts" are poor. However, he comes to realize that poverty in Ireland can have causes other than laziness, and what is more, he does something about it.

There are a number of possible reasons why the Irish were considered lazy by Kerrigan and his non-fictional contemporaries. After the Famine, the importance of tillage farming decreased in Ireland and pasture farming came to replace it as the cattle industry grew in importance. Since pasture farming was less labour-intensive, the demand for agricultural labour over and above what could be supplied by the family unit declined. In 1841, the total number of agricultural labourers was estimated at 1,326,000. By 1881 it had dropped to 329,000, many of the labourers dying or emigrating during the Famine. In 1911, their numbers had fallen even more.[173] Although there are no figures to show what happened to the labourers who disappeared from the statistics, it is likely that some of them became 'unemployed' and thus did not have much choice except becoming 'lazy'. As far as the tenants were concerned, they had no incentive to improve their land by working hard because any betterment in their conditions was likely to lead to an increase in rent. Not until their legal position was protected – from 1881 onwards – could they begin to raise their sights economically and socially. In Barlow's novel, Kerrigan, who has brought back a considerable amount of money from Australia, buys the local big house and becomes a model landlord. On his exemplary estate work is worthwhile, the Irish are no longer 'lazy' and the living conditions are vastly improved.

There is no denying that the Anglo-Irish novelists of my study adhere closely to the stereotype when it comes to 'simpleness', alcohol abuse and laziness amongst the Irish. However, as the section on "Living conditions and poverty" showed it can hardly be said to be surprising that these traits are so prevalent in the Irish.

[173] Lyons, p. 51.

Superstition

Superstition in a religious context was dealt with in Chapter 2, "Religion" ("Catholics and Protestants", p.100) above; but there are many other manifestations of superstition amongst the mere Irish in the novels. It is, of course, all but impossible to draw a line between superstition originating in religion and other types of superstition; but this chapter will supply a few more examples of Irish expressions of superstition, as the imagination of the Celt was supposedly more alive to "those dim formless visions which people the dusk" than that of other races (*Grania* p. 113). These "formless visions" will also include premonitions and other supernatural phenomena, as well as myths.

One of the disadvantages of the part of Clare where Emily Lawless's *Hurrish* is set is that, according to the narrator, it is a favourite haunt of all sorts of strange beings (p. 17). Many examples of superstitions and myths are given. At Ailleena-haseragh there is a hole in a rock that is known to be permanently occupied by an evil spirit. A lake only three miles away is haunted by the *Each-Uisge,* or water-horse, a supernatural animal of particularly unpleasant habits. It is described as having a black shining skin, a tail without hair and a mule's head, with fins like a haddock. It waits for people to pass by its lair and then spouts out enormous quantities of water, darts on the passer-by and draws him into the lake, where it rarely happens that even his bones are recovered. Hurrish's father has had his own frightening experience with another monster, thought to be one of the devils that tormented the holy Saint Gormgal. When fishing, close to where the saint used to live, the lines were once pulled out of his hands. He thought it must be a dozen fish at least, but when they got near the surface

> he saw a blue mist or jelly, with eyes all over it, and in the middle of this jelly a pea-green face, covered with huge, warty knobs, and shiny yellow arms and legs, which waved about in all directions, and – what was naturally more startling – a large whisky-bottle sticking out of a loose flap of skin about the middle of its body. (p. 17)

Happily, writes Lawless, Hurrish's father had had an uncle who was learned in such matters so he knew it must be Gougalidimus, the king of oysters, and he knew how to save himself. He quickly dropped a burning spark into the water out of his pipe, which he was fortunately smoking at the time, and the monster melted away and vanished completely.

In Lawless's *Grania*, too, the mere Irish characters are provided with a superstitious nature. Fairies and leprechauns are a reality to them. Peggy Dowd, with the recognized weight of her years and authority, talks about the subject to some of the other women characters in the novel. She foresees a bad end for people like Grania, whose belief in myths and superstitions is not sufficiently strong according to the islanders. However, for all her deviations from the norm, Grania is still a Celt. In fact, Grania has many premonitions, one a replica of her fate – drowning while in her mind reaching out for her unsatisfactory and absent boyfriend,

Murdogh (pp. 117–18). Like Grania, Maurice in *Hurrish* has a strong feeling of premonition of death, in this case that of his brother (pp. 86–87).

While Lawless's novels mention the superstitions of the mere Irish characters more than books by other novelists, it must be borne in mind that *Hurrish* and *Grania* have few Anglo-Irish and English characters. Fairies are, however, mentioned by other novelists. Jack in Letitia MacClintock's *The March of Loyalty* explains the fairy lore: "It's allowed the fairies is the fallen angels [...] When Satan and his angels was thrown over the battlements of heaven, some fell in heaven – those is the devils; some fell into the sea; those is the mermen and mermaids; an' some fell on the earth – those is the fairies" (p. 174). As was pointed out above, the 'simple' boy Timsy in Mrs H. H. Penrose's *Burnt Flax* has a close relationship to fairies or Good People, and he meets leprechauns on a regular basis. [174]

The superstition of the Catholic kitchen-maid in Mabel Morley's *Boycotted* does not involve fairies but is of a more hands-on variety. As it is supposed to be bad luck to see something for the first time through glass, she is determined not to look out through the window. Nevertheless, when the soldiers arrive to protect the people of the Grange, she catches sight of them through the kitchen window. Later, the sergeant pays flattering attention to her, but she does not 'fall' until further superstition has intervened. When she gets the ring from the colcannon at Halloween, she mistakenly sees this as a token of what is to come, marriage between her and the sergeant, and she gives in to him.

The respective reaction of the characters to the superstition running through *A Silver Fox* (1898) by Somerville and Ross differs depending on their background; the mere Irish are firm believers, the Englishman Glasgow has a total disregard for it whereas the Anglo-Irish Slaney – as I have already mentioned (p. 106) – feels that the opinion and the feeling of the Irish must be considered. Glasgow has persuaded Danny Quin to sell some land that is needed for building the new railway-line. However, Danny is racked with guilt afterwards as that particular piece of land should never have been touched. It is the home of the silver-grey fox of the title who, according to the locals, is no ordinary fox but a witch or a fairy. Danny Quin dies following a fatal fall into the sandpit. At his funeral, the mere Irish mourners agree that he would not have died had he not sold the land.

The silver fox turns up again and again in the novel and bad luck continues. Danny Quin's son, Tom, cannot live with the burden of the family land having been sold and loses his mind. He drowns himself in the lake after having removed

[174] The fairies, the *sidh*, were also known as the Good People, so called to appease them. Irish fairies were divided into many different categories. W. B. Yeats studied the tradition about the Irish fairies in depth and classified them into those who moved "as a host of the air" and those who appeared singly. Solitary fairies are known variously as leprechauns (*leipreachan*); the *fear dearg* (the red man – red being the otherworld colour); the *cluracan* (drunken fairy) etc. This is his definition of fairies in the early 1890s: "The fairies are the lesser spiritual moods of that universal mind, wherein every mood is a soul and every thought a body". (Quoted in Richard Ellmann, *Yeats: The Man and the Masks*, p. 70).

his scapular as, according to his sister, it is not possible to drown with a scapular around your neck.[175] The twice-bereaved sister is, needless to say, distraught but also furious with Glasgow. Some ugly scenes ensue. Afterwards Glasgow accuses Slaney of having caused it all by her encouragement of superstition amongst the people. Slaney is, however, quick to retort that the accidents may actually have come about because superstition was *dis*couraged. She is close to the mere Irish and understands their way of reasoning better than any of the other non-Irish characters in the novel. It later transpires that the folk superstition of the area is no mere foolishness. After many months of hard work, Glasgow discovers that he is building on sand. The land that he is trying to build his railway on is doomed never to be secured. The inadequacy of English culture in Ireland is repeatedly exposed in the novel.

The Irish are undoubtedly portrayed as being superstitious in many novels, particularly in the two novels by Emily Lawless. However, in other novels non-Irish characters are also prone to superstition and a belief in the supernatural, as exemplified in Chapter 2, "Religion" ("Catholics and Protestants"). The Anglo-Irish Slaney in Somerville and Ross's *The Silver Fox* shows understanding for the mere Irish and expresses her belief that superstition is often justified. Only in Lawless's novels is the reader given the impression that there may be a distinct connection between race and an inclination to believe in superstition and the supernatural.

Violence

The "brutal and cruel elements, which too often, alas! streak and disfigure" the Celtic strain, and which are said to be lacking in Lawless's character Hurrish (p. 15), occur in other characters in *Hurrish* as well as in a number of other novels. Intermittent rebellions and agricultural agitations seemed to confirm the English notion that Irish Celts were violent criminals intent on using terrorist methods to drive the English away from Ireland. In his survey of the Irishman in Victorian caricature, *Apes and Angels,* L. P. Curtis Jr found that of all the Irish news reported in *The Times* of London in the late 1880s, almost one half concerned what the government classified as "Special Crime", namely, offences committed for agrarian and political motives. Without any qualms about the inadequacy of their sample, many Victorians "jumped to the conclusion that Irish Celts were born criminals at best and anarchists poorly trained in the use of dynamite and daggers at worst" (p. 21).

[175] In a letter dated 3 January 1894, Martin Ross tells of the drowning of a local man close to Ross. He had been called from his work to shorten the chain of the chapel bell, with the result that when the new priest arrived the bell could not be rung. When he realized what he had done he was miserable. He disappeared on St Stephen's day. The search party found his scapular on the bank, and finally the man himself. See Lewis, ed., *The Selected Letters of Somerville and Ross*, pp. 197–98.

Belief in the close connection between physical and mental traits was deeply rooted among many Victorians. The more organized and active Irish Nationalists became, the more simian and bestial the stereotypes of the Irish Celts in literature and caricature. One of the best-known Irish ape-men is portrayed in Matt Morgan's Fenian monster, "The Irish Frankenstein", which appeared in the comic weekly the *Tomahawk* on 18 December 1869.[176] The lower facial angle and the severe prognathism of the jaw make this monster stand out. L. P. Curtis's description of him as "a human orangutan with the expression of a village idiot" is much to the point. "The Irish Frankenstein" was a recurring figure and John Tenniel, senior cartoonist on *Punch* for over forty years, presented one of his versions in *Punch* (20 May 1882) shortly after the Phoenix Park murders. The ape-like creature with a pistol in one hand and a dagger in the other stands beside a death notice signed by Captain Moonlight, the legendary leader of Irish agrarian crime.[177]

Notices from Captain Moonlight make an appearance in several novels, too. Threatening letters, so-called coffin-letters, signed by Captain Moonlight are sent to the servants in Letitia MacClintock's *A Boycotted Household* (1881) as well as to the Lloyds in Edith Rochfort's *The Lloyds of Ballymore* (1890). A member of the family is murdered in each of these novels. The Phoenix Park murders are alluded to in *The Lloyds of Ballymore*, as is the fear that "the demon of assassination" would stalk unheeded through the land (p. 256). In Mrs H. H. Penrose's *Burnt Flax* (1914 – set in the 1880s) it is only the colonel's hat that is shot. Another attempt is made to kill him, but again the would-be assassins fail. In their disappointment, and as revenge, the men set a house on fire and kill the people in it. The farm-house in Somerville and Ross's *Naboth's Vineyard* (1891 – set in 1883) is put on fire too, when the widow who rents it refuses to move. The man behind the arson is the president of the Land League in the district posing as Captain Moonlight. The widow survives but some of her animals are killed. Another novel where Moonlighters are active is Mabel Morley's *Boycotted.*

There is a great deal of threat expressed towards landowners in the novels by their tenants in their capacity as Land Leaguers (see also Chapter 1, "Agrarian Agitations", p. 64). Sometimes the tenants in question have been considered to be on very friendly terms with the family – at least according to the family – but the friendliness suddenly turns into hostility. One of these "two-faced" men, previously trusted and appreciated by the Hamilton family, goes as far as murder; Jack Riley in MacClintock's *A Boycotted Household* kills the eldest son in the family. In Mabel Morley's *Boycotted* (1889), "there will be bloodshed, bloodshed all

[176] Curtis, *Apes and Angels*. The caricature is reprinted on p. 49.

[177] Ibid., reprinted on p. 43. On the connection between 'Captain Moonlight' and land issues, see Chapter 1, "Land and Politics" ("Agrarian agitations", pp. 67–68).

over the place" (p. 76) according to one of the tenants whom the landlord knows since they were boys together. In the end the Boyds come to no harm, but they are forced to leave for England.

Emily Lawless's *Hurrish* is another novel set during the troublesome Land War period and a considerable amount of bloodthirst and hankering for violence is expressed in it, particularly by Hurrish's mother Bridget and by Hurrish's enemy Mat Brady. Bridget tells her son of one of the local murders with obvious delight: "Buggle – the little black villin that was servin' writs, ye know – [is] *dead.* The boys dun for him on yesternight at the Killimaney cross-roads! An' my blessin' an' the blessin' of heaven be upon thim for the same, Amen!" (p. 25). Mr Andy Holohun, a prominent member of the Republican brotherhood, has been helpful with more than half-a-dozen violent outrages. It is therefore not surprising that there is frequent cause for the characters to talk about murders and atrocities. It is pointed out that even innocent, saintly Alley, "like every girl of her class and country [...] was perfectly well used to hearing murder talked of, and talked of too without any special reprobation" (p. 109).

In these novels it is the agricultural agitations that are behind the violence; in others the religious divide seems to be the main cause of what is happening. In Letitia MacClintock's *The March of Loyalty* (1884) as well as in F. E. Crichton's *The Soundless Tide* (1911), the Catholics attack the drums of the marching Protestants on 12 July. The Catholics wreck the town and Protestants are wounded and killed. The violence in *The March of Loyalty* is appreciated by an Irish American, Maloney, who asks a local man: "What would you say if we'd help yous to drive all the Protestants out of Ireland with the landlords? [...] Would you like to wet your hand in Protestant blood?" The reply comes without any hesitation; "God bless you, Mr Maloney [...] I wouldna say a word to save thim devils" (p. 34).

In later novels, violence is more likely to have a political motivation. The 1916 Rising occurs in N. M. Chastel de Boinville's *O'Reilly of the Glen* (1918) as well as in Annie P. Smithson's *Her Irish Heritage* (1918), albeit in passing only. The hero O'Reilly in de Boinville's novel is a Nationalist upper-class Catholic who dies in the Rising, while O'Donnell, the man who has influenced him to become dedicated to Sinn Fein, is executed. Smithson, a convert to Catholicism and Nationalism, is more concerned with British violence than with the violence perpetrated by the rebels.

An Enthusiast (1921) by Somerville and Ross and *The Last September* (1929) by Elizabeth Bowen are both set in the time of the Troubles in 1920. In the 1918 general election, Sinn Fein had a majority and formed Dáil Éireann. In an effort to suppress the rebellious parliament, the English government sent troops to Ireland. Sinn Fein supporters made nightly raids for guns – often in vain, because most weapons had already been confiscated by the police. People were terrorized and police barracks burnt. The Black and Tans, the non-Irish personnel enlisted

into the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) who fought against the IRA, applied themselves to reprisals and counter-terror with ferocious zeal. They soon became infamous for their indiscipline and violence (see also Chapter 1, p. 87–88). The Anglo-Irish Dan Palliser in *An Enthusiast* tries to keep a neutral stance and concentrate on farming in these difficult times. However, he is – despite his denial – defensive when he talks to Car, his tenant's wife, about the Irish side of the violence:

> Even these murders of policemen and soldiers – whoever commits them, they say there's a murder-gang –God knows I don't defend them! Call them as brutal and cowardly and senseless as you like, I'll go all the way with you, but at least you must admit that they're not personal, not done for private interests, or money, or for what is called Love – in England! [...] I'm tired of all the abuse going one way! (p. 53)

Sir Richard Naylor in *The Last September* is another Anglo-Irish character who is defensive of the Irish. He does not even pretend to share in the satisfaction that the English soldier, Gerald, displays when he has caught one of the rebels, the son of one Sir Richard's tenants. There are illegal searches for weapons, and farmers are beaten up and tortured. The violence comes from both sides of the conflict. Lois, the young niece in the novel, comes across guerrillas – she is once threatened with a revolver – but also meets and is frightened by the Black and Tans out on their savage forays. The Naylors may invite young English soldiers to their tennis parties, but they do not cooperate with the authorities when it comes to disclosing rebel activities on their estate. The striking of a balance between two violent forces is impossible to sustain; the Naylors' Big House Danielstown is burnt down, while Dan Palliser in *An Enthusiast* is killed in mistake for a Sinn Feiner.

The violence exercised by the Irish in the novels always serves a purpose, however alien that purpose may be to the Anglo-Irish characters. Rarely is blame for offences put on individual Irishmen. In the earlier novels the Land League is usually designated as the culprit, coercing farmers to join and forcing them to adhere to its rules by blackmail and threats. In the novels set during the war of independence, it is emphasized that the violence is two-sided. Despite the frequent violent actions, and even more frequent threats of violence, the Irish in these novels do not give the impression of having a particular violent streak built into their genes, the exceptions being Bridget, Hurrish's mother, and Mat Brady in Emily Lawless's novel.

Language

The Celtic language spoken in Ireland, Gaelic, survived to modern times but in ever-decreasing geographical areas. As it was essential to know English to be able to conduct any form of business, parents would encourage their children to learn it. Furthermore, should the latent threat of emigration ever materialize, it would

at least be made easier if English was understood and spoken. The English dialect spoken by the mere Irish was, of course, different from the English spoken by the Anglo-Irish. In 1800, the first consistent attempt to compose a novel in an English dialect was published, Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent.* In the preface Edgeworth writes:

> We cannot judge either of the feelings or of the characters of men with perfect accuracy from their actions or their appearance in public; it is from their careless conversation, their half finished sentences, that we may hope with the greatest probability of success to discover their real characters. [..T]o those who are totally unacquainted with Ireland, the following Memoirs will perhaps be scarcely intelligible, or probably they may appear perfectly incredible. For the information of the *ignorant* English reader, a few notes have been subjoined by the editor, and he had it once in contemplation to translate the language of Thady into plain English; but Thady's idiom is incapable of translation, and besides, the authenticity of his story would have been more exposed to doubt if it were not told in his own characteristic manner. (pp. 3–4)

Not only did Maria Edgeworth supply the reader with a few notes; as an afterthought she added a glossary after her preface, doubting the sufficiency of her footnotes. The problem that Maria Edgeworth encountered was to haunt coming generations of Irish novelists.

A novelist who chooses to represent Hiberno-English brogue in written form is confronted with the question of how best to do it, while at the same time keeping it intelligible to a reader used to standard literary language. For the writers of the Literary Revival, it was of importance to be able to present an Irish dialect to enhance the "peasant quality" of the characters in their works. Lady Augusta Gregory was the pioneer in the field of contemporary dialect literature. She chose as a suitable medium the dialect of Kiltartan, spoken near her estate Coole Park in the West of Ireland. Kiltartanese was soon accepted on the Dublin and London stages as thoroughly representative of the speech of western Ireland, where the most typical peasants were said to live.

The writers of my study also had to decide how to represent the discourse of the mere Irish in their novels. The mere Irish are always readily recognizable – also when they make a cameo appearance only – as they are responsible for a great deal of dialogue. The dialogue stands out from the surrounding text, and certainly from the dialogue of the English and the Anglo-Irish themselves, as it is written in a way that tries to imitate the way it is spoken. The use of idioms and distinctive grammatical structure is, however, highly selective. It is the individual novelist who chooses what is sufficient in her view to serve as an adequate rendering of the Hiberno-English tongue. Sometimes the representations of the brogue may differ depending on which region the novel is set in – the ones with a Northern Ireland settings are particularly distinguishable. In general, however, regional factors seem less significant in relation to a person's way of speaking

than sociological factors, a fact which A. C. Partridge emphasizes in his survey of language and society in Anglo-Irish literature.[178]

In some novels, Emily Lawless' *Hurrish* being a prime example, the brogue appears to be emphasized. In the following discussion, Hurrish's mother Bridget has expressed her delight at the murder of the representative of law in the district. She deeply regrets that her cowardly son is not likely ever to strike a blow "wid the rist". Hurrish on the other hand is appalled at the bloodthirst of his mother:

> "Whist, mither, whist! My God! Is it a woman ye are, at all, at all? Ye make me 'shamed, ye do. D'ye think the crature hadn't a mither, too – one that's cryin' her heart out for him most like this minute, God hilp her! I'm not sayin' that he oughtn't to hav been shtopt," Hurrish continued, rather shocked apparently at his own heretical humanity. "But to be baten to death! – an' him all by hisself – by a hape of big men! Och, mither 'cushla, 'taint that way ould Oirelan's to be freed anyhow. 'Tis them sort o'doin's that makes the Cause be 'bused, so it do! A dozen big men settin' on one poor trimblin' little bodagh, and batin' the life out of him wid shticks at night! 'Tis cold me blood is this very minute, to think ov it."
>
> "Twasn't sticks at all, so that shows how much ye know. 'Twas *shtones* they dun it with," Bridget said sullenly.
>
> "Will, 'sn't that wurst, if anythink? If he was to be kilt, sure shootin' 'ud be the marcifulest."
>
> "Och, wud ye be takin' powder and shot to the loikes of that?" she retorted with fine scorn. "Twould be like takin' the fire-shovel to kill a flea, so 'twud – no better." (pp. 25–26)

The representation of peasant dialect in the novel frequently tries the reader's patience, and there is an abundance of it. For some of the novels a glossary, like Maria Edgeworth's in *Castle Rackrent,* would have been most welcome to the non-Irish reader. *Hurrish* is a case in point, even though punctuation and spelling have been modernized in the 1992 edition of the novel from which this quotation is taken. It would seem that Lawless herself found the dialect cumbersome to work with. She abandoned it in *Grania,* set on one of the Aran Islands, using the excuse that "since no single actor on this tiny stage is supposed to utter a word in English" it can be dispensed with. In all other cases, Lawless asserts, a "brogue" in an Irish story is a "tiresome necessity" (from the Dedication of *Grania*).

Jane Barlow is also prone to emphasizing the speech of the Irish peasants, but there is less dialogue in her novels than in *Hurrish* and it is therefore less obtrusive. It should, again, be pointed out that Lawless's and Barlow's novels all have mere Irish protagonists, or at least characters of some importance – in Barlow's case it is difficult to appoint a protagonist – while the other novels of my survey have not; hence there is less occasion to use the peasant brogue in these. How-

[178] A. C. Partridge, *Language and Society in Anglo-Irish Literature* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1984), p. 244.

ever, when a mere Irish character makes his entrance in any of the novels, even if peripherally, the novels place him by using the peasant brogue in some form or other.

Michael Connor in Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September* (1929) is one of few mere Irish characters in the novel. When asked if his grandchildren are well, Connor says gloomily: "They are [...] but they're very bashful. And they do be stravaging about always, and not contented at all. They are a great distress to herself, and she unable to come out after them" (p. 65). Spellings are nearly always standard spellings – the exceptions being words like 'desthroyed' and 'dhreading' – but even though the representation of his speech is far removed from that of Hurrish in Lawless' novel, Michael Connor is decidedly mere Irish. *Hurrish* was written some forty years earlier, and the 'need' for differentiating the mere Irish from other characters may have been more essential than when the Irish were on the verge of independence. It is, of course, possible that the modified brogue used by Bowen and by other novelists can be explained by the fact that in their novels the mere Irish are nearly always speaking to one of the 'quality'; the modification of their speech may hence be meant to originate in the speaker. In fact, there are several instances in the novels when it is recorded that a character does modify his or her way of speaking. Johanna Fogarty, housekeeper in Ella MacMahon's *The Job*, has three accents – one for her intimates and equals, one for servants and one for strangers from England. The last variety is said to be so painstaking that it makes people tired listening to it. Willy in *An Irish Cousin* by Somerville and Ross intentionally changes his accent and phraseology when speaking to "the lower orders". Charlotte in *The Real Charlotte* is at least bi-lingual and skilful at adapting her speech depending on whom she is talking to. The instability of her voice contributes to concealing her 'real' self. She is, however, given away by it in the end. After the funeral of Mrs Lambert, the woman to whose death Charlotte has – at least – contributed, she meets and abuses a fisherwoman in her very best brogue. As she does, she catches sight of Christopher Dysart of the Ascendancy, looking at her "with an expression from which he had not had time to remove his emotions". Charlotte flushes but recovers herself: "How are you again, Mr Dysart? You came just in time to get a specimen of the *res angusta domi,* she said, in a voice that contrasted almost ludicrously with her last utterances" (p. 211). Christopher Dysart finds it difficult to believe that she is the same being whom he last saw on the sofa at Tally Ho, with black gloves and sal volatile. He has finally seen, or heard, through her.

Edith Somerville and Martin Ross had a deep fascination with language. In the summer of 1886, when Somerville had returned from Paris, the young and frivolous cousins started to assemble words peculiar to their families in *The Buddh Dictionary: A Dictionary of Words and Phrases in Past and Present Use among the Buddhs.* A Buddh was anyone descended from their common great-grandfather,

Charles Kendal Bushe, Lord Chief Justice of Ireland and a celebrated orator. The dictionary was meant to celebrate the cult of the "silver-tongue". Somerville referred to the Buddh language as "the froth on the surface of some hundred years of the conversation of a clan of violent, inventive Anglo-Irish people, who, generation after generation, found themselves faced with situations in which the English language failed to provide sufficient intensity, and they either snatched at alternatives from other tongues or invented them".[179] It is quite obvious from the way Somerville and Ross recorded the pronunciation of some of these sayings that they were spoken in a brogue. In *The Selected Letters of Somerville and Ross*, Gifford Lewis states that they themselves were perfectly conscious that they were "country cousins" with Irish brogues when staying in London. She continues: "It should be noted that although gentry children were punished for speaking in servants' brogue there was also a gentry brogue with distinctive variations by family [...]. [The Somervillio-Donovan brogue...] was a rich drawl with tonal changes noticeable in London drawing rooms, where the prevailing tone was a monotonous forte bray" (p. 122).

However, Somerville and Ross's interest in language was not limited to Buddh language and the language of their own Anglo-Irish circle. They were no less captivated by the English language usage of the mere Irish, as is apparent from some of their articles in *Some Irish Yesterdays* and *Irish Memories*. In *Somerville and Ross,* Gifford Lewis suggests that Edgeworth's influence on Somerville and Ross was considerable. They had a strong personal connection in that Edgeworth had been a close friend of Nancy Crampton, Edith and Martin's great-grandmother, and Martin had inherited their correspondence (p. 9). Lewis mentions that Somerville had specially made skirts with deep, baggy pockets, littered with sugar for the horses and biscuits for the dogs but also containing the little flat notebooks, one for sketches and one for speech, that she used throughout her long life. She was seemingly very skilful in taking down her notes, encouraging the talker without looking at her hand and notebook as she wrote (pp. 83, 103). In *Wheel-Tracks,* Somerville herself records: "Martin Ross and I, though very different diarists, had one good habit among many bad ones, and that was a habit of persistent eavesdropping and of recording its spoils. It is one of Ireland's charms that the agreeability of its people is not at all disconcerted by publicity" (pp. 165– 66). Martin Ross was fascinated by the English language usage of the native Irish. She despised the British misconception of Irish loquacity and the 'illogic' as displayed by stage Irishmen. In "The Children of Captivity", she claims that the bare and still country of West Galway – the area where Ross is situated – "carries an amount of good talk, nimble, trenchant

[179] Quoted in Lewis, *Somerville and Ross*, p. 49. Lewis gives a selection of words from the dictionary, as yet unpublished, with their definitions on pp. 54–56.

and humorous, to the square mile, that the fat and comfortable plains of England could never rival" (p. 272). As to Irish Bulls, they can be explained, "were it of any avail, that they convey a finer shade of meaning than the downright English language will otherwise admit of" (p. 275– 76).[180] Already in *Naboth's Vineyard,* published in 1891 before the 'dialect literature' of the Literary Revival writers began to appear, Somerville and Ross recorded dialect as spoken by the Irish middle and peasant classes and in a way which appears very genuine. In Martin Ross's view, "pronunciation and spelling are small things in the presentment of any dialect. The vitalizing power is in the rhythm of the sentence, the turn of phrase, the knowledge of the idiom, and of, beyond all, the attitude of mind" (*Some Irish Yesterdays,* p. 279).

Language is clearly used as a tool to separate the mere Irish from other characters. No derogatory comments are made as regards the peasants' way of speaking, and yet there is no denying that the impression created by the peasant brogue is, at times, that the mere Irish are very simple or indeed inferior beings, albeit occasionally in possession of a certain craftiness. In particular, the novels by Emily Lawless appear to use language as a distancing device, while the language representation in the novels of Somerville and Ross give no such impression.

Summarizing the impression of the Celt in the novels by the Anglo-Irish women novelists of my study, it must be admitted that he displays many of the characteristics typical of his race according to contemporary race theorists. Some novelists appear more conscious of the concept of race than others, although little hostility is expressed against the mere Irish Celts in any novel. Instead, there is a great deal of understanding and sympathy for their situation. This may at times give a somewhat patronizing impression to a present-day reader.

The English

The writers of the Irish Literary Revival presented the lives of their Celtic peasants as the ideal contrast to the commercialism and modern way of life in England. In *The Study of Celtic Literature*, Matthew Arnold writes about the "disciplinable and steadily obedient" masculine Anglo-Saxon as against the "undisciplinable, anarchical and turbulent" feminine Celtic temperament (p. 91). The Anglo-Saxon was everything that the Celt was not. The most intense period of "Anglo-Saxonism" in England, writes L. P. Curtis in *Anglo-Saxons and Celts,* ran from the 1860s to the early 1890s. This period "represented the apogee of British power and influence in the world" and "tended to reinforce ethnocentric assumptions about the genius of the Anglo-Saxon people for ordering their lives

[180] Edith Somerville and Martin Ross, *Some Irish Yesterdays* (London: T. Nelson, 1916 [1906]). "Children of Captivity" by Martin Ross, pp. 269–81.

and those of other people"(pp. 31–32). How did these two pictures fit in with the view of the English in the novels by the Anglo-Irish novelists of my study?

As the Anglo-Irish characters generally travel regularly to and from England, have English relations, educate their sons in England and so on, it is not surprising that many English characters appear in the novels. Some novels are set partly in England, such as Erminda Rentoul Esler's *The Wardlaws* (1896), which is divided into two parts. In the first part, "Margery Wardlaw, Spinster", Margery is still in Ireland, dealing with the difficulties of bringing up and supporting a much younger half-brother. The Wardlaws are impoverished, but Margery works hard and retains her dignity despite her poverty. The second part, "John Wardlaw, Stockbroker", is set in the half-brother's household in England many years later. This Wardlaw household is very different. There is affluence but also superficiality, in stark contrast to the way things were back in Ireland. The affluence itself, however, is superficial too. It transpires that the family spends more money than it can afford. John Wardlaw is deeply worried and tries to speak sense to his English wife and children, but to no avail; the word 'retrench' does not exist in their vocabulary. He comes to the conclusion that it would be easier for his family to adjust to poorer circumstances if he were dead and commits suicide.

At times English characters do not seem able to distinguish between the Anglo-Irish and the Irish, an error which is generally quickly indicated and corrected. Lady Hexham in Ella MacMahon's *The Job* (1914) is an English visitor who comes over to visit her stepson, Thady, in Ireland. Her chief knowledge of the country is that it is singularly and startlingly unlike England – and she does not like places that are unlike England. However, once in Ireland she finds that her preconceived ideas are strangely falsified by the actual facts. Thady's house, Mount Pleasant, bears a striking resemblance to an English one, and inside Mount Pleasant's gates Lady Hexham is well able to suppose herself in her own familiar territory. The village, Ballymaclashin, is a different matter:

> For Ballymaclashin was made hideous by that unredeemed squalor which only Irish county towns seem able to achieve. Yet she was assured that Ballymaclashin, as towns go in Ireland, was prosperous and industrially active. She found it hard to credit such a statement, for it seemed to her that the majority of its inhabitants – male inhabitants anyhow – spent their days leaning up against any and every available gate-post, wall, or other support which they could find. Lady Hexham had never seen so many idle men leaning up against walls in her life. (p. 122)

She eventually comes to find Ireland "perfectly delightful", so unexpected and curious and like one of those odd places "where everything is on the verge of civilization and just has been skipped over" (p. 125).

Lady Hexham's niece, Ria, learns the difference between the Irish and the Anglo-Irish by way of an instructive conversation with the three Miss Eatons.

They very much regret that Ireland is always held up to English people as a country of "clodhopping peasants and barefooted children" and implore Ria to tell the English people that not *all* Irish people live on nothing but porridge and potatoes. All the stories and plays about Ireland seem to be about peasants, and "the sort of people who are like ourselves don't seem to make themselves known and so the others attract all the attention". One of the Miss Eatons is sure that the reason for the attention given to the mere Irish is that they are so much easier to ridicule, which pleases the English people as they don't want to be told that "there are ladies and gentlemen – yes, *ladies and gentlemen* in Ireland, as good as themselves and better" (pp. 194–95).

Nancy and Maurice, the English children in C. M. MacSorley's *An Irish Cousin* (n. d. [1901]), have the common English view of Ireland before they come over for a visit. Their notion is that Ireland is full of "bogs and mud huts [...] and that the people divided their time between dancing jigs and digging potatoes" (p. 15). When they arrive in Kingstown and Dublin, they are somewhat disappointed as it is much too civilized. Creevemore, their final destination, is more in accordance with their preconceived ideas. The straggling little street looks its worst under the grey sky and is utterly different from anything they have ever seen in England, as are the barefooted children and the country women, who come out to look as the car passes by the cottages. It takes a while for Nancy and Maurice to realize that the language their chauffeur, old Mick, is speaking is English and not Irish. Nancy's room in the Big House is one of the dreariest and most uncomfortable rooms she has ever seen. The Big House of Creevemore has many failings, but later Nancy admits to herself that not all Big Houses in Ireland are as bad – in fact, she gets an opportunity of seeing some houses that are just as nice as her own Beech Lawn in England.

Another English character who is forced to revise his views on Ireland, and who learns to differentiate between the Irish and the Anglo-Irish, is Captain Lionel St Helier in Mabel Morley's *Boycotted* (1889). He brings some of his oldest, most countrified clothes when he and his men are sent off to protect the Boyds in the West of Ireland, an outlandish place in St Helier's view. St Helier talks of his host-to-be as a clodhopper and makes fun of his title, Captain, because, he maintains, in Ireland every squireen is called captain. However, the tumble-down house he expects to find turns out to be a most impressive and well-appointed building, as are the stables. The Anglo-Irish inhabitants of the Grange are as much of a surprise as their house, and St Helier greatly appreciates their company.

The English characters in these three novels, *The Job, An Irish Cousin* and *Boycotted,* make the mistake of bracketing all of Irish society together – and they all have to revise their views. In fact, it was difficult for the Anglo-Irish at the time to establish separate credentials for the simple reason that Ireland was relatively

unimportant to Britain. The English were not disposed to pay it much attention. This inability to make distinctions between the Irish, claims James H. Murphy in his survey of Catholic fiction, is the reason why upper-middle-class Catholic novelists chose to write about the Irish peasantry. The peasantry was the most significant group in the population and it was the class most clearly in conflict with British rule. By presenting an idealized Irish peasantry that would appear 'normal' according to Victorian values, they hoped to win British approbation for themselves (pp. 18–19). In the Anglo-Irish novels mentioned above, it would seem that the relationship and resemblance between the Anglo-Irish and the English is emphasized at the expense of the mere Irish.

In other novels, the emphasis is rather on the distance between the Anglo-Irish and the English. We are not told about Miss Hope-Drummond's expectations before her first visit to Ireland in Somerville and Ross's *The Real Charlotte* (1894), but her visit to Bruff is no success. She is utterly surprised to see Lady Dysart and her daughter, Pamela, take part in garden work while Christopher Dysart is out with his camera, thus leaving her to entertain herself – quite an impossible task. She is bored, and boring, and seems to take an inordinate interest in her fringe (which is, it is pointed out, accurately curled at the visit to Tally Ho but unfortunately out of curl on the launch with Captain Cursiter; p. 86). She finds Irish society intolerably mixed and regards Charlotte as *outrée* as well as impertinent (p. 154). Charlotte on her part thinks that Miss Hope-Drummond lacks breeding, and she loathes "the sight of these English fine ladies" (p. 99).

The English characters are no more admirable, or desirable, in *The Silver Fox* (1897), another Somerville and Ross novel. It opens on the Hurlingham estate in England some time in the middle of winter, when Lady Susan, married to the Anglo-Irish Slaney's cousin Hugh, displays her utter selfishness and blocks the fire from Slaney by putting her well-shod feet on the fender. Emphasizing her superiority, Lady Susan indicates that seeing boots may be a pleasant experience as "[they] don't have them in Ireland, do they, Slaney!" (p. 2). When the young Anglo-Irish girl looks at the confident and at least outwardly cultured English people out skating on the lake, she thinks of them as "marionettes sliding along a wire":

> Even at that distance they seemed to Slaney over-dressed and artificial. No doubt they were screaming inanities to each other, as were those other English idiots in the room behind her. How ineffably stupid they were, and how shy and provincial they made her feel. How could Hugh have married into such a pack? (pp. 2-3)

Slaney observes the people around her "inwardly scornful and outwardly shy, in the midst of a conversation whose knack she could not catch, and whose purport she thought either babyish or vulgar". She concludes that there must be an English and an Irish form of humour and listens "with the intolerance of the clever provincial" to Lady Susan's loud and ready laugh (p. 6). When Lady Susan finds

that no meal has been prepared for them, she has no hesitation in appropriating the leg of mutton that was meant for the waiter. Having had enough herself, and finding the conversation boring, Lady Susan snatches Major Bunbury's plate from before him and puts it down in front of an expectant cat. She cannot wait to go skating and arranges "her fringe and veil at a looking-glass with minute care and entire disregard of the company" (p. 10).

The portrayal of the immensely selfish Lady Susan is one of the scathing depictions of the English in *The Silver Fox*. The railway-contractor Mr Glasgow, whom we meet back in Ireland, is another one.[181] He bases his brilliant and minute calculations for the work of the railway on the assumption that the cheap Irish labour will accomplish as much in a day as costly English labour. It does not. Glasgow is not able to deal very well with the difficulties arising from his mistake and suggests that it is impossible for sane and honest people to have any dealings with the Irish. This view is expressed by him before it transpires how utterly dishonest Mr Glasgow himself is. He flirts with Slaney and deserts her for Lady Susan, goes bankrupt and runs away from the scandal. When Lady Susan's husband has had a fall from his horse, it is to Glasgow's house he is carried; but by then Mr Glasgow is no longer there. Here the ultimate repudiation of the English awaits the rescue party. "Mr. Glasgow has left", a nasal cockney voice tells them; "I'm going to have an auction of his furniture in less than a week. I'm just taking an inventory now" (p.187). The description of the English woman who meets them provides a stark contrast to the refined Anglo-Irish Slaney: "Her hair was straw-coloured, and drooped in nauseous picturesqueness over her coal-black eye-brows; her face was fat and white; her dress was a highly-coloured effort at the extreme of the latest fashion but one; the general effect was elderly" (p. 187). The yellow-haired lady introduces herself as Mrs Glasgow, there to sort things out when her husband chose to run away from the scandal after going bankrupt.

Sir Harold Burgrave in *The Big House of Inver* is another Somerville-and-Ross Englishman. This *nouveau riche* young man 'buys' his way into the Weldon household with two dozen bottles of port, a huge cushion, and a box of chocolates in the shape and size of a cart-wheel. He is of the arrogant variety and calls Irishmen "Paddies" while pointing out that Irish hotels are unfit for "white men". When the windows and doors are stolen from his house, he is quick to condemn all Irish people as thieves. "The men rob decent Englishmen's houses, and the girls steal their hearts!" (p. 186). The girl who steals Burgrave's heart is Peggy Weldon. Her parents consider him an ideal husband for their daughter, but

[181] Many employment opportunities were found in Ireland through an increase in the road and bridge-building programme, but particularly through the building of light railways which started in 1889. The conditions for the building programme were far from ideal, but it nevertheless resulted in a dozen different lines and the employment of some 16,000 (Lyons, p. 206).

Peggy herself is more inclined to choose Kit Prendeville of the local Big House, despite his poverty and brogue. The marriage stone on the Prendeville Big House has its names inscribed with archaic spelling, and the roughly carved coat-of-arms is blurred and lichened with age. The Burgrave family has used some of its money to pay a "whacking price" to the College of Heralds for a coat-of-arms while Kit Prendeville has had his for nothing. Peggy sees Sir Harold for what he is, a very commonplace young man. Furthermore, he appears common, stupid, conceited and dull-witted, even though he is "not a bad fellow". More than once it is repeated in the novel that Sir Harold is not a bad fellow but the repetitiveness is excused: "in the case of so unattractive a young man it is advisable to reiterate" (p. 282). It is indicated that Sir Harold understands the difference between his estate Loxley in England and the Big House of Inver. He buys Inver from the impoverished Prendevilles, in the hope of settling there with Peggy.

When times turn from bad to worse in Ireland, the Prendevilles and other Big House owners have to sell or let their property to more affluent English acquaintances or relations. This is the case in another Somerville and Ross novel as well, *An Enthusiast* (1921). When Daniel Palliser finds it difficult to raise the death duties, Lord Ducarrig is prepared to come to Ireland to rent Monalour despite the current political situation and the unrest in the country. Lord Ducarrig has earned his fortune out of rubber during his Governorships in the east. He is the archetypal imperialist, used to governing 'natives'. The thought of a civil war is far from unappealing to him; he cannot see much difference between chasing rebels and hunting grouse. He bullies everybody around him, including his young wife. It is not made clear whether Arnold Gilmore/Lord Ducarrig comes from England or Northern Ireland, but he appears much more English than the Anglo-Irish Pallisers. The Pallisers are of old Protestant stock who have been in Ireland since Elizabethan times.

In several other novels, the Big Houses are let to English tenants for financial reasons and the Irish characters comment on these 'upstarts', as in B. M. Croker's *Beyond the Pale* (1896). The first scene in the novel portrays the young Englishman Denis and the old Irish woman Mrs Shea outside Mrs Shea's cottage. The difference between the two is stark and in line with racial prejudice. Denis has been educated at Eton and and Oxford, even though he has only distinguished himself on the cricket field and on the river. He wants Mrs Shea to tell him everything that is to be known about a boycotted, local farm. Mrs Shea brings him into her cabin and tells him about the farm, but she also gives him a great deal of information about the local old stock; the Hares of Wilde Park (who have very little Park any more), Sir Dermot French (who is so pinched that his wife has to go to church behind an ass) and the Miss Dwyers (who never see the sign of a butcher's mate from Christmas to Christmas but are so proud that no one dare offer them a trout or a jacksnipe) (p. 11). These families have all suffered

considerable come-downs but the greatest come-down of all has befallen the O'Biernes; the O'Bierne widow has married Matty Scully, the local horse-dealer. Despite the misfortunes of the local 'quality', Mrs Shea considers them superior to 'the upstarts'. Without knowing that she is talking to one of them, Mrs Shea tells Denis about the English people who have taken the castle, Carrig. "[T]hey are not quality at all! Just purest dirt, that old Brian would not clanc his boots on. Their name is Money, and it's nothing but filthy lucre that has set them up, in their bether's elegant, fine place" (p. 16). It turns out that Denis Money's family originally came from Ireland and that Money should be Mooney. When he marries Jerry O'Bierne, he gets rid of his tainted background altogether and takes her family name.

In Emily Lawless's West-of-Ireland novel *Hurrish* (1886), one of the English characters, sub-inspector Higgins, is there in an official capacity. In one of the first interviews between Higgins and the Anglo-Irish landlord Pierce O'Brien, Higgins exhibits "some of the importance of the newly made jack-in-office", which O'Brien is not able to stomach. He is annoyed when Higgins complains about his lack of cooperation with the bodyguards provided for him by the Government. He does not want to be lectured by "a mere tenth-rate whipper-snapper" and would rather dispense with his police escort, because he cannot imagine that any of his people would wish to harm him. "I think," he says quietly, that "I am at least as good a judge of what is or is not necessary as you, with your very limited experience, can pretend to be" (p. 47). Mr Higgins in his turn is nettled by Mr O'Brien's reaction and does not mind admitting that his acquaintance with Ireland is rather limited: "Under present circumstances I should hardly be likely to select it as a place to come for *pla-asure,* I must say. How much worse it is capable of being I don't pretend therefore to – ar – know; all I can say is, that it appears to me at present to be in a perfectly awful condition" (p. 47). He really did not say "hawful," it is pointed out, but the Cockney inflexion is nevertheless said to be perceptible. Major Pierce O'Brien's temper boils over:

> As a native of that country, I am bound of course to express my gratitude. At the same time, I think you have really carried your condescension far enough, and might now, without loss of dignity, devote your evidently brilliant talents to some more congenial sphere of action. As regards my poor safety, allow me to suggest, with all due deference to your superior judgment, that that is a matter which entirely and exclusively concerns *myself.* If I prefer to run such risk as I may be exposed to in this *hawful* country – there was no disguise or hesitation in the *h* now, – rather than have the annoyance which seems to be inseparable from the present system of police protection, I have yet to learn that I am not at liberty to do so. I am exceedingly sorry that you should have had the trouble of coming here this evening upon so wholly unnecessary an errand. Mat, show Mr Higgins 'out'. (pp. 47–8)

The narrator's comment makes it clear that if Mr Higgins had been an underbred and somewhat consequential Irishman, his offence, though quite bad enough, would have been infinitely less to the Anglo-Irishman. However, as he is a consequential and somewhat underbred Englishman, the tone and accent with which the reproof to O'Brien is conveyed become part of the offence and double its enormity. It is the slight to the country which chiefly infuriates him. Mr O'Brien loses his temper and cannot keep back a furious exclamation: "D-d Cockney whipper-snapper! Coming and ventilating his twopenny-halfpenny insolence in that fashion" (p. 48). However, being a gentleman he manages to control himself until his visitor has left.

On Inishmaan, the setting of Emily Lawless's other West-of-Ireland novel, *Grania*, the English government and England are too remote to be a reality in the lives of the islanders. On one occasion, however, three rare English tourists come over from Galway in a pleasure yacht and make a tour of the islands. Grania meets them on a narrow path. No words are exchanged between them. Grania simply steps aside to let them and the ragged tangle of children following them pass. One of the lady visitors takes up her "eyeglass" to look at the native, at the same time touching her friend's arm to call her attention. With an angry sense that she is being stared at, Grania turns and gazes fiercely back at them. This upsets the English visitors; for them to stare at Grania, as if she were part of the scenery, is acceptable but they find it "not quite pleasant" when she stares back. Here the narrator's sympathies are firmly with Grania and not the mannerless English interlopers.

In Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September* (1929), there is a feeling that the Anglo-Irish have come to the end of their tether. Danielstown is a house besieged, although all sorts of guests still arrive as if desperate to repeat the good old times. But nothing is quite the same as it used to be. Some people from England will not come over to Ireland because of the Troubles. The scarcity of English visitors is compensated for by the English soldiers stationed in the vicinity, who come to tennis-parties and dances at the Big Houses. The members of the older Anglo-Irish generation are not too keen on their girls mixing with them. Sir Richard is in fact quite worried when his niece Lois's relationship with one of them, Gerald, seems to become too serious. He does not have a high opinion of English soldiers; the country is too full of them and they have, in his view, nothing to do but dance and poke old women out of their beds. When the postman tells him how three young women have had their hair cut off by masked men for walking out with English soldiers, Sir Richard is delighted to pass on the news to Lois.

Lady Naylor, Sir Richard's authoritarian wife, makes many deprecating allusions to the English. Gerald is clearly not a welcome suitor for Lois in her opinion either, because he has no 'background' to recommend him. On several occasions, Gerald is at Lady Naylor's mercy. She is exceedingly cruel to him while

at the same time appearing courteous, as when she asks him for his Colonel's view of reprisals. Gerald is half-hypnotized by the conversation at this stage, and not being in his Colonel's confidence, he can only repeat what he has read in the *Morning Post.* But, "[a]s Lady Naylor said at the time, no one would dream of taking the *Morning Post* seriously, it was so anti-Irish, but an opinion on it from anyone so much 'in things' as Gerald was well worth hearing. And as she said afterwards, it was extraordinary how no amount of experience shook these young Englishmen up. Their minds remained cutting-books" (p. 95).

Another failing in the English, according to Lady Naylor, is their vulgarity. Not only do they make uninhibited references to money, they are "as free with what [is] below their diaphragms". When she visits a friend's country estate in England, she gets the opportunity to be partial to the Irish and to criticize the English peasant for his lack of brain. The English landlord retorts that English peasants are loyal at least, presumably expecting to have the last word. Lady Naylor, however, is quick to point out that they have no alternative, and if they had an alternative, she doubts they would be able to see it.

Larry in Somerville and Ross's *Mount Music* is Anglo-Irish although a Catholic 'by accident'. His views on England are coloured by politics and his young soul is said to burn with hatred of that country, borrowed from the bards of the *Nation* office. At the same time, he admits that he likes the fact that there is no "blackguarding" of Catholics by Protestants or the other way around in England. His uncle, Dick Talbot-Lowry, cannot make up his mind which he hates the most, the English government for trying to save its own skin by pitching its Anglo-Irish friends overboard or his own countrymen, who do not know the meaning of the word gratitude. It would, however, seem that he considers the Irish his countrymen, no matter how disappointing and disloyal they have shown themselves to be. Talbot-Lowry's feeling of having been deserted by the English is shared by landlords in other novels, such as Letitia MacClintock's *A Boycotted Household* (1881) and Edith Rochfort's *The Lloyds of Ballymore* (1890).

Not surprisingly, the novel by the Nationalist Annie M. P. Smithson is more outspoken and openly scathing of English people than books by other novelists. Clare Castlemaine, the protagonist of *Her Irish Heritage* (1918), has been brought up in England by an English father and an Irish mother. During a train journey in Ireland she meets an Irish girl, Molly O'Sullivan, with whom she discusses the English, and some strongly held anti-English opinions are expressed. The two girls try to imagine what a train journey in England would be like. Clare points out that in England the travellers would not chat to each other the way Molly and she do, but instead be "encased" in "impenetrable English reserve":

> Oh, yes, I know what you mean, was the reply, the better classes in England are all like that; it must be amusing to watch them on a journey – so stiff and prim especially of course the women – suspicious of everyone. And then the lower classes – why they go

> to the other extreme! Really the contemplation of 'Arry and 'Arriet," travelling – say on a bank holiday – must make the angels weep. Heaven be praised, that we have no prototype of them in Ireland. [...] I have been three years amongst [the English people...]. And I have seen the best and the worst side of their character, as we nurses always do. As a whole I do not like them – I don't mind saying this to you now that I know you are half Irish yourself – but I *did* meet a few I sincerely liked. But they were all amongst the nurses themselves. I have never yet seen the English *man* I could admire – I found it hard enough to even tolerate the average English male! (p. 26)

Clare is somewhat surprised at having "the Celtic contempt for poor John Bull" conveyed to her by this young Irish girl. Clare has been brought up to regard England and the English as the nation *par excellence* and to consider her admixture of Irish blood as something that is, at least, to be regretted – and now she is presented with the opposite view.

Later on in the novel, more open hatred is expressed towards the English by Mary, Clare's friend and mentor. The First World War starts and Clare is full of excitement and patriotic fervour, but also worried about the English soldiers and the fact that "the very Empire itself is at stake". Mary on the other hand is disgusted by the very words "the British Empire"; but then, as she says, she has no English blood in her veins. Her Irish blood is mixed with some Scotch blood, but that is a "very decent" mixture (p. 158) in comparison to Clare's. When Clare expresses her view that England's bad treatment of Ireland is a thing of the past and that the English will now act towards Ireland with justice and mercy, her friend laughs openly at her. England will certainly not show justice towards Ireland, she says; instead it will "act with treachery and deceit, with brutality and cruelty and justify it all on the stupid plea of doing good to Ireland" (p. 155). Mary is anti-British rather than neutral as regards the war, a fact that upsets the half-English Clare a great deal. When Clare is shocked at some German atrocity or other, Mary is very quick to retort that it is the English version of the German horror that Clare is upset about, indicating that the English are not to be trusted in how their battles are presented. After the 1916 Rising, where one of the rebels killed is Clare's cousin, news comes to them of English reprisals, "of the North King Street shootings, of the Portobello murders, and many other revelations of what English martial law means for Ireland" (p. 165). Clare is aghast at the complete lack of justice and mercy of the English, and the religious conversion she goes through at this time is, in fact, in equal measure a political one. For the first time in her life she is ashamed of her English origin.

Apart from these major transformations, Clare's views on the English peasants are to change as well, and she comes to look upon them in much the same way as Lady Naylor in Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September* does. While staying in the Irish countryside, Clare has ample opportunity of noticing "the utter

contrast spiritually, mentally and morally" between the Irish peasant and the corresponding class of English labourer. She vividly remembers some of the farm hands she met in England when she spent some time on an English farm. They were "[s]tupid, heavy and dull, with apparently no ideals or aims, no aspirations beyond meat and beer" (p. 157). It is interesting to note that in a reversal of the usual identification of the Irish as animals, Clare is said to regard these Englishmen "as very little above the farm animals around them, and indeed if truth were told she infinitely preferred the animals". She now contrasts these English peasants with the "'clean souled, spiritual people" of her present home. She thinks of the many miles they walk winter and summer to their little village chapel for early Mass and of the young, modest low toned Catholic girls of Ireland, so different from the "Cockney 'Arriets, flaunting, loudvoiced, loudly dressed beings, disgracing the sacred name of woman". She has come to realize that her Irish friends are right when talking about the English; "they *are* a different people – a different race" (p. 157).

There are some novels other than *Her Irish Heritage* where the mixture of Irish blood and English blood is mentioned and sometimes commented on. Rosamund in N. M. Chastel de Boinville's *O'Reilly of the Glen* (1918) is a mixture of "Celtic lawlessness and John Bull doggedness", seemingly a good blend here as Rosamund is the heroine of the novel. Jervais in Edith Rochfort's *The Lloyds of Ballymore* emphasizes that it is "the steadfastness of the Saxon, his industry and patience, blended with the Celtic dash and genius, [that] has brought Ireland forward in the history of nations!" (p. 103). In Mrs H. H. Penrose's *Burnt Flax* (1914), Kathleen's admixture of Irish blood is also considered an asset – she is a spirited young lady – while in another of Penrose's novels, *Denis Trench*, Irish blood is a somewhat more dubious advantage. The Trench children are told that their Irish blood "is a terrible thing to be reckoned with".

The picture of the English that emerges from these novels is not flattering. Even though Annie Smithson's novel goes further in its hostility than others, many of the themes brought up in *Her Irish Heritage* are also referred to in works by other novelists, albeit less vehemently. The English are accused of being full of misconceptions about Ireland, and of having deserted the Anglo-Irish in their time of need. They are portrayed as superficial, Miss Hope-Drummond in Somerville and Ross's *The Real Charlotte* being a prime example. They may be affluent, but they are 'upstarts' without any background. Many are vulgar and as 'common' as cockneys. While it seems important to clarify the difference between the Irish and the Anglo-Irish in some novels, it cannot be said that the Anglo-Irish characters are inclined to identify with the English "marionettes" or "cutting-book" minds.

The Anglo-Irish

Generally speaking, neither Saxons nor Celts in the novels by the Anglo-Irish women novelists of my study are presented as paragons. The English may not be held up as models for the Anglo-Irish characters in the novels; but on the other hand, the possibility of 'contamination' by the Irish and the Irish environment is sometimes considered a potential danger for them, at least by their English friends and relations. How, then, are the Anglo-Irish themselves and their way of life presented in the novels by the Anglo-Irish women of my study? Are their Big Houses English oases in an alien country?

Thady's stepmother in Ella MacMahon's *The Job* goes over to Ireland with the explicit intention of preserving him from "sinking into the completely Irish condition" (p. 21). Ardsollus, the home of the Blake family in F. E. Crichton's *The Blind Side of the Heart,* is much more "relaxed" than Dick Sandford's home in Edinburgh. It would seem that when the Blakes stay in their house in Ireland they are influenced by the Irish to such an extent that an English visitor speaks of the house as being "demoralising" (p. 175). 'Contamination' is seen as a threat by Mrs Fitzpatrick in Mrs H. H. Penrose's *Burnt Flax*, too. The Fitzpatricks come to Ireland to take over an estate when a relation has died. As there is some unrest on the estate, their arrival occurs at an unfortunate time. Mrs Fitzpatrick's daughter, Kathleen, Anglo-Irish in the sense that she is of mixed blood, says that she understands the people who join the Land League – she herself would join anything if she had to live the way they do. Her mother finds this kind of talk upsetting and upbraids her daughter:

> [Y]our talking like that proves that you're not fit to live in Ireland. I suppose it's because you have Irish blood in your veins that you are open to the germ of disaffection or whatever it's called, and it attacks you when you enter an infected area. Therefore you ought to live in England, where the disease does not exist, because, I suppose, it dies, likes some tropical flower seeds, when carried across salt water. (p. 88)

In some cases, however, although 'contamination' does occur within an Irish environment, genes are still of considerable importance. Mary in B. M. Croker's *A Nine Days' Wonder* (1905) has grown up as a Catholic in a simple Irish peasant family, but her genes make her different from her friends and her family. She is not good at manual work and she loves reading books. When the English Mr Usher meets her, he is well prepared to believe that Mary is not the simple Irish girl she is assumed to be – one supposedly tell-tale sign is that she hates potatoes. Through Mr Usher's intervention Mary is claimed by her real father, an English earl, and goes to England, where she has a great deal to learn. Her language, manners and social skills are somewhat unusual for English high society; but with the help of a book, *The Manners of Good Society,* and Miss Usher she soon leaves peasant-Mary behind to become Joseline, the earl's daughter.

Little Gerald in C. M. MacSorley's *An Irish Cousin* (n. d. [1901]) is another

character who leaves Ireland for England. The difference between the Big House in Ireland and his new home in England, Beech Lawn, is enormous. Beech Lawn feels very small and full to him after the wide passages and empty rooms of his old home. The trim lawn shut in by its beech-trees strikes him with a cold sense of strangeness: "everything looked prosperous and comfortable and – to Gerald's eyes very dull" (p. 106). Gerald much prefers the Big House back in Ireland, which his English cousins found so dilapidated and uncomfortable.

The Irish Big Houses in the novels may indeed be big, but their upkeep is not always the best and the interiors often leave a lot to be desired. This is, however, not always a result of 'contamination'. The decline of the landlord class is reflected in their Big Houses. The germs of this decline had, as Terence Dooley points out in *The Decline of the Big House in Ireland,* somewhat ironically been sown during the boom years from the mid-1850s to the late 1870s (p. 79). This is when landlords went in search of mortgages and managed to secure them quite easily, too easily in some cases; but very little of the money they obtained was put aside for rainy days ahead. When the agricultural depression started in 1877 and tenants organized themselves to call for a reduction of rents while backing it up with agricultural agitation, the landlords were in a precarious situation. Decreased or no rents at all coming in meant that arrears became a source of grave concern. It was no longer possible to borrow to improve cash flow, but the estate expenses remained the same; agency fees, legal fees, insurance and maintenance still had to be paid. Lord Dufferin proclaimed: "An Irish estate is like a sponge and an Irish landlord is never so rich as when he is rid of his property".[182]

Many Irish landlords and their families had to leave their estates, temporarily or permanently. Martin Ross lived away from Ross for many years as her brother, Robert, let it to earn a living in London. She and her cousin Edith Somerville saw the deteriorating conditions of the Big Houses in Ireland at first hand and used some of their experiences in their novels. Durrus in *An Irish Cousin* seems to have certain similarities to Ross as it was when Mrs Martin and her daughter came back there in the summer of 1888.[183] Gifford Lewis writes about the household at Ross in *Somerville and Ross*, revealing that Mrs Martin and her daughter lived at Ross as tenants in five rooms. When Robert Martin joined them, he had to contribute weekly to the carefully kept housekeeping fund, as did Edith Somerville when she visited (p. 29). The ramshackle Ross had one usable trap and an ungainly horse for transport, while Somerville's Drishane was somewhat better off (p. 149). However, the upkeep of Drishane also suffered in these difficult times. It was a cold, damp house. Furthermore it was infested with rats. In his

[182] Quoted in Dooley, *The Decline of the Big House in Ireland,* p. 99 and others.
[183] See letter written by Martin to Somerville in Lewis, ed., *The Selected Letters of Somerville and Ross,* pp. 76–78.

biography of Somerville and Ross, Maurice Collis supplies a picture of life in the Big House which may seem somewhat surprising:

> Ross House remained infested with vermin despite efforts to clean it up. 'I caught a flea on my person with amusing brilliance and let it go by accident,' thus Martin complacently. But all the great houses of the gentry were in this state because the servants did not notice dirt. Drishane was noted for its rats, which flourished on the bits of food left lying about. If poison was put down they retired to die in some inaccessible spot. The stink of dead rats under the drawing room floor was sometimes strong. The air in the dining room was like a charnel house on one occasion, and meals could not be eaten there. Martin's worst experience of rats was when staying with the Persses, one of the Galway families. 'Dined at the Persses' and slept there. Had a bad night surrounded by rats.' She enlarges on this diary entry in a letter to Edith; 'My bedroom was a weird room on the ground floor with an earthy smell. The weirdness was the rats. Mrs Persse warned me about them and assured me they couldn't get into the room, but the row they made was intolerable. I wasn't frightened but just bored by the distracting courses of the rats on the ceiling and down the wall.' (p. 82)

The more of their power and fortune the Anglo-Irish landowners of the novels lose, the more dilapidated their houses become. Somerville and Ross's description of the house Major Yeates rents from Flurry Knox in the Irish R. M. stories – with its rat-eaten floors and wallpapers furred with damp – is graphic. In *Burnt Flax*, Mrs H. H. Penrose claims that everyone's roof leaks in Ireland; those of the Big Houses are in no way excepted, as the inhabitants of Glanmore find out. Lord Fintragh's Barnaglen in Jane Barlow's *The Founding of Fortunes* is a much larger place than Shanabawn owned by Sir Herbert Considine in the same novel, but its superior size has only served to provide scope for more extensive dilapidation and decay. The trees in the park have fallen, the weeds flourish high. Among the dismantled galleries and saloons, with their smouldering decorations and spider-hung tapestries, are the still inhabited apartments "wherein Lord Fintragh [is] usually to be found buzzing like the quarrelous captive of a dusty web" (p. 191). Compared to the conditions in the cottages and hovels in Ireland, the dirt and squalor found in the Big Houses seem to be on a much grander scale – and the only animals kept inside are dogs, except for the unwanted rats and fleas mentioned by Maurice Collis.

An English visitor in Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September,* Captain Vermont's wife, has comments on the hospitality of the Anglo-Irish which are as revealing of the English as of the Anglo-Irish. It seems that this lady is rather encouraged by the fact that Irish Big Houses are dilapidated. Coming to Ireland, she had expected to be disappointed in it; but she is not, for she has never before seen so many large houses with so small a sense of her smallness. All the houses are shabby and she would love to be turned loose in any one of them with a paintpot – and a few hundred yards of some really nice cretonne.

Sometimes it would seem that the physical decay of a house and an estate in a novel corresponds to the moral degeneracy of its inhabitants. Willy and Uncle Dominick in Somerville and Ross's *An Irish Cousin* are "captives" of the sins of the past. The ramshackle Big House of Durrus is seen through the eyes of a visitor to Ireland, initially unaware of any difference between the Irish and the Anglo-Irish. Theo is rather surprised when her Irish cousin does not greet her with what she believes to be the national salutation, "Begorra". Durrus itself is overrun with rats and cobwebs. Nothing is ever cleaned or mended. When Theo finds that her hairbrush has been used to support the window because the sash is gone, she finds it "eminently characteristic of the slipshod manner of life at Durrus" (p. 44).

The family history of the Anglo-Irish Prendevilles in *The Big House of Inver,* written by Somerville and Ross thirty-six years after *An Irish Cousin,* is rather sinister too. It is loosely based on the St George family of Tyrone House in Co. Galway. In *Twilight of the Ascendancy,* Mark Bence-Jones tells about Tyrone House and the St Georges. Christopher St George had lived extravagantly and when he died, in 1877, the estate was already impoverished. The decline continued after his death. The house stood empty and most of the furniture was gone, but a life-size marble statue of an eighteenth-century Lord St George remained in the hall (pp. 131–32). When Martin Ross came here in 1912, she described the house in a letter to Somerville on 18 March:

> In the afternoon Tilly Redington and I drove over to Tyrone House. A bigger and much grander edition of Ross – a great square cut stone house of three stories, with an area – perfectly empty – and such ceilings, architraves, teak doors and chimneys as one sees in old houses in Dublin. It is on a long promontory by the sea – and there *rioted* three or four generations of St. Georges – living with country women, occasionally marrying them, all illegitimate four times over. Not so long ago *eight* of these half peasant families roosted together in that lovely house and fought, and barricaded, and drank till the police had to intervene – about 150 years ago a very grand Lady Harriet St Lawrence married a St. George and lived there, and was so corroded with pride that she would not allow her two daughters to associate with the Galway people. She lived to see them marry two men in the yard. Yesterday as we left, an old Miss St. George, daughter of the last owner was at the door in a donkey trap – she lives near in a bit of a castle [...] She was a strange mixture of distinction and commonness, like her breeding, and it was very sad to see her at the door of that great house – if we dare to write up that subject![184]

By the time that Somerville did "write up that subject", Martin Ross had been dead for ten years; but a great deal of what was written in her letter in 1912 comes back to life in *The Big House of Inver.*

[184] Lewis, ed., *The Collected Letters of Somerville and Ross*, p. 294.

The Prendeville family of the Big House of Inver is "one of those minor dynasties that, in Ireland, have risen, and ruled, and have at last crashed in ruins". It is nevertheless 'the real thing' with a coat-of-arms that goes back for generations. The Prendeville family history is recapitulated from the reign of Queen Anne onwards in chapter one of the novel. There is in fact a great deal of family snobbery expressed in some of the novels by the Anglo-Irish novelists, with minutely chronicled genealogies. In Erminda Rentoul Esler's *The Wardlaws* (1896), it is pointed out that it is unnecessary to recapitulate the Wardlaw family history, as it can be read in detail in Burke's *Irish Landed Gentry,* but a short summary cannot be avoided. "The founder of the family was Hugues de Vardlais, who followed the conqueror to England and fought at the battle of Hastings. Two de Vardlais took part in the Crusades, one de Vardlais signed Magna Charta, which facts were accepted by their descendants as naturally as that they should be christened and vaccinated nowadays" (p. 5). By the time of James I, the fortune of the family has dwindled and Lord Wardlais is grateful to accept the provision for a younger son which the plantation of Ulster offered. Some two and half centuries of princely lavishness further decrease the family fortune and the Wardlais family name has now undergone a further change and become Wardlaw. The castle passes out of their hands and Margery, one of the two remaining Wardlaws in Ireland, is worried that "[i]n time nobody will believe that we were a great family". However, the county still consider Margery and her brother "the raal stock through an' through" and their benefactor, Lord Kilmoon, who is not of a particularly long descent himself, is impressed with their tremendous lineage.

Charlotte in Somerville and Ross's *The Real Charlotte* does not possess the same standing as the Anglo-Irish characters in the novels of my study. However, she is a Protestant and she takes as much pride in her genealogy as a Wardlaw. She is taken aback when the son of the local Big House, Christopher Dysart of Bruff, mistakes her for a relation of the Fitzpatricks. Charlotte tells him that her father's brother married a Butler and that Francie Fitzpatrick's grandmother was a Butler, too. "And that's the only connection I am of the Fitzpatricks," she assures him. However, as she is trying to marry off Francie to Christopher, she hastens to add that Francie takes after her mother's family and her grandmother's family, the Butlers of Tally Ho, who were as well known in their time as the Dysarts of Bruff. "Yes, indeed as good a family as any in the county. People laugh at me and say I'm mad about pedigree; but I declare to goodness, Mr Dysart, I think the French are right when they say, '*bong song ne poo mongtir,*' and there's nothing like good blood after all" (pp. 82–83). When Francie Fitzpatrick stays out on the steam launch with Lieutenant Gerald Hawkins till too late for decency, Charlotte claims not to be able to look her old friend Lady Dysart in the face again. She abuses Gerald in no uncertain terms. This "unprincipled blackguard" is "an impudent little upstart without a halfpenny in his pocket and as for family [...]

God only knows what gutter he sprang from". She doubts that "he has a drop of blood in his whole body" (p. 167).

Lady Naylor in Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September* is an extremely proud woman, much concerned about "background", one of the things she considers to be lacking in English people in general but particularly in her niece's English friend, another soldier by the name of Gerald. Lady Naylor manipulates a situation where she can talk to Gerald alone:

> "Such a day," she sighed briskly. "We have lunched with the Boatleys. What a delightful colonel he must be! *She*, you know, is Irish; a Vere Scott. We must seem ridiculous to you, over here, the way we are all related."
>
> "Topping, I think," said Gerald.
>
> "Oh, I don't know! Now you lucky people seem to have no relations at all; that must feel so independent."
>
> "I have dozens."
>
> "Indeed? All in Surrey?"
>
> "Scattered about."
>
> "That sounds to *me,* of course," remarked Lady Naylor, pulling her gloves off brightly, "exceedingly restless. But you all *came* from Surrey, didn't you?"
>
> "More or less," said Gerald, who was not sure. (p. 178)

Even though background is extremely important, the matter of money cannot be totally neglected. Lady Naylor's modesty shrinks at the subject – a subject the English make free with – but she does bring herself to raise it. She makes it absolutely clear to Gerald that he is not a desirable suitor for her niece, and she does so in a cruel way.

The question of the allegiance and identity of the Anglo-Irish is touched upon in several novels, albeit in a lighthearted way. In J. M. Callwell's *A Little Irish Girl* (1902 [1901]), considerable pride has been expressed by the O'Briens – particularly by the youngest sister, Norah – in their Irish heritage; but at the suggestion that she should accept the Irish slovenly ways of running her household, the elder sister, Anstance, points out: "We are as much English as we are Irish and I will remain English enough to remember that it is not natural for hens to lay eggs in a wine-cooler" (p. 68).

Often there is a distinct dichotomy between political allegiance to Britain and emotional allegiance to Ireland amongst the Anglo-Irish. There is some inherited loyalty to England, where their sons go to school and to whom they owe their lands and power in the first place, but their blood-and-bone 'Irishness' is very strong. The Anglo-Irish feel that their long association with Ireland entitles them to be proprietary about it, and in their view the fact that they continue to sound somewhat English and make frequent visits to England is irrelevant. They are very proud people in the novels. Circumstances may have changed for them – sometimes they accept the blame for this themselves – and their houses may be

dilapidated and 'Irish'-looking, but they still have their 'family' and feeling of superiority to cling to. It is interesting to note that in Somerville and Ross's *The Real Charlotte*, the social hierarchy is made evident by the different speaking voices and the authors' bias sees to it that the Anglo-Irish Dysarts speak 'best'. One thing is clear: neither the mere Irish nor the English compare to the Anglo-Irish.

4 The New Irish and 'the Ould Stock'

As the preceding chapters showed, the long-drawn-out struggle between the Anglo-Irish and the Irish for leadership in Ireland took place within several different spheres. Since Ireland was an agricultural society, security of land tenure and land ownership was the all-important issue for many. The decline of rents during the Famine had bankrupted a large number of landlords, and in 1849 Lord John Russell's Whig government seized the opportunity to pass the Encumbered Estates Act in the hope that it would revitalize agriculture in Ireland. The Act simplified procedures by which forfeited estates could be purchased, and within a decade one seventh of the country had changed hands.[186] However, the purchasers were not the ones that had been envisaged when the scheme was introduced. It had been hoped that experienced English farmers with capital would buy land, improve it and make it pay; but the overwhelming majority of the new owners were Irish, mainly younger sons of gentry but also solicitors and shopkeepers from Catholic and Gaelic families who had done well out of the Famine.

Gladstone's first Land Act in 1870 had no economic and few social consequences, but from the Land Act of 1881 onwards the tenant's legal position was protected and the Irish farmer could begin to raise his sights socially as well as economically. With the enactment of the Land Acts of 1903 and 1909 yet more radical changes occurred. When, in March 1920, the Estates Commissioners summed up the effects of these two acts, they found that together they had led to nearly nine million acres changing hands while another two million acres were in the process of being sold.[187] Ireland had become a country of peasant proprietors.

As the nineteenth century progressed, social status became increasingly important to those who had improved their material position. Catholics took the cue from their social betters, the Protestant upper classes, and as some of them sidled their way up the social ladder, they realized that they had to go into the professions to acquire a semblance of equality and a veneer of gentility. Education became a factor in the leadership battle. Many of the Anglo-Irish families sent their sons to schools and universities in England, but this option was not viable for the Irish. An Irish national school system had been established for

[186] Lee, p. 37.
[187] Lyons, p. 219.

them as early as 1831, and educational facilities improved steadily throughout the century. The Irish Education Act of 1892 was intended to impose a degree of compulsion on school attendance, and by 1908 it is estimated that seventy-five per cent of all Irish children attended schools with some regularity. Literacy figures improved accordingly; in 1851, the proportion of five-years-olds and upwards who could neither read nor write was forty-seven per cent, and the corresponding number had dropped to twelve per cent in 1911.[188] As for secondary schooling, the secondary school system was largely Cardinal Cullen's creation. He fostered the creation of an educated Catholic bourgeoisie – Blackrock College and Terenure were both founded in 1860 – but also encouraged the Christian Brothers Schools, which provided the only hope of secondary education for poor boys. The Catholic share in the secondary school population increased greatly between 1881 and 1911. In 1881 Catholics accounted for about fifty per cent, while by 1911 they represented three-quarters of the total secondary school attendance.[189] The increase is impressive; but the figures must, of course, be seen against the considerable majority status of the Catholics.

The university question was a thornier issue and several solutions were attempted during the nineteenth century, but none that was satisfactory to the Irish. In *Ireland Since the Famine*, F. S. L. Lyons gives a summary of the problems encountered. Until the end of the eighteenth century Trinity College, founded in 1591, was the only university in Ireland. It was very conscious of its position as an upholder of Anglicanism and as a pillar of the Ascendancy. To meet the needs of Catholics, Maynooth was founded in 1795, primarily for the training of priests. Higher education remained the monopoly of a very small and privileged minority. Official opinion believed in mixed education and wanted a university where everybody in Ireland, irrespective of religious affiliation, could study. The Catholic hierarchy, however, came out against the "godless colleges" set up by Sir Robert Peel in accordance with the Provincial Colleges Act of 1845, because they were – at least theoretically – undenominational. On the initiative of Cardinal Cullen, Archbishop at the time, the Catholic University was founded in Dublin in 1854. Its first Rector was the distinguished John Henry Newman, and it looked as though Irish Catholics had finally found a place of wide and modern learning of their own; but financial difficulties for the new seat of learning soon set in. Some Catholic upper- and middle-class students attended Trinity College, which had started to admit students to degree courses without religious tests as early as the end of the eighteenth century. In 1873, Trinity opened Fellowships

[188] Ibid., pp. 82, 87–88. Lyons points out that the 1911 Census, though continuing to use five years of age as the point of departure for measuring illiteracy for purposes of comparison with earlier censuses, accepted that nine years was a more realistic age. The effect, of course, was to lower the illiteracy rate still further. In 1911, by that measurement, 87.6 per cent of the population of nine years and over could read and write, 3.2 per cent could read only, and 9.2 per cent were completely illiterate.

[189] Ibid., p. 92.

and Scholarships to non-Anglicans. Two years later, the Catholic hierarchy denounced it as dangerous to faith and morals and the college was in effect closed to Catholics again. Subsequently, the Catholic University was re-organized as University College Dublin, and shortly afterwards it passed into the hands of the Jesuits who controlled it for some twenty-five years. It was, however, still privately funded as it was a denominational institution, and so the financial difficulties continued.

Church and state were clearly unable to co-operate in the area of university education and the difficulties seemed to increase with Catholic expectations. The main reason for this was the simple fact that the university question was not only an educational or a religious question but also a political one. For those who feared that Home Rule meant Rome rule, the spending of public money on a Catholic university seemed utterly self-destructive. Eventually, eight years into the new century, a solution was found: two new universities were created, the Queen's University of Belfast and the National University of Ireland. Trinity College remained a separate entity. The National University was in effect a Catholic university with substantial government funds, although supposedly nondenominational according to the Act of Parliament that created it.[190] With increased opportunities for Catholics the Irish became better educated, and the proportion of Catholic lawyers and doctors rose from about one-third to about one-half between 1861 and 1911.[191] The Irish were no longer exclusively peasants but able to compete with the Anglo-Irish on their own grounds within a number of areas.

As the Irish became more socially secure and their educational opportunities increased, political change began to take place, particularly during the latter decades of the nineteenth century. In 1873, the Home Rule movement was organized into a new body – the Home Rule League – with Isaac Butt as leader, and in the 1874 elections Home Rule was subscribed to by fifty-nine MPs.[192] However, even before that year the Unionist Ascendancy had been challenged in some constituencies, such as the constituency where Martin Ross's father had been used to influencing the outcome of the election. In a by-election in 1872, the Conservative candidate, the younger son of the Earl of Clancarty, was supported by James Martin of Ross whose estate was close to the place where the polling took place. His tenants had always voted whichever way he wanted, but this time they were encouraged by their priest to vote for the Home Rule candidate, who won a resounding victory. When James Martin returned to Ross after the election, as his daughter recalled, "even the youngest child of the house could see how great

[190] Ibid., pp. 94–98.
[191] Lee, p. 17.
[192] Ibid., p. 63.

had been the blow. It was not the political defeat, severe as that was, it was the personal wound, and it was incurable".[193] The elections had been held in February and James Martin died in April.

Local affairs had long been the responsibility of the local landlords, but with The Local Government Act of 1898 – which gave Ireland a system based on the British model – their stranglehold on local affairs was broken. Administrative and financial duties, previously the duty of the old grand juries,[194] were taken over by county and city councils, while rural and urban district councils took charge of housing and public health. These were elected bodies, chosen on a wide franchise, and they were eligible to receive grants from the Treasury apart from being able to impose their own local grants. Once they began to operate, they were dominated by Catholics and Nationalists – no doubt helpful as preparation and practice for the responsibility of self-government. However, as Joseph Lee points out in *The Modernisation of Irish Society 1848–1918*, the Act did not provide for competitive entrance examinations, and appointments were virtually by favouritism only; hence the new system soon became as big a byword as the old one for corruption (p. 128). This is clearly reflected in some of the novels by the Anglo-Irish novelists of my study, particularly in Somerville and Ross's *An Enthusiast* (1921) where Mr Coyne, the Baby Bullet, buys the votes he needs for his purposes before the Council meetings and bribes with such skill that his tenders are accepted. Not surprisingly, his business flourishes and Mr Coyne manages to achieve a position of considerable consequence in the locality.

Undoubtedly, it was the Catholic Church that provided the cement in the political movement of the people-nation in its move towards self-determination. Despite internal tensions, particularly between the hierarchy and the younger and more radical country curates but also between individual bishops, the Catholic Church generally managed to present an imposing united front to the world. Two strong personalities, both Archbishops of Dublin, dominated it for a long period of time: Paul Cullen (1852–1878), later Cardinal Cullen, and William Walsh (1885–1921). Their people were the Irish peasants who had become the threatened repository of virtue in the land besieged by Saxon materialism. This image of them was largely a myth, however. The peasant so favoured by the Anglo-Irish writers of the Revival – as well as by the Catholic natives – as upholding the values of tradition and the organic society, living on and from the land independently of English commercialism and the supposedly rootless values

[193] Edith Somerville and Martin Ross, *Irish Memories*, pp. 26–27.

[194] The grand juries – a survival from the eighteenth century – were groups of landowners in the different counties nominated by the High Sheriff who was in his turn appointed by the crown. Grand juries fixed local revenues, but these were to be approved by the judges of assize. A further and perhaps more stringent control on the allocation was the fact that whatever money they voted for would largely have to come out of their own pockets and those of their fellow landlords (Lyons, p. 77).

of the city, was by no means as unworldly when it came to economic matters as they liked to portray him. As Joseph Lee points out, the Irish farmer showed considerable commercial alertness, as did the Catholic Church. In Lee's view, Irish Catholicism displayed an obsession with the materialistic "which might have made a less institutionally religious society squirm with envy". Catholic teaching, he continues, "proved no obstacle to rackrenting slum landlords, frequently ostentatious pillar of Catholic piety, to grinding exploitation of workers, to petty swindling of customers, to learning how to [in the words of W. B. Yeats] fumble in a greasy till / And add the halfpence to the pence / And prayer to the shivering prayer" (p. 16).[195]

The reaction of the Anglo-Irish to the challenge against their hegemony included miscellaneous interpretations of the Celtic character, usually to the advantage of the English colonial power or the Anglo-Irish. Those who wanted to dissolve the barriers between the Anglo-Irish and the people-nation realized that either the Anglo-Irish or the people-nation would have to change radically. To take Yeats as an example, the position he adopted within his texts in relation to his material clearly reveals that rather than changing the Anglo-Irish, he chose to remake the people-nation. In *Writing Ireland*, David Cairns and Shaun Richards claim that Yeats re-fashioned the Irish as Celts in his pre-1900 writing while they became "noble peasants" in his post-1900 writings. Later still, faced with the new realism of shopkeepers and clerks, his work, particularly after 1907, tends to be in opposition to the new Irish of the people-nation. In Yeats's view, the Celtic movement was supplanted by what he called an "Irish Movement".[196] This Irish movement was the preserve of "a new class [...] without exceptional men" made up of "shopkeepers [and] clerks" and dominated, it is implied, by Sinn Fein and the Gaelic League (pp. 67, 97).[197] The members of this new class went by several different names, such as gombeen-men (from Ir. gaimbín, usury), grabbers and Paudeens (Ir. Pádraig + H. E. dim. suffix -een), the latter term being used for any plebeian Irishman. A gombeen-man (or -woman) was originally a rural moneylender in pre-Famine Ireland. After the Famine the term was often used for shopkeepers who practised usury as a sideline, and it became more generally applied to political and economic opportunists who were involved in a number of enterprises. Sometimes gombeen-men went by the name mealmongers, as in

[195] W. B. Yeats from "September 1913", originally titled "Romance in Ireland" and published in the *Irish Times* on 8 September, 1913, on the same page as the letters to the editor. The editorial, dealing with the proposed Hugh Lane gallery and headed "The Art Gallery", interprets Yeats's poem as a warning to the Irish people against becoming too materialistic, i. e. failing to support the gallery. There is a letter from Lady Gregory just beside the poem, backing the gallery. Hugh Lane was a nephew of Lady Gregory's through his mother.

[196] W. B. Yeats, *Explorations* (London: Macmillan, 1962), p. 72. Quoted in Cairns and Richards, *Writing Ireland*, p. 97.

[197] W. B. Yeats, *Essays and Introductions*/W. B. Yeats selected by Mrs W. B. Yeats (London: Macmillan, 1961), pp. 259–60. Quoted in Cairns and Richards, p. 97.

William Carleton's *The Black Prophet* (1847). The grabber, or land-grabber, was an individual who took over the land of an evicted farmer, particularly during the Land War (1879–1903); but the designation 'grabber' has also been used in a wider sense. The word 'grabber' was not invented to describe a new class, but rather to denote the remarkable character of a class long in existence, explains Brinsley McNamara – one of the Catholic intelligentsia writers mentioned by James H. Murphy – in *The Valley of the Squinting Windows* (1918):

> That was their innermost nature, these farmers, to be close-fisted and to guard with an almost savage tenacity their possession to which they had already attained. It was notable also that they were not too careful or particular as to the means they employed to come into possession. This was the full answer to the question why so many of them put a son up for the Church. It was a double reason, to adopt means of acquiring still further and to be an atonement in the sight of Heaven for the means they used in acquiring thus far (p. 80).

I have chosen not to use any of these pejoratively loaded terms generically for the new emerging class in Ireland but will simply call them 'the new Irish', unless the context requires otherwise as in the headings below. It could, of course, be argued that the term 'the new Irish' would be equally suited to some Anglo-Irish individuals, such as Sir Horace Plunkett, who introduced co-operative ideas into Ireland, or fictional characters such as Thady Munfort in Ella MacMahon's *The Job* (1914) and Dan Palliser in Somerville and Ross's *An Enthusiast,* who did their best to adjust to the new circumstances in Ireland and tried to take an active part in the building of the new country. However, I will use it in a more narrow sense to include only those Irish persons who were upwardly mobile in society as against those, generally the Anglo-Irish, who were losing their previous leading positions and their power.

The Anglo-Irish novelists of my study were, as I have mentioned earlier, not associated with Yeats or the Revival; but they too lived through these times of 'war' vying for position in society, and they saw the new Irish replacing them in areas which had previously been reserved for their own class. How are these new Irish social climbers portrayed, and how do the Anglo-Irish characters and the mere Irish characters react towards them? As land was so central to the people of Ireland, I will focus on "The land-grabbing new Irish" before dealing with "Grabbers of all sorts", who may grab land but anything else as well that may be useful and desirable to them. Getting involved in politics was an effective means for some characters to achieve their ends, and I will look at these in "Political upstarts". As these three headings imply, the new Irish characters can hardly be termed heroes; nevertheless, "The new Irish heroes" will be presented in section four. When the status and position of the Anglo-Irish change in the novels, they are increasingly referred to as "The ould stock". It is with the old stock that I will deal under the final heading of this chapter.

The land-grabbing new Irish

In 1877, after a lengthy period of economic prosperity, a long-term agricultural depression began and farmers – landlord-farmers as well as tenant-farmers – saw a substantial decline in the value of their produce. Shopkeepers and other traders around the country who had benefited from tenant prosperity were affected by the downturn and were as ready to listen to the rhetoric of the Land League leaders as the tenant farmers. The Land League called for rents to be reduced and many landlords complied, while others refused for reasons similar to that given by John George Adair in October 1879: "[The] tenants are aware that my estates are subject to charges, taxes, rents, annuities and encumbrances; these must be paid without reduction. Were I therefore to accede to their request I should be driven to abandon my property".[198] Not surprisingly, he did not grant his tenants' request, even though accepting rent reductions was at times less detrimental to the landlord than the alternative rent strikes when rents were withheld so that sizeable arrears accumulated. By studying local and national newspapers of the time in his *The Decline of the Big House in Ireland*, Terence Dooley found that most landlords were more accommodating than Adair (pp. 92–93). However, when a tenant could or would not fulfil his obligations to the landlord, he was evicted. From 1847 onwards, agricultural statistics were collected by the Irish constabulary and from these it can be estimated that on average 2,700 evictions took place annually. This figure increased between 1879 and 1883, when 14,600 were evicted; that is to say almost one in every thirty had to leave their homes.[199]

The new tenant who had taken over a farm from an evicted family was a land-grabber in the eyes of his neighbours. Land-grabbing, to greatly varying extents, was one way of trying to move upwards socially and economically in Ireland. I will use the term land-grabber to include other land-grabbers than those who took over farms from evicted tenants. Some of them are not farmers and grabbers of land only but have other occupations too. The concept is thus rather vague, but all the land-grabbers below belong to the new Irish in that they do not accept their allotted share but want to improve their financial situation and position by any means available.

When the Land League was founded it had restricted itself to the relief of destitute people, but soon it began to organize popular demonstrations against evictions. In 1880, the president of the Land League, Charles Stewart Parnell, told a gathering of farmers at Ennis not to pay unjust rents and not to bid for farms from which other tenants had been evicted. He encouraged them to try to influence public opinion so that nobody else would bid for these farms either.

[198] *Leinster Express*, 1 November, 1879. Quoted in Dooley, p. 92.
[199] W. E. Vaughan, *Landlords and Tenants in Ireland 1848–1904*, pp. 16 and 38.

Whoever broke the rule should be shunned by his neighbours and placed in "moral Coventry". Only a few days later this policy was tried and applied, and not only to tenant-farmers. Captain Boycott, the first man to be successfully boycotted, was Lord Erne's agent.[200] However, despite the threat and the risk of boycotting, land-grabbing did take place.

I will now consider the circumstances surrounding land-grabbing in the novels. How are the land-grabbers presented? As land-grabbing provided landlords with much-needed income, their attitude to land-grabbers was different from the one adopted by the Land League. McPherson, son of the butler at Castle Hamilton, in Letitia McClintock's novel *A Boycotted Household* (1881) is a land-grabber. He and his family have rented a farm from which the tenant has been evicted. The landlord, Mr Hamilton, is not in the habit of evicting his tenants; in fact, it is said that he has only ever evicted two, even though he no longer receives any rents at all. However, his lenience does not prevent him from being boycotted, as are the McPhersons. To keep themselves and their farms going during the hard times of the boycott, the landlord and the land-grabber co-operate as best as they can. Threats are continuously issued from and carried out by the League members, culminating in the murder of the eldest Hamilton son. There is no help to be expected from their neighbours, because they have been forced to join the League to avoid being boycotted themselves. They are all victims of a common culprit, the Land League. The land-grabber, McPherson, is portrayed with sympathy. He is a good Christian who looks after his family, an adopted son included, very well. McPherson is a somewhat unusual land-grabber in that he is a Protestant. In this respect it could be argued that it is the Catholic representatives of the Land League, taking over the power in the countryside, who are the new Irish. However, far from being land-grabbers they oppose the practice.

Threats from the Land League play an important role in the plot of *Naboth's Vineyard* (1891) by Edith Somerville and Martin Ross, although the threats do not in fact originate in the League at all. The widow Leonard takes over the farm that James Mahony has had to leave because he was unable to pay the rackrent demanded for it (see also Chapter 1, "Agrarian Agitations", p. 76). Mr Donovan, the President of the local branch of the Land League, informs her that the resolution coming from headquarters is that she should be boycotted. However, the idea of a boycott is Donovan's own and has nothing to do with the League. His intention is to secure the farm for himself as soon as the effects of the boycott has made it impossible for the widow to pay her rent and she has been evicted.

[200] Charles Cunningham Boycott (1832–1897) retired from the army as a Captain and became Lord Erne's agent in Co. Mayo in 1873. He was one of the most prominent victims of the policy which later was to be named after him. During the autumn of 1880 the crops on the estate had to be harvested by Orangemen working under the protection of 1,000 members of the Royal Irish Constabulary. Boycott left Ireland permanently in 1886.

The would-be land-grabber Donovan is a dishonest scoundrel who reflects badly on the organization he represents. The actual land-grabber, on the other hand, is presented as a hard-working, righteous and upstanding victim. Donovan is one of the new Irish gombeen-men. A man of power in the local community, he owns the hotel, the shop and the pub. It would seem that his Land League membership is just one additional means of advancement for him.

It was in fact quite common for shopkeepers to be active Land Leaguers in Ireland at the time. In "Farmers, Traders, and Agricultural Politics in Pre-Independence Ireland", Liam Kennedy points to the Land War as marking a major stage in the political advance of the trading community. He analyses the social composition of the Land League to reveal that shopkeepers and publicans played a disproportionately large role in it, relative to their numbers in the population.[201] Being a shopkeeper confers power when boycotting is in fashion. Donovan, the fictional Land League president in *Naboth's Vineyard,* uses his position as a shopkeeper by refusing to sell to the family he has decided to boycott. The drink from his pub is useful when it comes to bribing members of the Land League to support his decisions. Donovan's influence in the League, and in the locality as a whole, is undoubtedly enhanced by his trading interests, and he could be seen as a fictional illustration of debt bondage.

Debt bondage has sometimes been said to be the reason why traders were over-represented in the League, as well as on county councils later. In an article in the *Economic and Social Review,* Peter Gibbon and M. D. Higgins claim that by the 1880s the landlord power had passed in many places to another source, the gombeen-man. Particularly in the western seaboard of Ireland, the gombeen-man was not simply an entrepreneur among many, but "the effectual ruler of large tracts of country and hundreds of 'subjects'".[202] In 1910, a Nationalist M. P. called F. H. O'Donnell claimed that the Irish lost their political and commercial independence as a result of their debts to the local shopkeepers:

> They lose all power of choice, all right of remonstrance, and all liberty of action so long as they are in debt to the gombeenman. [...] About 25 per cent of the keepers of drinking establishments, groceries, general stores etc., are gombeenmen or are trying to be gombeenmen. [...] A country fellow who has run up a bill for a couple of pounds, which he cannot pay at once, has got the hook in his jaw. He will never get loose [...]. All the leading parliamentarians from Ireland have dozens of gombeenmen among their leading supporters.[203]

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[201] Liam Kennedy, "Farmers, Traders and Agricultural Politics in Pre-Independence Ireland", in Samuel Clark and James S. Donnelly Jr, eds, *Irish Peasants: Violence and Political Unrest* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1983), pp. 339–73.

[202] Peter Gibbon and M. D. Higgins, "Patronage, Tradition and Modernisation. The Case of the Irish "Gombeenman"' in *Economic and Social Review* vi, no. 1 (Oct. 1974), 27–44.

[203] F. H. O'Donnell, *A History of the Irish Parliamentary Party* (London: Longmans, Green, 1910), p. 464. Quoted in Kennedy, p. 359.

To Liam Kennedy, the crude theory of debt bondage is unsatisfactory as an explanation for the political influence exercised by traders at the time. Instead, he sees the strategic position of traders in the social structure as having conferred broader horizons and a clearer perception of opportunities on them than on the farmers. The traders' higher level of social interaction simply made it easier for them to mobilize local support than for other segments of society. However, Kennedy does not deny that traders were able to accumulate some of their political power by exerting subtler forms of pressure on customers who were beholden to them for money and other favours (pp. 361–62).

Donovan, the gombeen-man in Somerville and Ross's novel, appears too secure in his power to bother about being subtle in the forms of pressure that he exerts on his customers. He is ruthless, as is his wife, Harriet. The couple have a great deal in common; they are both selfish upstarts without morals. Harriet has married the well-to-do Donovan out of convenience and is happy to flirt with her former boyfriend, Rick O'Grady, when he returns from America. Rick, however, has no interest in Harriet, who is not the girl she was seven years ago when he went off to make his fortune. Instead he falls in love with Ellen, the widow's daughter. Donovan taunts his wife with Rick's love for Ellen. Upset and jealous, she runs into the forest in a frightful storm, wrestling with the question whether her husband is right or not. The storm matches her inner turmoil. Meeting her husband at the bridge, she lets him fall to his death even though she could have saved him. In *Naboth's Vineyard*, the new Irish are clearly depicted as morally corrupt, evil and without any place in Irish society.

Naboth's Vineyard was given solemn reviews by *The Spectator, The Times* and the *Saturday Review* when it appeared, and it was considered a serious work about the political situation in Ireland.[204] Stephen J. Brown, however, is openly antagonistic in *Ireland in Fiction,* where he has this to say about the novel:

> An early novel of the Authors but unworthy of their later reputation. It presents a loathsome, sordid picture of Ireland. The Irish are treacherous, drunken, dishonest, and their religion has no good influence on their morals. Scene: a small town on a "fiord" between Cork and Kerry. The chief personages are the repulsive Donovan, publican and president of the local Land League, and his still more odious wife. The plot is made up of their schemes against O'Grady, with whom Mrs O'D. is vainly in love, and the Leonards, whose daughter is loved by O'G. O'Grady, the one decent character, has "the contempt for his fellow countrymen which the Irishman generally imports from America." There is a vivid, but sordid realism in the description. (p. 281)

Later Edith Somerville herself, whose political outlook changed to become more

[204] Hilary Robinson, *Somerville and Ross*, p. 69.

Nationalist as she grew older, felt that she had made a mistake in writing the novel. While the plot still passed her critical eye, the characters did not.[205]

Contrary to McPherson in *A Boycotted Household* and the widow Leonard in *Naboth's Vineyard,* Mat Brady in Emily Lawless's novel *Hurrish* (1886), who takes over the Maloney farm, is an utterly despicable land-grabber. Mat Brady already occupies more ground than he is capable of working and the Maloney farm – even at the low price it is offered – will probably be a loss rather than a gain to him. But he wants it nonetheless; it is beside Hurrish's farm and will provide him with opportunities for harming and generally annoying his neighbour, whom he hates profoundly. The landlord in the novel, Mr O'Brien, has a low opinion of Mat, but he has no alternative but to give him the farm as he cannot afford to be out of pocket on yet another farm. He is disappointed in Hurrish, who, while warning O'Brien not to let Mat Brady have the Maloney farm, refuses to take it over himself. "Now, Meejar, sorr, don't ye know there's things a man can do, an' there's things he can't," Hurrish says by way of reason and O'Brien, the Major, knows well enough. In fact he feels that "[h]is position and Hurrish's were not so utterly unlike but what a certain amount of fellow-feeling was inevitable" (p. 45). The two of them are in a situation where their own free will is curtailed by the power of the Land League and they are forced to make an undesired choice. The land-grabber, Mat, is a drunkard and a violent man with no mitigating characteristics.

The land-grabbers in *Naboth's Vineyard, A Boycotted Household* and *Hurrish* all suffer setbacks, and none benefits from their land-grabbing. The widow Leonard's house is put on fire and MacPherson is boycotted, while Mat Brady's setback is final; he dies. None of these are thus socially upwardly mobile in a consistent manner in the novels. In the sense that these three characters co-operate with the landlords, they are not typical new Irishmen either. Donovan in *Naboth's Vineyard* does not in fact succeed in grabbing the land from the widow. It is his ruthless abuse of his position as President of the local Land League to benefit socially and financially that makes him a typical new Irishman. The land in contention in these three novels is tenanted land, and what is discussed is the landlord's right to control the rents and appoint tenants to his lands.

Another type of land-grabbing takes place in Jane Barlow's *Kerrigan's Quality* (1894). Martin Kerrigan, an emigrant returned from Australia, has inherited a great deal of money from an uncle. When Kerrigan comes home, his mother emigrates to Australia and he is alone, without anybody to share his good fortune. Having no immediate use for his money, he buys the Big House of Glenore which has been empty for some time. Kerrigan is undoubtedly one of the new Irish in that he rises in society to the extent that he takes over the Big House.

[205] Ibid., p. 69.

However, his actions are, as Barlow portrays them, above reproach; he buys a deserted estate for money obtained by honest means. The locals are somewhat suspicious of him, fearing that he may interfere with their cattle grazing on the land that he has just bought; but there is no immediate change in this regard, or in any other way, in the locality. When the O'Connors, 'quality' people who have been overtaken by pecuniary disaster, meet with an accident in the village, they are installed in the Big House at Kerrigan's insistence. Sir Ben O'Connor and Kerrigan find that they have much in common and it is these two that see to it that changes take place in the community. In the sequel to *Kerrigan's Quality, The Founding of Fortunes* (1902), they are working together as model landlords and the village of Glenore is transformed. Each tenant has some land around his house, more or less of it according to the number of people there are at home to look after it; and the rest of the land, called the Common Lot or the Big Lands, they work co-operatively. At the end of each year, the profits are divided between them all. Through this venture, the living conditions have improved miraculously in Glenore. New houses are built with the stipulation that they are to have "not less than four rooms for a family, a washable floor, which precludes an earthen one and an embankment at least a foot high" (p. 215). It is Kerrigan, the upwardly mobile Irishman, who is the one ultimately behind the altered circumstances for the people of Glenore, even though he works closely with Sir Ben, acting as agent of sorts; but he receives little or no gratitude for his efforts. In fact, the people are said to think more of Sir Ben than of Kerrigan; after all, Sir Ben is 'quality'. The lingering respect of the mere Irish for 'quality' or 'the ould stock' is a theme that is repeated in several other novels, and I will revert to it in "The ould stock" on p. 227. It is interesting to note that the mere Irish criticize the honest, unselfish man of mere Irish origin. It is less surprising that one of the local gentry, Lord Fintragh, finds fault with the whole model project and is disturbed by what he calls "the ornamental pigsties" that are "[t]he detached residences for the new country gentry" (p. 250).

In some novels, the land-grabbers are involved in a more frontal attack on the land and power of the landlords. In *Mount Music* (1919) by Somerville and Ross, this attack is conducted in a secretive and roundabout way by one of the new Irish. Richard Talbot-Lowry is a landlord, loyalist major, soldier and sportsman. His wife, Lady Isabel Christian, is the daughter of an English earl who has brought much-needed money to Mount Music at their wedding. This was many years ago, and much has happened since then to make their financial situation become very strained again. Such rents as are paid have to be extracted by the hard hand of the law. The Mount Music tenants hold indignation meetings against their landlord, who will not give them what they believe to be theirs and he is convinced is his. Many petitions, sometimes led by Catholic priests, come to Mount Music to try to persuade the Major to sell but he staunchly refuses.

However, the Talbot-Lowrys are 'robbed' of their land in an unexpected way by a man who prospers and rises in society, Dr Mangan.

In his study of the decline of the Big House in Ireland, Terence Dooley examines estate rentals and accounts from the period as well as mortgage papers and parliamentary papers. He concludes that landlords who had borrowed heavily during the 1850s, 1860s and early 1870s found themselves in a critical situation. Their annual rental income declined, and an increasing proportion of it went towards interest payments. Looking at the reports of the Irish Landowners' Convention between the mid-1880s to 1919, Dooley is struck by the concentration on landlords with mortgage difficulties and the pleas to the British government to do something to help them (pp. 99–102). In the *Irish Landowners' Convention Report, 1893–94*, the frustration of the landowners at the time is clearly expressed:

> Why then should we carry on a hopelessly bankrupt business, flaying tenants alive and eternally plunged in scalding waters ourselves, merely for the benefit of some firm of London usurers who are safe out of range of blunderbuss or boycotter.[206]

The precarious situation in Ireland meant that land was no longer considered a safe collateral, and landlords were unable to secure loans to tide them over the difficult times. Their interests had to remain unpaid, and this caused panic to spread amongst the mortgagees who began to call in outstanding loans.

The Major in *Mount Music* fictionally exemplifies the difficulties many landlords experienced at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. Dr Mangan has ingratiated himself with the family at Mount Music for some considerable time and is well aware of the desperate financial position of the Major. When Dr Mangan offers him a loan of some money – which he conveniently happens to have lying idle in the bank – the Major is relieved, as there are no other opportunities for him to raise any capital. He gives a mortgage on the house and on the demesne as security.

Dr Mangan is busy in local affairs, and he sees to it that they are run in accordance with his wishes. The relationship he has built up with the Major is crucial for some of his activities, and he does not hesitate to use it. Through cunning, the Doctor manages to persuade the Major that he is the one who comes up with the idea of appointing a "cousin of sorts" of Dr Mangan's to the local dispensary. The Doctor skilfully feigns astonishment when the idea is presented: "I might never have thought of it if it hadn't been for you!" he exclaims. The following comment by the narrator seems to reverberate with significance: "Thus did the collie yap, while the sheep (who was a member of the Dispensary Committee) gratified, and pleasantly conscious of originality, trotted up the path and into the fold that had been prepared for it" (p. 90). The appointment takes place just before the Local Government Bill takes the power away from the old Dispensary Committees.

[206] Quoted in Dooley, p. 100.

The loans that Major Talbot-Lowry obtains from Dr Mangan do not go far, and the pressure soon rises again at Mount Music. Tradesmen queue at the door and begin talking about solicitors' letters. At the same time, Dr Mangan hints at the repayment of the loans he supplied; and annoying letters are sent from a firm of Dublin solicitors in connection with various charges and mortgages on the Mount Music property which have been acquired by them for a client now wanting them called in. It is not difficult to guess who is behind the mounting pressure, and the result is that the Talbot-Lowrys are forced to leave their home for London. It should be mentioned that Dr Mangan is not satisfied with taking over the Major's house and demesne; he wants the Major's daughter, too – as a wife for his son. A marriage would, as Dr Mangan sees it, be a way out for the Major while at the same time providing the Mangans with a considerable step up on the social ladder. However, these plans come to nothing and Dr Mangan dies in an accident without benefiting from his schemes.

In another Somerville and Ross novel, *The Big House of Inver* (1915), the situation is similar to the one in *Mount Music* in that the family loses control over its estate with the 'help' of one of the new Irish. The years of the Land League, and the Famine of 1882, bear heavily on Captain Jas Prendeville's resources. John Weldon, his bailiff, who seems to ascend the social ladder in singularly direct relation to his employer's descent, has been obliged to come to his help financially more than once. Jas lives his life on board his boat or in the Tower of Inver attended by the Widow Hynes and her grandchild. He is vain, half-educated and drinks while "not to excess, yet ever so deeply" (p. 33), and is completely incapable of looking after himself and his estate. Having lost his boat, he immediately requisitions a new one although he has no money to pay for it. The celebration of the arrival of the new boat is a ceremony that involves the consumption of a great deal of whiskey, and "when spirits were up as well as down" (p. 34), the grabber takes advantage of the situation. John Weldon produces the draft of a lease of the demesne-lands of Ross Inver, which will make him the tenant. He explains to the Captain that his signature on the document will automatically cancel the debt on the boat, as well as yield a little something to put into the bank that is getting "a bit nasty" about the overdraft on the farm account. In 1903, under the Land Purchase Act, John Weldon Junior induces the impoverished Captain to sanction the sale of the lands to his father who becomes the absolute owner of them. The broad and beautiful acres that Old John has known and revered since he was a little boy are now inalienably his. The Prendevilles are left with the dilapidated Big House of Inver and the Tower but have no lands.

Somerville and Ross take us through several (de)generations of the Prendeville family, but we also follow the corresponding rise of the Weldons. Young Johnny Weldon is an educated man. After having spent some time in Dublin, he returns to his native village a solicitor, learned in the Law – a useful trade at the time,

John the elder says, with all the litigation that is going on in the country. The son is already higher up on the social ladder than the father has ever dreamt of being. Furthermore, young Johnny's marriage contributes to the social elevation for the grandson of old Mick and the son of Old John. Miss Louisa Owen is English and well educated; and what is more she has "the name" of a little patrimony of her own. Peggy is the fourth step in the ascent of the Weldon family. Initially there had been disappointment that Peggy was not a son; but the two Johns agree that Peggy is an undoubted credit to the House of Weldon. She, who is sometimes referred to as the Grabber's daughter, has her education rounded off by a course at the Conservatoire in Paris before returning home full of accomplishments and without a brogue. The contrast between Peggy and the two young Prendevilles is vast.

In his survey of the education of Irish landlords in *The Decline of the Big House in Ireland*, Terence Dooley notes that while daughters normally remained at home under the tuition of successive governesses, most sons went on to public school in England. Of the fifty-five peers who owned the sample houses of Dooley's survey, forty-five had attended Eton and four had attended Harrow (p. 71). The same was true of the untitled owners of large estates. These schools were not only places of education, they were also places where social status was perpetuated and where suitable contacts were made that would be beneficial in later life. Nesta in *The Big House of Inver*, the youngest offspring on the Prendeville family tree, has been taught her letters by her illegitimate half-sister at home and some further rudiments in the local National school. Later, Mrs Johnny Weldon "had compassionately intervened, and Nessie had shared with 'the Grabber's daughter' the teaching that Peggy received from her mother, preliminary to being sent to schools, English and French, of a class to which the daughter of 'the Grabber's' employer could not aspire" (p. 55). Not surprisingly, there is no possibility of a public school education for Kit, the Prendeville heir. By the time that his schooling has to be taken in hand, his father's income has been reduced to a figure that hardly suffices for the bare necessities of life. Kit learns "how to read and write (indifferently both), how to chuck a stone underhand, with unerring aim, how to climb a thin Connaught stone wall, and to jump a fence like a hound running a line, as well as some slight smatterings of arithmetic" (p. 41) in the local National School. His 'higher' education is spent at Mr. Kilbride's Commercial College at Monarde, where he acquires "the rudiments of the 'sound commercial education' guaranteed by the prospectus, the knowledge that he was good-looking [...] and a tone of voice that was considerably less attractive than the soft brogue of the National School with which he had entered Mr. Kilbride's Academy" (p. 42). Further efforts to educate him are in vain. On returning home after her years abroad, Peggy, the Grabber's daughter, is surprised to find that Kit is not more like the gentleman she had expected and thinks that "[h]is voice is as bad as Fa-

ther's". The initial land-grabbing has resulted in reversed roles in all respects for the Prendevilles and the Weldons. The Prendevilles are history.

In the novels mentioned above, different types of land-grabbers are portrayed, the characters in the respective novels reacting differently depending on the circumstances. It is beneficial to the landlord that his land is taken by a new tenant when the previous tenant has been evicted, and it is not surprising that the land-grabbing characters in Letitia MacClintock's *A Boycotted Household* and Somerville and Ross's *Naboth's Vineyard* are portrayed with sympathy. The Land League threatens the livelihood of the landlords and is viewed with antagonism by the main landlord characters in MacClintock's novel, while the internal politics of it is questioned in Somerville and Ross's novel. Emily Lawless's novel is less clear-cut in its portrayal of land-grabbing. While Mat Brady is prepared to go against the Land League and take over the farm, he does so for all the wrong reasons. He is an utterly despicable person, while Hurrish, who refuses to take the farm when offered to do so by the landlord, is depicted as an honourable man. The only man to compare with him as far as honour is concerned is the landlord himself, Pierce O'Brien. The novel could be seen to indicate that without the involvement of the Land League and the English government, both severely criticised, the likes of Hurrish and Pierce O'Brien would manage to get along with their work and with each other. The land-grabbers in Somerville and Ross's two novels *Mount Music* and *The Big House of Inver* are a different type of land-grabber, working against and not with the interests of the landlord. Dr Mangan in *Mount Music* dies but the Grabber's daughter in *The Big House of Inver* prospers and marries an Englishman, while the representative of 'the ould stock' cannot compete and continues on his down-hill slope. The outlook for the Anglo-Irish gentry is gloomy, as is the future for Ireland if the new Irish in these novels are anything to go by. In Jane Barlow's *Kerrigan's Quality*, the ideal solution is suggested. The 'mere' Kerrigan buys a Big House and its deserted estate for money obtained by honest means and then works it with Sir Ben as his agent. The two men have met halfway – Kerrigan on his way up the social ladder and Sir Ben on his way down.

Grabbers of all sorts

Land-grabbing is one means of representing social climbing in the novels, but there are other ways to rise in society. Talking to the Poor Law Guardian, O'Loughlin, in Jane Barlow's *The Founding of Fortunes,* the English butler expresses a firm view as to the best way of making money:

> Land's all-fired dirt. Fi-nance and commerce is what's got the money in it. If you want to keep your own pocket plumpy, you're bound to have a hand in other fools' ones; and commerce is the way to do it – commerce and fi-nance. Make your fortune and

> you can have as much rotten land as you like along with all the rest of the luxuries, if that's what you cotton to. (p. 153)

As early as the eighteenth century, there was a contemporary claim to the effect that the bulk of the country's trade was carried out by Catholics. This is contradicted by R. F. Foster in *Modern Ireland 1600–1972*, who notes that Catholic businessmen were not numerically dominant although they managed to maximize their influence by keeping together and organizing themselves against discrimination (pp. 210–11). Being excluded from acquiring landed property, there were few alternatives for Catholics at this time outside the Church, the Continental armies and the medical profession (the Penal Laws had left a medical calling open to Catholics). In post-famine society, however, one of the strategically significant features of change, mentioned by Liam Kennedy in "Farmers, Traders and Agricultural Politics", was the rise of traders: wholesalers, retailers, dealers in agricultural inputs and outputs. In 1902, Charles Booth calculated that the proportion of miscellaneous traders had risen from 3.6 per cent at mid-century to 5.4 per cent in 1891, a relative gain of 50 per cent over the period.[207] This upward trend Liam Kennedy found to be sustained in later decades.

There is no denomination stated for the various traders, but as R. F. Foster claims in *Modern Ireland 1600–1972,* the Anglo-Irish had a deep contempt for trade and preferred not to get involved in it (p. 210). This contempt can be observed now and then in some of the novels, such as *A Boycotted Household* by Letitia McClintock, where John Hamilton is forced to go into trade with his brother-in-law to support his family despite feeling that it might be thought to be demeaning. In *The Wardlaws* (1896) by Erminda Rentoul Esler, the charitable Lord Kilmoon is shocked when he hears that Margery Wardlaw, whose family is so much more distinguished than his own, will become a shopkeeper, even though he later expresses his approval of her brave spirit. The mere Irish people of the village are also shocked and upset that Margery is going to break the pattern of what is expected of her class and go into trade.

Margery Wardlaw has no choice but to set up a grocery in her house so as to be able to support herself and her young brother. It is ironic that the man she asks for advice is the man who has contributed to her family's poverty. Thady Gilligan was, we are told by one of the mere Irish characters, "her father's Papish servint till he'd stole enough to set up shop wid" (p. 105), but he has now retired from his business and is pleased to be able to help Miss Wardlaw. His main advice to her starting off in business is: "You take care of yerself, and don't trouble yer head about back-goin' people" (p. 101). As for learning about keeping accounts, he tells Margery that "in the matther of accounts, the less of them the betther." He

[207] Charles Booth, "The economic distribution of population in Ireland" in William P. Coyne, ed., *Ireland, Industrial and Agricultural* (Dublin: Browne & Nolan, 1902 [1901]), pp. 64–72. Quoted in Kennedy, p. 340.

proceeds to talk about his own career and it is made abundantly clear that he has been shameless and ruthless on the path to earning his fortune. It was his mother who got him into service with Margery's grandfather when he was twelve, with the recommendation that he stick to it as the Wardlaw family is "goin' to pieces, an' that's the place for the likes of us to pick up wer bits" (p. 103). Gilligan manages to do just that, and very well too, thanks to his "intelligence". Margery is aware that Thady has rendered his service with her family unduly profitable to himself, but she dismisses the thought of it with a shrug of her shoulders; a few hundred pounds more or less would not have mattered in the case of the Wardlaw family disaster. She is said to be thankful when Thady teaches her to make paper twists for groceries, where to buy to most advantage and how to take stock and balance her books. Whether because of Thady's expert advice or not, the shop prospers and Margery enjoys having some money for clothes and a liberal present now and then to her maid, quite in the old style. She feels that there are compensations "even for a pedigree buried behind the counter" (p. 107). She adapts herself remarkably well to her new circumstances although she is not able to make the fortune that Thady, the grabber, has done.

No matter how skilful Thady Gilligan is at grabbing and advancing on the social ladder, he is an amateur compared to Timothy Galvin in Jane Barlow's *The Founding of Fortunes.* Timothy Galvin's career starts when he is a small child living with his grandmother halfway between Glenore and Port Maguire. Every Saturday she gives him a penny with the instruction to bring home a couple of good heads of cabbage. This commission is executed with modifications of his own devising. He always brings home *one* head of cabbage, and reports to his disappointed grandmother that "they had 'riz to pence apiece" (p. 6), which leaves him a halfpenny on each transaction for sugar-sticks. Luckily this is not revealed until he has ceased living with his grandmother and joined his parents who have retired from domestic service. His father dies soon afterwards, but Mrs Galvin is no less dishonest than her son and continues to draw her husband's pension.

Tim is a very lazy boy, and Mrs Galvin is sometimes worried about his future; but her worry is superfluous. He promptly seizes the opportunity to advance himself when it is presented to him. At the age of seventeen, he steals a purse with a good deal of money in it from a child, Bernard. Timothy leaves Port Maguire with the contents of the leather pouch but without his mother. By producing a small fraction of his fortune, Timothy is accepted as a partner in the firm of Thomas Vittie, a provision dealer and a cousin of his. The cousin's business can do with Timothy's helping hand. Without undue delay, Tim picks up half a side of rusty bacon and labels it *Best Limerick, 8d.,* then procures a licence and liquor and the business begins to prosper.

After the death of Thomas Vittie, Timothy considers making a match with

his widow because it would put a stop to sharing the profits. However, even this early in his career, he is convinced that he might do better in life for himself than marrying his cousin's widow. He decides to quarrel with her instead. This grabber's self-interest not only allows him to cheat on his grandmother but also on a mourning widow and her children. As the widow is "a silly, ignorant, tearful sort of woman", Tim is able to rid himself of her, her children and the interest in the lease and the business on quite easy terms to himself. Now he has a business and a house of his own, even though the name T. Vittie is still above the door. Timothy Galvin is no longer the poor boy from Glenore but a new man, one of the successful new Irish. To further distance himself from his humble beginnings, he decides to adopt his cousin's family name and reinvent himself as Timothy Vittie. By doing so, he will of course also limit the risk of any possible trouble that may arise in connection with the method by which he acquired the capital to start off in business.

Despite Timothy's efforts to keep his whereabouts secret from his mother, she catches up with him. His first shock of alarm and annoyance at seeing her having passed, Timothy comes to realize that she may be useful and Mrs Galvin does her utmost to confirm him in this opinion. Mother and son have much in common. She has "a natural talent for huxtering" and it makes her a great asset in the shop, at least in the early days. Then Timothy's fortunes rise and he finds it expedient to transfer the scene of his labours to London. His mother, who was so useful weighing out "short half-pounds" in the shop in Ireland, has become an embarrassment to him in his new elevated position in society. Timothy displays the same ruthlessness to his mother as he has done to everybody else; he does not hesitate to get rid of her by committing her to a private asylum in Ireland.

Timothy Galvin is a stark contrast to Kerrigan, the humble, charitable and helpful human being in the novel. Timothy is an altogether unsympathetic character with no mitigating traits whatsoever. From modest beginnings and through cunning, dishonesty and ruthlessness, the margarine millionaire and successful businessman T. Vittie has emerged. By marriage to Lord Fintragh's daughter, Leila, he further elevates himself. Initially Leila is reluctant to associate with Timothy because she finds him vulgar, but he is immensely rich and she is too much in need of money not to accept his proposal. The impoverished Lord Fintragh of Shanabawn, a neighbour and a severe critic of Kerrigan's and Sir Ben's model farm, is consoled by the growing brilliancy of his daughter's marriage:

> For Timothy Vittie's fortunes continue to rise by leaps and bounds, if progression towards solemnly lofty places may fittingly be so described. At present he is a baronet, but as he has just endowed a suffragan bishopric, it is confidently predicted that the new year will see his elevation to the peerage. Ulster King-at-Arms has traced his de-

> scent from several mythical heroes of the Red Branch,[208] and he will probably revive the ancient title of Ought Ormond, borne long since by his chieftain ancestors. Very soon he will be privileged to entertain Royalty, and offer it wedding gifts. Nor is it by any means impossible that one of these days he may, as a stroke of business, bring about a great war, and so attain to the dignity of a historical character (p. 330).

The irony is heavy and the disdain of the upstart as well as of the insignia of the upper classes is obvious.

Timothy Galvin is an unusual new Irishman in the novels in that his dishonesty seems to pay. He continues on his upward move in society, unlike, for example, Dr Mangan in *Mount Music* and Donovan in *Naboth's Vineyard*. It is impossible to tell whether their deaths are meted out as punishment for their land-grabbing, but the fact remains that their careers are cut short by drowning.

Most of the new Irish are Catholics, but there are some notable exceptions, Timothy Galvin in Jane Barlow's novels and John Weldon in Somerville and Ross's *The Big House of Inver* being the most prominent ones. Religion alone is thus no distinguishing factor when it comes to what characterizes the new Irish; an utterly self-centred wish to climb up the social ladder by any means available seems to be non-denominational. Charlotte in *The Real Charlotte* (1894) by Somerville and Ross is a Protestant, too, but also, which is more unusual, an independent woman. Her father was the manager of Bruff, the Dysart estate, before Roddy Lambert, and Charlotte used to help her father in his business. She is fairly well off and with an inheritance from an aunt, who dies at the very beginning of the novel, her fortunes increase. Unfortunately a more inconvenient legacy, little Francie, Charlotte's cousin (once removed), comes with the money. Charlotte has promised her aunt to share the inheritance with Francie, but as it was never written down, "the bequest was of the kind that may be repudiated if desirable" (p. 10).

Charlotte is more than a little in love with Roddy Lambert, but she is sensible enough to realize that it is necessary for him to marry a substantial amount of money. Lambert too is a grabber. Having married a well-to-do widow, he thinks that he should expend her money in as distinguished a way as possible. Unfortunately the end of the ready money comes too soon and Lambert has difficulties in satisfying his most rapacious creditors. Charlotte is prepared to come to his help, though, and she is happy to give him a couple of hundred pounds as a loan. In fact, Charlotte is a versatile grabber who is not only interested in her cousin's legacy or in acquiring land; she is also a gombeen-woman who lends money to

[208] The Red Branch is an order of warriors under Conchobor mac Nessa, in the Ulster cycle. This group of heroic tales relates to a powerful prehistoric people of the north of Ireland, the Ulaid (from whom the name of Ulster is thought to derive) and at the time in which the tales are set Conchobor mac Nessa is King of the Ulaid. The tales evolved sometime between 100 BC and AD 400 and were written down by monks in the monasteries from the 7th century onwards.

people other than Lambert. Not even her most intimate friends know anything about one or two of the sources of her income. They would indeed have been surprised to know that some householders in Ferry Row pay excessive rent for ramshackle accommodation to her. Others have money dealings with her of a more complicated kind, that is to say complicated to anybody but a person of Charlotte's strong financial intellect. She never brings any account books with her on her outings to Ferry Row, as "[s]he and her clients were equally equipped with the absolutely accurate business memory of the Irish peasant, a memory that in few cases survives education, but, where it exists, may be relied upon more than all the generations of ledgers and account books" (p. 58).

Charlotte is also unusual in the degree of ruthlessness she displays. It is never more to the fore than when she visits Mrs Lambert to tell her about her husband's flirtation with Francie. Mrs Lambert refuses to believe that Roddy is going to Tally Ho for reasons other than business and is pitiful in her efforts to convince herself that her tormentor is wrong. Collapsing with a cry for her drops, she entreats Charlotte to save her. However, Charlotte, after a very slight hesitation, decides that she has more important things to do. She has to get through reading some letters and get them back in their place before Roddy comes back in. Mrs Lambert is left to die. This almost-murder is a repetition of that by another grabber, Mrs Donovan, in *Naboth's Vineyard.* She and Charlotte have their moments of choice. Evil wins out and they disregard anything but themselves and their own interests.

Charlotte is a managing and overpowering woman who knows what she wants. When Lambert has buried his wife and returns from Limerick after having dealt with his wife's trustees, Charlotte has had ample time to prepare for her visit to him. Dressed in new clothes, "black and glossy and well made", she hopes to make an impression on the widower. Apart from sorting out the late Mrs Lambert's belongings, the pair has some practical issues to discuss. In Lambert's absence Julia Duffy, the tenant of Gurthnamuckla, has been taken to Ballinasloe Asylum, and her farm – which Charlotte and Lambert have schemed to get their hands on – is up for grabs. In a weak moment, being in need of a loan of money from Charlotte, Roddy Lambert has had to promise her the farm although he would very much have liked it for himself. Charlotte sees a beautiful future for herself at Gurthnamuckla with Roddy riding over several times a week to look after the young horses they have agreed he should keep there. She, "the bland lady of the manor, should show what a really intelligent woman could do at the head of affairs; and the three hundred pound debt should never be spoken of, but should remain, like a brake, in readiness to descend and grip at the discretion of the driver" (p. 233). Charlotte may be in love with Roddy Lambert, but she is first and foremost a grabber, and she does not lose her head over her feelings for him.

The "brake" is used when Lambert has married Francie. Charlotte's subsequent actions are those of a woman scorned and she has nothing to gain from them except revenge, but they plainly reveal her character. Cunning is a common and necessary trait for all grabbers, and Charlotte possesses it to a remarkable degree. Not only does she use it to grab but also to avenge and spite. She knows that Lambert has spent a great deal of money on his honeymoon in Paris with Francie, she knows that he is greatly in debt and she decides that now is the time to ask him for her money back. However, Lambert's ability to repay her has not improved, and even though Charlotte claims that she is in urgent need of the money, Lambert manages to gain some respite. A rent-collecting tour for the Bruff estate is imminent, and this will provide him with the opportunity of 'borrowing' from the estate account. Charlotte knows that he will seize that opportunity. Being worried about Francie's renewed relationship with Hawkins, her previous lover, Lambert arranges for Charlotte to come to his house as a chaperone and a spy when he is away. She arrives the night before he leaves and reminds him that she expects a couple of hundred pounds on his return. Roddy Lambert may be a skilful grabber, but he is not in the same league as Charlotte. It does not come as a surprise to the reader that Charlotte neglects her duties as a chaperone and rather encourages Hawkins. However, she is not satisfied with hurting Lambert's feelings. She sees to it that she gets an opportunity to tell Sir Christopher of her "suspicions" of irregularities in the estate account. The result is that Lambert loses the agency and has to look for money to replace what he has "borrowed".

Lambert has no idea that Charlotte is behind his predicament. He is used to turning to her when he is in trouble and promptly rides over to ask her for a loan to replace the missing money. As the two confront each other in the potato-loft at Gurthnamuckla, Charlotte makes it clear that she has no intention of throwing good money after bad and asks for her previous loans to be repaid. While this conversation takes place, Francie is lying dead on the road outside. It is rather ironic that Charlotte has chosen to expose herself as Lambert's enemy precisely at the moment when Francie's death would have made him available as a husband yet again. While these two grabbers are left alive at the close of the novel, neither can be seen as particularly successful. Charlotte may prosper financially but she is a lonely woman; Lambert has lost two wives and his money.

Charlotte is an active force of evil, but it must not be forgotten that she operates in the vacuum created by the Anglo-Irish Dysarts' neglect of their duties. The censure directed against grabbers like Charlotte and Lambert in *The Real Charlotte* is severe while the Dysarts are presented as being, at best, ineffectual. Sir Benjamin is a demented invalid of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy who is wheeled about in a bath-chair. Lady Dysart appears more 'normal' than her husband; but her feeble-mindedness, as when she plants an entire flower-bed with chickweed

plants which she has mistaken for asters, seems to connect her with her husband's dementia. None of the couple's children affords any hope for the future of the Dysart estate. Pamela sings in the choir and is a pleasant insignificance. Christopher sees the world through his camera only. The Dysarts are, as John Cronin aptly puts it, "a genteel group of aristocratic hybrids who represent sterility and decay at the top of the social hierarchy",[209] and as such they are in stark contrast to the social vigour of Roddy Lambert and Charlotte Mullen.

Social vigour undoubtedly characterizes Thady Gilligan in Erminda Rentoul Esler's *The Wardlaws* and Timothy Galvin/Vittie in Jane Barlow's *The Founding of Fortunes* as much as Charlotte Mullen and Roddy Lambert in *The Real Charlotte.* However, these grabber characters also have other, more unpleasant, characteristics in common – vulgarity, dishonesty, ruthlessness and total selfishness, to mention but a few. While the Anglo-Irish characters, Sir Ben in *The Founding of Fortunes* excepted, are subjected to some severe criticism as well, they are above all portrayed as inept and ineffectual and as such inviting or encouraging the new Irish in their new Irish ways.

Political upstarts

As early as the beginning of the nineteenth century Irish people came together in rural protest movements, which all adhered to an alternative conception of law and government. This underground tradition of local agitation is an important background to later Irish party politics. Daniel O'Connell's Catholic Association, founded in 1823, was formally opposed to secret societies and was itself an open and accountable democratic mass movement, but it might not have been as effective had it not been preceded by Whiteboyism and Ribbonism.[210] The Catholic Association was funded by the "Catholic Rent", paid at a low rate by hundreds of thousands, and it soon became an important factor in Irish politics. The chapel-yard and the courthouse were used as political fora, and in R. F. Foster's view an "alternative parliament" effectively met in O'Connell's Dublin headquarters. The Association's local agents, often priests, passed on information about legal rights etc., and a political education could be said to have been started for the classes outside the Ascendancy.[211]

By and by, the central organization began to vet, select and back parliamen-

[209] John Cronin, *The Anglo-Irish Novel. Volume One. The Nineteenth Century* (Belfast: Appletree, 1980), p. 150.

[210] The Whiteboy movement, one of the first secret societies in Ireland, started in Tipperary and its neighbouring counties in the early 1760s. The agrarian protests of the Whiteboys and other similar societies were usually the work of small local groups that had adopted a common name. Sometimes contemporaries used the term 'Ribbonism' to refer to agrarian protest, but Ribbonism was in fact a different type of secret society, rather political and religious in character.

[211] R. F. Foster, "Ascendancy and Union" in R. F. Foster, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989), p. 186.

tary candidates with a breakthrough occurring in Waterford in 1826, where the Catholic Association's candidate challenged and vanquished the candidate put forward by the local grandees, the Beresford family. O'Connell himself was elected an MP for Clare in 1828, and it became obvious that the Catholic Association could return a number of popularly mandated MPs who were not able to enter Parliament. After Catholic Emancipation in 1829, Catholics could at last sit in Parliament and be entitled to hold high offices. Unfortunately, this concession came at a cost; the forty-shilling freeholder class, which had made the electoral triumphs possible, was disenfranchised as the franchise was raised to £10. The body politic was still controlled by landlord interests and was to remain so for some time. The introduction of the secret ballot in 1872 did not initiate major new political trends, but at least the risk when exercising electoral rights in accordance with the voter's own preferences, rather than with those of a landlord or priest, was lowered.[212] Twelve years later the "Mud Cabin" reform act more than trebled the electorate, and small property holders as well as labourers could for the first time participate directly in the process of returning MPs.

The land agitation mobilized different sectors of the population in different areas of the countryside, which became increasingly politicized. Newspapers like *United Ireland,* founded by C. S. Parnell and edited by William O'Brien, harnessed popular support. Gradually the Home Rule body was transformed into a close-knit political party whose parliamentary importance was augmented by the threat of mass mobilization. In 1877, Parnell became the leader of the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain. Eight years later his party represented four-fifths of the Irish candidates and the English parties were practically eliminated in southern Ireland. In 1885, Parnell's team, while retaining a few 'gentlemen' of the old 1870s intake, came from backgrounds representing the interests which were simultaneously capturing the elective seats on boards of Poor Law Guardians, and which would take over local government after 1898. These men, 86 altogether, pledged to vote together along party lines when returned. The members of Parnell's party came from a generally poorer section of the community than previous Irish politicians, and it is interesting to note the change in type as well as number of Nationalist MPs between 1874 and 1885. In *The Modernisation of Irish Society 1848–1918,* Joseph Lee notes that in 1874 23 of 59 Home Rulers were landed, in 1880 8 of 59, in 1885 only 5 of 86. The professions supplied 29 Home Rulers in 1880 and 31 in 1885. Between 1880 and 1885 the number of farmers and shopkeepers, all Home Rulers, rose from 2 to 22, reflecting the rise of a new section of society to potential political leadership. The changes likewise involved an increase in the number of Catholic MPs, from 51 in 1874 to 75 in 1885. The representation of Nationalist Ireland, in contrast to Unionist constituencies, became a function of political capacity rather than a matter of birth. The local organizations

[212] Michael Hurst, "Ireland and the ballot act of 1872" in *Hist. Jn.,* vii, no. 3 (1965), 326–52.

generally accepted the nominees of the National party, and in this way local roots too became somewhat less significant than before. Lee claims that the Irish MPs of 1885 were the first members at Westminster to be paid out of party funds – no doubt a factor contributing to their party loyalty (pp. 107–08). When the popular local government and county committees of agriculture were introduced towards the turn of the century, the Irish countryside was further democratized.

Most of the Anglo-Irish families in the novels are rather inconsequential rulers of their particular part of Ireland. Some of their actions and reactions, such as selling their land and emigrating, are by and large caused by circumstances beyond their control; but it cannot be denied that on several occasions their own inefficiency is a contributory factor to their changed circumstances. However, not all Anglo-Irish landlords allow themselves to be passive victims to the changing times. Some of the Anglo-Irish characters accept the challenge and do their utmost to adjust to the new conditions in the country. When doing so, they cannot avoid coming into contact, and sometimes confrontation, with the advancing new Irish, who often use the opportunities offered to them in politics to further their financial and social position. How are these political upstarts presented in the novels, and how do the Anglo-Irish characters react to them?

Sir Thaddeus Munfort, Thady, in Ella MacMahon's *The Job* (1914) is one Anglo-Irish landlord who accepts the challenge given by the present times and is prepared to adapt. He has inherited Mount Pleasant, and even though he has sold most of his land to his tenants, he considers it his responsibility to look after 'his' people. Thady seems to realize that Ireland cannot survive by agriculture alone. As he lives in Northern Ireland, the idea of going into manufacturing is closer at hand than had he lived in the more exclusively agricultural southern part of the country.[213] Together with Magrath, who represents the new Irish in the novel, he has started a carpet factory in Ballymaclashin. Apart from his other occupations, Magrath is a member of the County Council, which gives him the opportunity of meeting useful people. He has made it clear to the members of the council board, he tells Thady, that he does not like "infarior beings" to sit on it alongside him. "[A] man like me is different to men like them [...] Look at the *style* o'man I am. *They've* no money, sez I, and consequently, *consequently,* no manners, sez

[213] Dublin was primarily a financial centre, but Belfast and the Lagan valley was Ireland's one example of large-scale industrialization. Initially, in the eighteenth century, it was based on the new-fangled cotton, while linen took over in the early nineteenth century. The mills were adapted for the spinning of flax and as machinery needed to be maintained and improved, an engineering industry developed. Already at the time of the Famine, the industries of Belfast made an impact on the demographic pattern of the province so that the urban population increased at the expense of the rural population. By the end of the nineteenth century, 828,000 spindles and 31,000 power-looms were in operation in an industry that had its market in Britain and the United States. There were other textile industries in Northern Ireland, such as the shirt and collar industry around the city of Londonderry (made possible by the invention of the sewing-machine), and the manufacture of woollen goods; but there was also a ship-building industry, such as Harland and Wolff, and others (see Lyons, pp. 65–66).

I, fit for my society". Magrath and Thady have a great deal of conversation in this vein, clearly revealing Magrath's upstart nature, part of which is his desire to be on friendly terms with Sir Thaddeus. He is quite genuine in his wish that Mount Pleasant never be left without a Munfort in it; but the reason for this is mainly that he does not want his own uprising to be discounted by the downfall of someone with whom he longs to be equal. When Thady points out that the Munforts belong to "the outclasses" these days, having neither "representatives nor representation", Magrath falls into the trap: "Who cares for representatives [...] An' what do they represent? Nothing but themselves. And who are they, every mother's son of them, but a lot of needy gas-baggers, lifting any money they can get wherever they find fools to give it to them" (p. 236). He prides himself on what he and Thady – he includes Thady rather condescendingly – have achieved in their "godforsaken" town. It takes gentlemen like himself – and Thady – to "galvanize" the working classes into anything like industry. Magrath does not think much of equality and democracy. These things may be good enough for the English, if they are satisfied with it, but he claims that it would never work for Irishmen. This new Irishman displays a great deal of arrogance and class pride, contrary to Sir Thady Munfort. Thady is, the narrator tells us, rather amused by the "labyrinthine delights" of Magrath's conversation. The social distance between the two is emphasized by thoughts ascribed to Thady on a number of occasions. His face may not betray them, but they nevertheless remind him of how proud Magrath's grandfather used to be of his little potato patch outside the cabin door. Despite working with Magrath, Thady is always aware of the difference between them, in background as well as in outlook.

Magrath may speak disdainfully about "needy gasbaggers", who lift any money they can get wherever they can get it, but he himself has "hoarded as perhaps only the Irish can hoard", the narrator reveals, and this has made him a very rich man (p. 234). He repeatedly boasts of the company he keeps, the "jukes" and "bar'nets" of his acquaintance. Thady's friend, the duke in the novel, has a very low opinion of Magrath. To him Magrath epitomizes the new Ireland. He does not like the new Ireland that is shooting up around him and hopes to be dead before it is fully developed. Thady tries to attain a more optimistic outlook than his friend. Perhaps the new Ireland will not turn out as bad as they think? But the duke is sure that they have no future in the new country; their time is past. "Don't you know that we are to be ended, not mended?" he says to Thady, and the two break out in laughter. The duke compares himself and Thady to " broken bottles on a wall" but concludes that, "a broken bottle on a wall has kept a good many thieves from other people's possessions before now. I'd rather be a broken bottle than a thief" (p. 336).

There are representatives of the new Irish other than Magrath in *The Job,* such as Mr Roe and his daughter Birdie. Mr Roe has one trait in common with Magrath:

his pride in consorting with the upper classes. When he is master of tournament at "the Cassel", he feels invested with a social supremacy which makes it the greatest day of the whole year for him. He bustles about the lawn and tennis courts as if they belong to him. The Roes may be "underbred" and inferior to the upper classes, but they are pale shadows of Magrath and totally harmless. Magrath, on the other hand, causes a great deal of harm. He has not, despite Thady's insistent requests, insured their new factory buildings. When a fire breaks out, all is lost – buildings, machinery and stock. Some few samples of carpets alone survive. Thady is in no position to finance another factory. The duke, however, is able to intervene and illustrate the difference between his class and that of Magrath by offering to help Thady and, what is more, without expecting anything in return. The Anglo-Irish upper classes are portrayed as admirable in every way while the new Irishman Magrath is rather a ridiculous upstart, ingratiating and untrustworthy.

Another new Irishman to utilize the opportunities offered by the Irish Local Government Act of 1898 is Baby Bullet Coyne in Somerville and Ross's *An Enthusiast* (1921). The unusual name of this character is the result of a strange occurrence and is explained by the narrator. According to a legend in the town of Eskragh, a young priest had borrowed a rifle to practise shooting at a mark. A bullet missed its target and crashed through the window of a public-house instead. The bullet finished its career in a bottle of whiskey just beside the prospective mother of Mr Coyne, who from the shock she received immediately experienced a succession of "wakenesses", the result of which was a son, Nicholas. The name Baby Bullet was given to him by the wits of Eskragh and has stuck to him for seventy years. The Bullet part of the name is indicative of his personality – Baby Bullet is not a man to be trifled with.

In *An Enthusiast*, we are given a more detailed picture of the workings of the council than in Ella MacMahon's novel. In this case the council is Eskragh Rural District Council, and Baby Bullet Coyne is one of its leading members. He is a farmer, the owner of a large general store, a coal merchant and the vice president of the Agricultural Society as well as a member of the council. He is a very skilled operator in everything he undertakes and there is no doubt that his businesses benefit from his political interests. He considers himself a man of principles and illustrates these principles to Jimmy Ryan, a fellow council member, when Jimmy approaches him with a view of getting Dan Palliser, the local Anglo-Irish gentleman of Monalour, co-opted to the council:

> There was a woman came to me a while ago, resumed the Baby, asking me would I get her a job – washing-a-day-a-week at the Union, I think it was. I said to her, "My good woman," I says, "I might consider it, but I must have something for it." "Sir," says she, "I'm a poor woman, what could I give ye?" "Mary Bryan," says I (that was her name), "Mary", says I, "if it was only half a crown, I should have it. For the *principle* of the thing, Mary," says I.

> Mr Coyne again paused, and his spherical countenance rolled on his shoulder towards his fellow-councillor. You know, James, that half crown here or there, would be, as I might say, a matter of no considerable importance to me, but it was the principle I had to regard. It was I who introduced this method of obtaining votes into this Union, and I may say, James, I may say, it has worked exceedingly well! (p. 24)

After a lengthy discussion between Baby Bullet and Jimmy Ryan, it is agreed that Baby Bullet will see to it that Dan becomes a councillor. However, Baby Bullet's principle will have to be taken into account. It prescribes that when the council vote for the yearly coal contract is due to be taken, Jimmy must make sure that Dan will understand that Baby Bullet's coal is the best. Dan does not know anything about this, but he is prepared to listen when his friend extols the excellence of Baby Bullet's coal and is consequently duly elected a councillor. By becoming a councillor he hopes to get an opportunity of meeting the local strong farmers to interest them in the scientific farming methods he learnt at agricultural college.

Dan is a complete innocent when it comes to council matters; he is lacking in the tact and social skills summarized as "roguery" by Jimmy Ryan. As a beginner at the game of social government, he is bewildered to discover "that these administrators, in their civic capacity, recognised a different standard of morality from that which influenced their private life and conduct" (p. 45). At his second experience of the proceedings of the council, there is to be an election for the Clerk of Union, and it horrifies Dan that the majority of his fellow-councillors seem to have sold their votes in advance. He tries to urge a procedure whereby the credentials of all rival candidates be read to the board before the voting takes place. This, however, is indignantly negatived by one of Baby Bullet's henchmen, for "what was the use, he asked, of bothering with testimonials till they had the voting done?" (p. 45). To a great extent this meeting is made up of clamour and vituperation, and many personal insults are exchanged. Baby Bullet gives as good as he gets but is rendered inarticulate – at least for a moment – when one of the councillors accuses his mother of having gone "pucking" at every back door in the country, with a bag on her back, and her baby in it, begging "spuds". Eventually, however, he recovers his power of speech and exclaims: "Ye little weazel ye! [...] Ye dirty little weazel!" (p. 46). To Dan, this does not seem to be noticeably out of key with what has preceded it, but it has a profound effect on the gentleman to whom it is directed. In fact, it is very difficult to hold him back from a physical attack on Baby Bullet Coyne. It is only by the personal effort of Jimmy Ryan and a few others that what the Press later describes as a "bout of fisticuffs" is prevented. In the midst of the tumult the vote is taken, and Baby Bullet's candidate, Mr T. Sharvin, is chosen. His suitability for the post under consideration is, according to Baby Bullet, sufficiently attested by the fact that, young though he is, he has already spent three weeks in a British dungeon in the cause of Ireland. Another reason, and perhaps

a more relevant one, is that Mr Shavin's father has been able to afford to spend more than £200 in bribes for votes.

Dan's friend, Jimmy Ryan of the Catholic middle class, is laughing at all this; but Dan himself, the Anglo-Irish gentleman, is not as frivolous and cannot see any reason to laugh. He is the only member of the crowd to react in this way. "Dan Palliser, patriot and reformer, sat in silence, feeling as might a man in a bombardment, whose home and hopes are crashing on his head. How, with materials as these, was he, or anyone else, to build Jerusalem in Ireland's green and pleasant land?" (p.46). It is easy for the reader to sympathize with Dan Palliser's feelings of dejection and despair when presented with the local governing body of Eskragh. While Dan has no support at the meeting, it will transpire that Dan's reaction at the levity and violence of the people is similar to that expressed by the rebel Eugene Cashen at a meeting between the two on a later occasion. Cashen tells of how the Bridane District Council has been unable to form a quorum because the majority of the council members were arrested. When the clerk was arrested too and sentenced to a year in prison, a resolution was passed to give him "an indefinite holiday". The council members were delighted with themselves, Eugene says, but as the business of the Board is now in chaos Eugene is said to be "heartbroken".

As Edith Somerville writes in the Preface of *The Irish R.M. Complete* in 1928, "[a] southern or western Irish Petty Sessions Court can teach many things, often useful, still more often entertaining" (p. 7). Somerville and Ross did learn things from what took place in the courtroom, as well as from reading the newpapers, on which to base some of their fiction. The meeting of the Rural District Council of Eskragh in *An Enthusiast,* for example, is based on a report of a meeting of the Skibbereen Rural District Council published in *Cork County Eagle and Munster Advertiser* on September 10, 1910:

> (After Uproar and near fisticuffs between Mr Healey and Mr McCarthy.)
> Mr Healy – "I would very soon make you conduct yourself if I thought it worth my while, but you are not worth it."
> Mr D. McCarthy – "Sit down you little weasel."
> Mr Sheehan – "This is too bad" (Uproar) Here another squabble ensued, and several members interfered to prevent the gentlemen from "getting at" each other. The Chairman repeatedly called for order but as his ruling was not obeyed he left the chair and endeavoured to pull away Mr D. McCarthy. [214]

This seems to have been a meeting with many similarities to the one presented by Somerville and Ross in their novel. The Eskragh council meeting may be amusing to many of the characters in the novel, as well as to readers, but to Dan Palliser it forms part of an increasing disillusionment with the reality around him.

[214] Hilary Robinson, *Somerville and Ross*, p. 170.

He is beginning to suspect that the local farmers are unappreciative of his good intentions for their well-being. Some seem to listen to his theories, but most of them make it clear that they would not dream of putting his co-operative ideas – ideas which would in his view save Ireland – into practice.

In the early 1890s, the co-operative system had started to establish itself on the initiative of some individuals associated with the landed gentry, such as Sir Horace Plunkett. This system was seen by them as presenting great possibilities for Ireland. Plunkett and other enthusiasts had initially advocated consumer co-operation, but they soon realized that there was too much resistance from shopkeepers and other retailers for it to work. Instead they started to advocate creamery organizations, and the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society (IAOS) was established to become the umbrella body for agricultural co-operatives. It was, however, dependent on the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction (DATI), the duty of which it was to provide expert advice as well as financial aid to the IAOS. A third agricultural body, the Council of Agriculture, which consisted of 104 members, was a forum for discussion of matters relating to agriculture. It had an advisory role towards DATI. Two thirds of the Council members were elected by the county councils around the country while the remaining members were nominated, mainly by Plunkett. It would emerge that in general the elected members were hostile to subsidizing the co-operative movement and to the idea of co-operation on the whole. Liam Kennedy has investigated the social composition of the council in "Farmers, Traders and Agricultural Politics in Pre-Independent Ireland" and comes to the conclusion that an over-representation of traders, particularly among the elected members, is evident. It is therefore not surprising that the Council would vote against assisting the co-operative organizations, which were likely to provide competition for many of its members. Traders were over-represented on county councils, too, and as the county councils elected the members of the agricultural Council the effect was carried on.[215]

This tension between trading interests and co-operative ideas is illustrated fictionally in *An Enthusiast.* At Eskragh County Council, Baby Bullet feels that Dan's farming ideas and his co-operation shop is "a mean and unworthy method of ruining hard-working traders" (p. 125), in particular of course Baby Bullet himself and his Eskragh General Emporium. He cannot understand why a gentleman in Dan Palliser's position wants to use the wealth that has been bestowed upon him "to interfere with the rotheen of the neighbourhood, and to take the bread out of the mouths of the poor!" (p. 125). Baby Bullet's hatred of Dan is deepening and he does not hesitate to send Lord Ducarrig, with whose wife Dan has fallen in love, an anonymous letter about the secret meetings between Lady

[215] Kennedy, pp. 349–54.

Ducarrig and Dan. Dan Palliser now has two reckless enemies, one new Irish and one of his own class.

While it cannot be said that Dan Palliser aspires to become one of 'the new Irish' in the sense of the social-climbing new Irish, it could, as I have mentioned before, certainly be argued that he is – in the same way as Thady in *The Job* – attempting to become a new type of Irishman. The Pallisers have been in Ireland since Elizabethan times, and their circumstances have changed dramatically throughout the centuries. Most of their land is gone and with the land their social power. Daniel himself has returned from the war with a wound, a Military Cross and a deep hatred of violence. He has chosen not to complete his degree in Cambridge but to go to an agricultural college for two years, and he has very firm ideas about how to contribute to the improvement of Ireland. In fact, on one occasion, with a solemn promise to himself, he dedicates his life to Ireland. However, Daniel's family background seems to rule out that his type of new Irishness will be able to compete with the one represented by Baby Bullet.

As the Irish as well as the Anglo-Irish become suspicious of him, Dan feels increasingly isolated. It is, the narrator states, a time in Ireland's stormy history when no two Irish people of the same class can speak together for five minutes without irrepressibly diverging into politics. Dan's friends among the farmers begin to avoid him, and the colleagues of the Rural District Council have never erred on the side of effusiveness with him; their positions as official representatives of Sinn Fein may be jeopardized by over-ostentatious intimacy with an ex-officer of what they are careful to speak of as "a foreign army", however liberal his views. Conversations fade to a whisper when he comes near, or they turn into an animated discussion about the weather. While he is shunned by Sinn Fein, Dan's own family considers him too Nationalistic. Nobody believes in his disinterested love of Ireland, and Dan learns the hard way that neutrality is impossible in practice. The fact that he can see two points of view, the Irish and the Anglo-Irish, is fatal for him. On one occasion his friend, the Catholic priest Father Hugh, warns him that it is impossible to be neutral. But Dan cannot or will not take sides. He says he feels like "Mr Facing-both-ways". Horace Plunkett would seem to have had a great deal in common with the fictional Daniel Palliser, even though his feelings are expressed differently:

> Now and again an individual tries to broaden the basis of Irish Unionism and to bring himself in touch with the life of the people. But the nearer he gets to the people the farther he gets from the Irish Unionist leaders. The lot of such an individual is not a happy one; he is regarded as a mere intruder who does not know the rules of the game, and he is treated by the leading players on both sides like a dog on a tennis court.[216]

[216] Horace Plunkett, *Ireland in the New Century* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press 1982 [1904]), p. 64.

Horace Plunkett made many enemies in Ireland in the early twentieth century. Traders and gombeen-men as well as anti-Parnellite Nationalists opposed Plunkett's co-operative movement; and Plunkett's hope of being able to change the current of Irish opinion from its obsession with politics into a consideration of how all Irishmen could work together for a new Ireland was frustrated. The most sustained attack on him, mainly focused on religious grounds, came in 1904 when he published *Ireland in the New Century.* His position as a Protestant Anglo-Irish landlord was of course a sensitive one from which to launch his theories at the time. While the English reviews were generally favourable to the book, the *Freeman's Journal* saw it as a prolonged libel on the Irish people and suggested that Plunkett was unfit for his position as vice president of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction. Several public bodies called for his libellous book to be banned. Criticism came from the floor of the House of Commons, too, and eventually, in 1907, Plunkett was removed from office. Dan Palliser in *An Enthusiast* may not be removed but he chooses to resign from his positions, deeply disappointed with the new Irish:

> I have been Vice-Chairman of your Society, and I have been Chairman of the Agricultural Society, since my father died, and when I joined these societies I had every intention of sticking to them as long as I lived. I didn't think that in less than six months I should be saying good-bye to them both! Still less I thought that the reasons for leaving them would be that the men whom I worked with and trusted, wouldn't trust me! I have done my best for the farmers and their interests, I have never spared myself, you know that. [...] I told you I was going to stand clear of politics, and I have done so, but that hasn't saved me from the mud-slinging that politicians deal in. I don't believe that one of you believes in his heart the lies that, I understand, are being told about me, but that doesn't stop any of you from repeating them. [...] And it isn't only these damned lies are being passed round about me that has sickened me of your societies! [...] You haven't the pluck, nor the perseverance, nor so much as the decency, to stick to a thing even though you have put your hands to it! What have politics to say to a Co-operative Creamery? And I'd like to know the connection between milk records and shooting policemen? I don't call myself a Sinn Feiner, you make that an excuse to go back on your promises to back me up in things that are only to your own advantage! (pp. 158–59)

Dan lashes himself into a fury and his audience into uproar at this meeting, which degenerates into chaos of the kind that occurred when the Clerk for the Union was to be elected. Not surprisingly, it is Baby Bullet's squeaks that top the clamour and Dan is challenged to a fight with him. Jimmy Ryan offers to help his friend, but Dan simply walks out of the meeting, his head held high and looking neither left nor right. Jimmy may be disappointed at the missed opportunity to fight, but he is also said to be full of admiration for Dan. "He was like a king for them!", he tells a friend later when speaking of the event.

The unfavourable picture of the middle classes in *An Enthusiast* is somewhat balanced by characters such as Jimmy Ryan, Father Hugh and Eugene Cashen. However, none of these is enthusiastic or understanding about Dan's solution to the crisis in Ireland, and they are certainly not prepared to work with him. The farmer Jimmy Ryan, who is friendly and kind and, contrary to Baby Bullet, likes Dan for himself and not for what he can get from him, is of the opinion that "fashionable farmin's no dam' good." The main reason for his view seems to be that he thinks that the labourers would ruin the machinery within weeks. Jimmy Ryan has a low opinion of his fellow Irishmen. "Bone-idle they are, and stupid to the back o'that. [...] Don't I know them fellows! They'd rather do a thing wrong than right; it'd be satisfaction to them. [...] Let you stick to the ways your men know." (pp. 20–21).

Eugene Cashen and Father Hugh are as sincere in their love of Ireland as Dan, and from the way that they are presented the reader gets the impression that an effort is made to give a fair presentation of all sides of the Irish conflict. It is Father Hugh who brings Eugene Cashen and Dan together. Cashen is an intelligent man and a lover of English poetry with whom Dan feels kinship despite his rebel methods. He is an active Sinn Feiner but abhors senseless murder, and he does not like Baby Bullet or his corrupt ways. In fact, Cashen is inclined to believe in the advantages of what Dan is advocating for the future of Ireland, although he does not consider the time ripe yet for measures like these. Father Hugh's vision of Ireland is different from Cashen's as well as from Dan's. He hopes that Ireland's destiny is to become the Land of Saints once more and to be the one country in the world that cherishes the Holy Church. Despite the three men's differences in outlook, in religion, in class and in race, they find comfort in each other's company and they share their love of Ireland, albeit rather different Irelands. These four Irishmen seem to present a sense of hope for the country. When Dan considers leaving Ireland with Lord Ducarrig's wife, it is Jimmy Ryan, Eugene Cashen and Father Hugh he is afraid of disillusioning. As it is, Dan does not have to choose between his love of Ireland and his love for Lady Ducarrig; he is mistaken for a rebel and shot dead by the imperialist Lord Ducarrig.

The type of new Irishness represented by Dan Palliser cannot survive. The 'battle' for Ireland results in the country being left in the hands of the gombeen-man Baby Bullet, Eugene Cashen the Sinn Feiner, the priest and the middle-class farmer. The portrait of Baby Bullet is the darkest in the novel, while that of Sinn Fein is slightly less dark and certainly brighter than that of the Unionists who have come together in the house rented by Lord Ducarrig from Dan. They care nothing for Ireland. When they are raided by Sinn Fein and get an opportunity to shoot at their fellow men, they look upon it as a great night of sport.

The political upstarts, Ella MacMahon's McGrath in *The Job* and Baby Bullet in *An Enthusiast*, are similar characters, equally selfish and vulgar. If Baby Bullet

seems to be more vulgar and more dishonest than McGrath, it is because he is more prominent in his novel. Thady may laugh at McGrath's conversation, but to Dan Palliser Baby Bullet and what he represents is no laughing matter. *The Job* was written some seven crucial years before *An Enthusiast.* There is not quite the same aura of help- and hopelessness in it as in Somerville and Ross's novel, even though Thady's friend, the Duke, claims that their class is to be "ended" (p. 336). The future prospects for an Ireland run by the likes of these political upstarts are not encouraging.

The new Irish heroes

Looking at the grabber characters and the political upstarts in general, it is abundantly clear that their representation is incompatible with hero status. It is in fact quite remarkable how scarce new Irish heroes are in the novels by the Anglo-Irish women novelists of my study. While there are some new Irish characters who are portrayed in a sympathetic manner, as Jimmy Ryan in *An Enthusiast* undoubtedly is, they do not quite make the grade. It would seem that the terms 'new Irish' and 'hero' are mutually exclusive, and accordingly this section will be short. The most notable exception from the rule is Kerrigan in Jane Barlow's *Kerrigan's Quality* (1894) and *The Founding of Fortunes* (1902), but he needs the cooperation of Sir Ben to transform the poverty-stricken Glenore.

The land-grabbers and other new Irish characters by the Protestant Anglo-Irish novelists of my study appear in stark contrast with the new Irish characters presented by Annie M. P. Smithson, the convert to Catholicism and Nationalism. Her novel *Her Irish Heritage* (1917) is primarily set in Dublin, so there is no tension between landlords and tenants. The characters are well-educated middle-class people seen through the eyes of Clare Castlemaine, the English cousin of the Blake family. These characters have every intention of taking over the running of the country and are politically involved, albeit not on any council board.

The Blakes live in a large old-fashioned house in Rathmines, and the family constitutes a representative set of new Irish characters as seen by Smithson. The father of the household is a solicitor and a widower, devoted to his children. His eldest son, Tom, is an architect and an "intellectual [...] upright, sincere and goodliving", while Pat is a medical student and Shamus a keen Gaelic Leaguer. Mary Blake, the eldest girl of the family, is her father's right hand, the stay and support of the motherless family. There are four more girls in the family. Ursula is a very pretty girl of twenty-one, currently a teacher but about to enter the Poor Clare Order as a novice. Bride is a secretary to an influential philanthropic society and a committed social worker. She lives for her work amongst the poor and exists in a world of district visiting, free breakfasts for the poor, social clubs and committee meetings. Nora is employed as a typist in the office of a large city firm

and does her work well. The youngest in the family, Angela or Angel, is delicate from birth and suffers from a bad curvature of the spine as well as shortening of one leg. She is always cheerful and never complains. When Clare Castlemaine meets her Irish family, she is pleasantly surprised that Irish people are as admirable as her uncle and cousins. Through them she meets other equally worthy and selfless people – teachers, journalists, doctors and nurses. The majority of them are devout Catholics and/or devout Irish Nationalists.

One of the women Clare meets in the Blake household is Mary Carmichael. Clare and Mary Carmichael become close friends. Mary has done her nurse's training in London but returns to Dublin and has converted to Catholicism. Annie M. P. Smithson was herself a nurse, trained in London and Edinburgh, and the novel is undoubtedly somewhat autobiographical. Mary Carmichael and Bride Blake are both actively working to assist the sick and the poor in the slums of Dublin and they bring Clare "slumming" with them so that she will meet other people than the ones living in the prosperous and fashionable parts of the city. These people do not aspire to rise in society, and some of them live in dirt and squalor like so many of the mere Irish characters in other novels of my study. However, Clare meets with some very worthy old people too, who are humble, mannerly and grateful and who live in bare but clean rooms. They appear to be as admirable as their middle-class countrymen in the novel.

Mary's boyfriend, Dr Delaney, is initially as upstanding as the other Irish characters in the novel, although there is an indication of his untrustworthiness early on, as his politics are not as passionate as those of the others. He is prepared to accept the Home Rule that the English offer Ireland and he is proud of not being a political "extremist". It comes as no surprise when he deceives Mary and breaks off his relationship with her.

The characters in *Her Irish Heritage* have two things other than altruism in common: an interest in culture and anglophobia. When it comes to culture nearly all the young people go to concerts, the opera and the theatre. They take an active interest in the Irish language movement and seem to be fluent Irish speakers, although they are polite enough to speak English when Clare is there. Clare is half-Irish and comes to be accepted despite her English handicap, which is truly a handicap in Nationalist circles in the times when the novel is set – just before and after the 1916 Rising. The hatred for England expressed by some of the characters is palpable. Mary Carmichael does not expect anything but treachery, deceit, brutality and cruelty from the English in the aftermath of the 1916 Rising. The Irish Nationalists, however, are very different – even in the tumult of battle they are selfless gentlemen. One of Clare's cousins is shot in the Rising while selflessly trying to save a wounded comrade. Another cousin is killed by an English bullet while trying to save an Englishman.

The people Annie M. P. Smithson portrays are intelligent, good and up-

standing citizens. Their lack of flaws is conspicuous, and it seems that *Her Irish Heritage* was written with the fervour of a convert and therefore with a bias. At the same time, however, the fact that new Irish heroes are conspicuous by their absence in novels by other Anglo-Irish women novelists would seem to indicate that Ascendancy novelists were as susceptible to bias as their Catholic-convert colleague.

'The ould stock'

When the Anglo-Irish landlords found themselves competing locally with Catholic priests for political influence, they had different means at their disposal. They could give notices to quit to tenants who were not prepared to vote for the right candidate, or they could demand early payment of the rent or withdraw benefits. Another alternative was abatement for the landlord's loyal supporters. Some locals could no doubt be relied upon to vote for the landlord candidate out of deference or paternalism. However, it has been argued that 'the good old days' of deference started to go with Catholic emancipation. Later, the Land War caused irreparable damage to the relationship between landowners and the tenantry, and from then on tenants are no longer supposed to have "lifted their hats" to landlords. However, many of the Irish characters in the novels, also in those written after the Land War, have one trait in common: they are described as feeling admiration and loyalty towards the Anglo-Irish. It may well be that the Anglo-Irish novelists display a good deal of wishful thinking in this respect, although, as W. E. Vaughan points out in *Landlords and Tenants in Ireland 1848–1904,* there were no R. I. C. statistics for hat-lifting and "what little evidence there is suggests there was no revolution in manners; testimonials to landed families on occasions such as their heir's majority continued" (p. 37). It should, of course, also be remembered that not all Irish became 'new Irish' and there were many who remained 'mere Irish', as can be seen from the numbers of landless labourers which, although declining dramatically from 700,000 in 1851, was still nearly 260,000 in 1901 according to Vaughan (p. 4).

As we have already seen, the mere Irish in Jane Barlow's *Kerrigan's Quality* are critical of Kerrigan who is of mere-Irish background and full of praise for Sir Ben of 'the quality'. They would miss 'the quality' if they left Glenore again, and they take Kerrigan to task for his lack of attention to what the mere Irish consider to be the needs of the 'quality'. In fact, they go so far as to pass strictures on Kerrigan's "appalling neglect" of his tenants in the Big House. They do not think that Sir Ben and his family are treated in the manner due to them, but then what else is there to be expected from a man like Kerrigan, who "spent his days among goodness what barbarocious haytins?" To Hugh Brady "nothin' bates the idee of puttin' Quality into a place, and not so much as keepin' a horse in the stable

for them", as it is well known that they are all "superiligant riders" (p. 118). Mrs Gallaher is scandalized at the lack of facilities in the drawing-room and wants to know if anybody "hear tell of a gintleman's house widout a pianny in it" (p. 119). The mere Irish in the novel are said to take great pleasure in incidents such as a sight of his Honour out after the snipe or wild duck with his gun, or of Miss Merle in her furs and "iligant little high-heeled brogueens" or even "a respectfully distant glimpse" of her ladyship.

In *An Irish Cousin* (1889) by Somerville and Ross and in B. M. Croker's *Beyond the Pale* (1896), as well as in Catherine MacSorley's *Nora* (n. d. [1908]) and Erminda Rentoul Esler's *The Wardlaws* (1896), the mere Irish show their appreciation of their masters and their families. Willy, the Irish cousin, is celebrated by 'his people' – with a bonfire – on his twenty-fifth birthday. For Willy the event is part and parcel of being who he is, while his Canadian cousin finds the feudal scene rather exotic. Jerry in B. M. Croker's *Beyond the Pale* also gets very deferential treatment from the people. She is the impoverished last descendant of the ancient family of the O'Biernes. Denis, a visiting Englishman of Irish ancestry, falls in love with her but she is "beyond the pale" to his stepmother, because Jerry lives with a socially unacceptable stepfather. These altered circumstances do not make any difference to the mere Irish. To them Jerry will always be an O'Bierne. When Denis and Jerry take part in a stag hunt, which gets carried away to a distant village that used to belong to the O'Bierne estate in the old days, Denis comes to realize that the Irish "stick up for their old families". Jerry is treated like a princess and the successor of a great race by the villagers. Previously in the novel, Denis has encountered a similar sentiment in old Mrs O'Shea, "who in spite of her detestable Socialist ideas, was a stern aristocrat at heart" (p. 25). She has, she tells Denis, found it impossible to pardon the late Mrs O'Bierne for her misalliance with Matt Scully, and she speaks "vaingloriously" of the very bones of the old family.

Like so many other landlord families in the novels, the O'Callaghans of Rathcallaghan House in Catherine MacSorley's *Nora* have seen better days. All superfluous luxuries have had to be dropped long ago and the servants' hall, where in former days a host of men and maids had served the Family, is now empty except for Bridget and her husband Barney. This is a clear indication of the diminished status of the family. Even the houses of quite small landowners required a substantial number of servants. In his chapter on servants in *The Decline of the Big House in Ireland*, Terence Dooley points out that the number of people involved in domestic service declined by 57,000 from 211,000 to 154,000 between 1881 and 1911. These figures include city houses, lodging houses and so on, but the decline of the Big House and the landlord fortunes is a major contributory factor (p. 166). Well-trained servants were of course essential for the smooth running of a gentleman's household, but the diversity and number of servants undoubtedly

helped to enhance a landlord's reputation among his peers as well. However, a reduction in personnel became necessary in the Big Houses during times of financial crisis. Bridget and her husband are the only servants left in Rathcallaghan House in MacSorley's novel. They have to share all the work that needs to be done and they are said to be happy to do so. When they inherit a cottage and a small amount of money, it never even crosses their minds to leave service and desert their beloved Family.

Nora O'Callaghan is as impoverished as Jerry O'Bierne in B. M. Croker's *Beyond the Pale*, but while Jerry trains horses for her stepfather, Nora is forced to become a governess in an English family, the Graingers. *Nora* is hardly a governess novel as classified by Cecilia Wadsö Lecaros in *The Victorian Governess Novel*, but there are some similarities between Nora and the governesses in governess novels. Nora is the daughter of a gentleman who dies after having been forced to leave his estate. What income is left is only just sufficient for her mother, and Nora must support herself. Her only possibility of doing so is to become a governess. She herself has had an excellent governess, but she knows nothing of teaching. Like other girls in her situation, she scans the advertisements in the daily papers and puts her name down in a governess registry. However, the position, when it comes, is through one of her mother's old friends. She is not supposed to teach much but mainly assist the school-going children with their preparation and help the lady of the house write notes as well as "settle" the flowers. The reception Nora gets by Mrs Grainger is cold, and Nora is frozen "almost into dumbness by her chilly formality" (p. 110). The metaphorical use of coldness is common in governess novels and is, writes Wadsö Lecaros, a foreboding of the emotional distance between employer and governess, indicating the former's aversion to treating the governess as a lady. There is also a suggestion that the nurse in the novel regards governesses with jealous disapproval. All this *Nora* has in common with the typical governess novel; but Nora's governessing days are too short an interlude to characterize the novel.[217]

Adding to the difficulty of communication between Nora and her employer is the question of nationality; Mrs Grainger is English and her views of things are alien to Nora's. To have money, and to be known to have it, is what really matters to the English woman. However, she loves her children dearly and when her young son falls ill, it is decided that he would benefit from some fresh country air in Ireland. By coincidence the house rented by the family is Rathcallaghan House, Nora's old home. Mrs Grainger is terrified when all the villagers gather to greet them at their arrival; for a moment she thinks the people have all risen up in rebellion. However, they have all come to welcome Nora: "And, it's the joyful day that's in it to see ye back to yer own place agin! Ah, wirrasthrue, but it's lonesome

[217] Cecilia Wadsö Lecaros, *The Victorian Governess Novel* (Lund: Lund University Press, 2001), pp. 47–97, "Going a-governessing".

we are widout yez all, and widout the master – God rest him!" (p. 125). The people love Nora as they had loved her father, "with the hereditary loyalty they gave him as 'wan ov the ould shtock' and the head of the Family" (p. 11). The Family is referred to with a capital F throughout the novel. Mrs Grainger initially thinks of the Irish as "natives" and the country as a "topsy-turvy one from which civilized people had better stay away" (p. 135), but she comes "to feel a dim wish that she too could belong to the country people – 'the rale ould ginthry', as the peasants call them – and to realize that there are things in the world which money cannot buy" (p. 155). Mrs Grainger realizes that Nora is indeed a lady.

When the news spreads that Margery Wardlaw in *The Wardlaws* by Erminda Rentoul Esler is going to remove the frontage of the best parlour in her house to make way for a shop front and a window, the shock that goes through the village strikes Wardlands dumb. "It will make the Wardlaws turn in their graves", seems to be the general consensus. When someone makes the suggestion, "with a suavity that was possibly meant to be offensive", that young John may be of some help to his sister in her venture, the reaction is even more outraged at the thought of the old stock demeaning itself to such an extent. "John, indeed! To think of dhurt like you takin' the name of Masther John Wardlaw into ye're mouth, like that! Masther John is a gintleman. The raal stock through an' through, an' he's goin' to restore the fam'ly – " (p. 4). Much the same sentiment, and in similar terms, is expressed by another mere-Irish woman, Nancy, who is heartbroken to "think o' the owld race o'them bein' brought to this" (p. 106). The Wardlaw family is of such a distinguished and ancient stock that the reaction of the people in the district is said to be exactly as if Queen Victoria were to establish a stall on London Bridge and personally start to traffic in oranges and peppermints (p. 5). No matter how poor the old stock has become, it is still venerated. Margery and John have two servants, Mary McSwine and McCallum, who are as faithful as Bridget and Barney in Catherine MacSorley's *Nora*.

In a late Somerville and Ross novel, *An Enthusiast* (1920), there is still some feeling expressed for the local landlord family by the people. The Colonel's son, Dan Palliser, is a modern young man, but he takes comfort in the fact that some things remain the same. When, at his father's funeral at the very beginning of the novel, the tenant-women raise the caoine, he is pleased to think that the old stock still matters to them. Dan will soon come to realize that things are changing rapidly in Ireland. The lament for the dead Colonel could be seen to apply not only to him but to his era.

However, it is not only the mere Irish who show admiration for and loyalty to the Anglo-Irish. Magrath, the new Irishman in Ella MacMahon's *The Job* (1914), likes to have the glory of the Anglo-Irish reflecting on himself. He thinks of himself as different from other men of his class and likes to identify with Sir Thady as a "man of the world [...] with a stake in the country" (p. 233).

Dr Mangan in Somerville and Ross's *Mount Music* (1919) is another new Irishman who likes to associate with the Anglo-Irish. He is an astute grabber and has improved his financial position substantially. However, money cannot buy social standing and Dr Mangan is not quite satisfied with where he is. He would like his family to rise socially and sees an opportunity of marriage into the gentry. His plans for his daughter to marry Larry, the Major's nephew and a landlord of Coppinger's Court in his own right, would have succeeded had his daughter not eloped with her lover before her planned wedding to Larry. By calling in his debts from the Major and acquiring the title deeds of Mount Music, Dr Mangan hopes to force a union between his son and Christian, the Major's daughter. A terrible storm and a flood put a stop to this aspiration. His dead body is, ironically, brought down by the water to the boathouse of Mount Music, where it is found by old Evans, the butler. "Well, ye wanted Mount Music!" he says to the body of Dr Mangan, whom he has always despised and even hated. "How d'ye like it now ye've got it?"(p. 297).

In *The Big House of Inver* (1915) by Somerville and Ross, marriage is again seen as a possibility to advance socially. Interestingly, it is not Peggy's father but her grandfather who would like to see his granddaughter further elevated in society by a marriage to one of the old landed gentry of Ireland, even though, as the narrator makes sure to add, "the qualifying adjective was, in 1912, not often based on more than such lands as were comprised in their flower-gardens" (p. 72). Kit Prendeville does not even seem to have much of a flower garden, but he is 'old stock' and old John Weldon, the grabber, would like to see him married to his granddaughter so that the demesne lands and the Prendeville family come together again. He has written his will to make it possible and talks it over with Kit's half-sister, Shibby Pindy, who is very much in favour of the scheme. She assures him that the young people are "in bonds". Old John is thrilled at the thought of the Weldons rising to such social heights. "Begad, but that's the best news I heard yet![...].My God! When I thinks of the Old Madam, that was Miss Moore of Gurtha, and no better in Ireland! And me father, Mick, that was her servant! By gosh, it's like a meracle to me that I should live to hear the like!" (p. 213).

Peggy, with her English and French education, is proud of herself and initially looks upon Kit as a country boy with a brogue, but he is long, lithe, golden-haired and so like the portrait of Beauty Kit in the Big House that she overlooks the fact that he speaks as badly as her own father. She and Kit get on very well together and she cannot help wanting him as a husband instead of the *nouveau riche* Sir Harold Burgrave from England who is favoured by her parents. However, when Young John and Mrs Weldon are told by Connor from the village that "in the first place", Kit has been a party to a shameful piece of swindling at the Clytagh Races and that "in the second place", Kit has seduced Maggie Connor, Young John is vehement that he will never let "a dissolute young ruffian" like Kit

marry his daughter. Conversely, Old John, still bound by feudal ideas, excuses Kit's behaviour: "And why shouldn't he plaze himself when he's young! He's the finest young man in this country and you may be the proud man the day he marries your daughter!" (p. 218). Encouraged by his half-sister, Kit gives Peggy a ring, a Prendeville heirloom, that has somehow survived the vicissitudes of fortune, but Peggy breaks 'the engagement' when Maggie Connor tells her that she is carrying Kit's child. In an effort to persuade Peggy to change her mind, Kit sends her a letter. It is badly written and so full of spelling mistakes that all Peggy can think of is that she must not let her mother see it.

Peggy and Kit are pawns played by Old John and Shibby Pindy. These two are working hard to make their plan materialize. Shibby refuses to give up when the ring is sent back and makes alternative plans. She has confidence in Kit's ability to persuade Peggy when he sees her in person. In the meantime she arranges for the Connor family to go to America, but it does not work according to plans. Finding the desperate Maggie Connor down at the water, seemingly about to drown herself, Shibby tries to hold on to her for a while; but she loses her hold and Maggie slips away. Shibby does not know whether her strong hands voluntarily let go or whether the strain was too much for them. The scene is similar to two others in Somerville and Ross novels: *Naboth's Vineyard*, when Mrs Donovan chooses not to save her husband from drowning, and *The Real Charlotte*, where Charlotte's priority is not to save Mrs Lambert's life but to satisfy her own needs.

Some time later Peggy realizes that she has made a mistake in considering Maggie Connor's boyfriend as a possible match for herself. She is ready to accept the proposal from Sir Harold. Old John is dead and no longer there to prevent this, in his view, undesirable match. Peggy's parents are delighted. To them Kit's lineage is of less importance than Sir Harold's money. Sir Harold buys the Big House of Inver to go with the demesne lands and the £12,000 that Peggy has inherited from her grandfather. The Prendevilles, with no demesne and no house, seem without a future while the Weldons have surpassed them in all but name. The merger between the new Irish and 'the ould stock' does not happen; decadence has been defeated by vulgarity. The younger generation has proved to be less nostalgic and less impressed by 'the ould stock' than Old John.

Charlotte Mullen in Somerville and Ross's *The Real Charlotte* is on her best behaviour when associating with the Anglo-Irish Dysarts. Like Dr Mangan in *Mount Music* and Old John in *The Big House of Inver,* Charlotte's schemes to claw herself up in society include being family with the gentry. The idea of being a "cousin" of Christopher Dysart is most appealing to her. Francie, Charlotte's cousin once removed, is a charming if slightly vulgar girl who is popular with all the men in the neighbourhood, and Charlotte plans for her to become young Mrs Dysart. Charlotte arranges to go away for a couple of days and persuades

Mrs Dysart to take Francie home to Bruff in her absence. Francie makes more than a few social mistakes but despite thinking her "inexpressibly vulgar" (p. 53), Christopher finds himself falling in love with her and proposes at a later stage. However, his proposal is rejected as Francie is in love with a young soldier. Again, it would seem that the younger generation is less impressed with the glory of 'the ould stock' than the older people.

In his study of the Irish landed families in Ireland 1860–1960, Terence Dooley looks, among other things, at their marriage patterns and concludes that the maintenance of social status was of utmost concern to them when contemplating marriage (pp. 64–70). Marriage to a member of a neighbouring landed family was not uncommon for, as Edith Somerville put it in *Irish Memories*, "to love your neighbour – or, at all events to marry her – was almost inevitable when matches were a matter of mileage, and marriages might have been said to have been made by the map" (p. 61). When transportation improved during the latter part of the nineteenth century, it became easier to attend social events in Dublin and London. The Dublin ball season lasted for about six weeks from the end of January, but many of the wealthiest landlords and their families attended the London season too, lasting from May to the end of July, and therefore almost providing an extension of the Dublin season. Victorian London was regarded as the Mecca for matchmaking. However, while geographical barriers had diminished the social barriers remained. Of Terence Dooley's sample of 159 peers (drawn from 100 sample families) who owned Irish estates and who married between 1850 and 1914, sixty per cent married daughters of peers, almost three-quarters of whom were English. Of the remainder, just over thirty per cent married into either Irish or English untitled, predominantly large, landowner families. The marriage patterns of younger sons and daughters showed a similar inclination to marry within one's own class, and untitled landowners placed just as much emphasis on social standing as titled ones (p. 67). The fact is that members of the landed class rarely married outside their class, and marriage was a way of maintaining its tightly knit and exclusive nature. Although some mixed-class marriages did take place, there is no doubt that they were quite rare in late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century Ireland. The novels of my study reflect this. The fact that the fictional marriages are not carried through for a variety of reasons – including refusal by the younger new Irish – does not alter the fact that none of the mixed-class marriages contemplated in *Mount Music, The Big House of Inver* and *The Real Charlotte* materializes. However, the novels indicate that marriage to one of 'the ould stock' is seen as a way of social advancement by the older 'new Irish' generation, even though the family name is all that is on offer. The mere Irish generally exude boundless adoration and admiration for their Family, 'the ould stock'.

As we have seen in chapter 3, under the subheading "The Anglo-Irish", the

frequent genealogies listed for some of the Anglo-Irish families in the novels, as well as the concern about family background expressed by, for example, Lady Naylor in Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September* (1929), would seem to indicate that pride in the local gentry family is something that the mere Irish and the Anglo-Irish characters have in common.

Apart from Smithson's characters and some other notable exceptions, such as Jimmy Ryan in *An Enthusiast*, Kerrigan in *Kerrigan's Quality* and *The Founding of Fortunes* and Rick O'Grady in *Naboth's Vineyard,* the new Irish characters in the novels by the Anglo-Irish novelists of my study are unpleasant, being ruthless as well as dishonest. Annie M. P. Smithson's remarkably flawless new-Irish characters are seen with a bias different from that of the Anglo-Irish novelists. It is interesting to note that of the other three exceptions to the rule of the new Irish being despicable characters in the novels, two have been away from Ireland for a long time – Kerrigan in Australia and Rick O'Grady in America – and have therefore been removed from the local politics of the day.

It is quite obvious that the new Irish as portrayed in the novels I have studied are not considered in any way worthy of their new position in which they run the estates that used to belong to the Anglo-Irish and look after local affairs. While some of these characters do not achieve their ultimate goal when it comes to climbing the social ladder and gaining influence – Dr Mangan in *Mount Music* and Donovan in *Naboth's Vineyard* both meet with accidental deaths – they usually end up temporary winners in the power struggles that take place. It is apparent that the new Irish have the upper hand in many situations, and it is equally clear that the Anglo-Irish are losers. Dan in *An Enthusiast* loses his life; some have lost or lose their position and power, and some have to leave their estates. Sir Ben, who co-operates with one of the new Irish, Kerrigan, in Barlow's novels, is one of few who seem to have a reasonably secure future. The novels express a great deal of pessimism and resignation as to the role of the Anglo-Irish in Ireland when the country is taken over by the generally morally corrupt new-Irish characters. They all seem to speak with Miss Kate de Vere in Somerville and Ross's *An Enthusiast* when she claims that "[t]he honest men fall out and the rogues come by their own – that is the honest men's own" (p. 151).

Conclusion

In *Inventing Ireland*, Declan Kiberd asks the pertinent question: who invented Ireland?[218] The most obvious answer would seem to be: the Irish. However, there is no doubt that the English helped invent Ireland. If England had never existed, writes Kiberd, the Irish would have been rather lonely. Each nation badly needed the other, if only for the purpose of defining itself. *Inventing Ireland* begins with an outline of the Anglo-Irish anti-thesis as a "slot-rolling mechanism" devised by the English. Anglo-Irish writers such as Oscar Wilde and Bernard Shaw offered a more inclusive philosophy against these either-or polarities, as did W. B. Yeats and many others. Irishmen and Irishwomen of this generation, continues Kiberd, took Nietzsche at his word when he said that those who are without a good father are compelled to go out and invent one, and they reinvented the Irish past in much the same way as they reinvented parents. This contributed to the introduction of a sharper focus in the debate on national identity; and at the level of practical politics, singular versions of identity came to be occupied by 'green' and 'orange' essentialists – eventually resulting in a divided Ireland.

The strongest bond interconnecting Anglo-Irish writers was their sense of a conflicted social and personal identity. It may have been felt differently by each individual, but the feeling was always there. The Anglo-Irish tradition is represented by people such as William Molyneux (1656–98), George Berkeley (1635–1753) and Jonathan Swift (1667–1745), the creators of modern Ireland according to W. B. Yeats. These men were, however, only the beginning of a tradition that also has a middle and an end. The hope of those at the end of the tradition, such as W. B. Yeats himself, was undoubtedly that some Anglo-Irish values would survive and be transmitted into the new, 'green' Ireland.

I have reviewed a great number of novels by Anglo-Irish women from the late period, novels which have – with few exceptions – attracted little attention from contemporary and modern literary critics. There are several possible reasons for this neglect: one is the difficulty associated with finding the relevant material, another is the fact that Anglo-Irish women novelists did not rate high on a research agenda which was increasingly concerned with 'green' Ireland. In the Free State, Catholicism officially became an essential strand of cultural nationalism, and it followed that the cultural nationalism of Protestants began to look like cultural

[218] Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1995), pp. 1–7.

unionism. However, it cannot be denied that there is a third and equally valid reason for the scant interest in the literature of the Protestant women novelists of the period: most of it is minor literature in which so-called literary qualities are rarely much in evidence. Minor literature undoubtedly invites a different kind of reading than major works, the kind of reading that is necessary for a study of this nature. Literary analysis is generally superfluous – a reason for my neglect of it here – but the very lack of artistry in the novels reveals Anglo-Irish traits more nakedly than if the books had been written by greater novelists. These traits are spontaneous expressions of a sensibility whose clearly visible political and sociological features may sometimes be objectionable to a present-day reader. At times these novels display some patronizing arrogance. However, arrogance alone does not characterize them. A wide spectrum of feelings and views are expressed, all of which have their roles to play in the fictional history of the period.

As I explained in my Introduction, I do not distinguish between different strands of Anglo-Irishness. My main focus is on the literature and on the society with which it interacted. Because of the vastness of the material, I have limited my discussion to certain issues that were topical at the time of writing. These issues were, however, more than topical; they were controversial too, as well as decisive for the future direction of Ireland. Religious affiliation and race separated the Protestant Anglo-Irish novelists from their countrymen, the Irish. To whom did the land belong – the Anglo-Irish landlords or the Irish tenants? In dealing with these and related issues, the novelists attempted to write themselves into a relationship with their country as a way of affirming their identity. In *Catholic Fiction and Social Reality 1873–1922*, James H. Murphy points out that Catholic upper-middle-class fiction was written in part to make a case, to answer objections and to stake a claim (pp. 149–50). This to a large extent applies to the writers of my study, too. The flaw of the writers from the Catholic upper-middle class was that, as Murphy sees it, they had a capacity for self-delusion about the leading role they did not play in Irish society. Again, this is certainly true of a number of Protestant women novelists as well. When it comes to what Murphy terms the Catholic intelligentsia writers – whether they were journalists, teachers, writers or priests, or belonged to other professions – they were all convinced of the need for "modernisation, education, individual freedom, a liberal spirit in society, and a critical stance with respect to current Irish realities" (p. 89). They saw themselves as being involved in a debate about the future shape of the new Ireland, and this debate took place not only among themselves but also between them and Catholic Ireland. Most of the intelligentsia writers eventually became frustrated at the lack of response from the Church. Catholic Ireland neither needed nor wanted debate. It withdrew into itself and consolidated its position. As time went by, intelligentsia writers tended to become increasingly pessimistic about the possibilities of a new Ireland (pp. 143, 134). It cannot be denied that the Protestant

women novelists shared that pessimism, as can be seen in their portrayal of the new Irish; see Chapter 4 in the present study.

As it turned out, the pessimism was not without foundation. Irish history of the period culminated in the achievement of political independence, and the possibility of cultural and literary history developing a celebratory sense of liberation would not have seemed far-fetched at the time. Instead of responding to political home rule with increased liberalism, however, the Free State enforced a very narrow kind of nationalism. For the ruling Free Staters, to be Irish meant being Catholic, Gaelic and sexually pure. The 1937 constitution mirrored these values and was not characterized by affirmations of individual liberties, but rather by restrictions on every freedom it granted. The Censorship of Publications Act introduced in 1929 resulted in a considerable number of books being banned during the 1930s and 1940s. Many novelists became oppressed and alienated by "the difficulties of writing in a country where the policeman and the priest are in a perpetual glow of satisfaction".[219] Nevertheless, according to James Cahalan in *The Irish Novel*, there are novelists of the period whose works constitute an impressive achievement. A new generation of women novelists emerged – Elizabeth Bowen, Molly Keane (M. J. Farrell), Kathleen Coyle, Kate O'Brien, Maura Laverty – who focused on Ascendancy and middle-class Irish life, continuing a tradition of realism in line with Maria Edgeworth, Emily Lawless and Somerville and Ross. Edith Somerville continued writing during the early part of this period, and Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September* (1929) is included in my study because of its earlier setting; even though Bowen is a contemporary of the younger women. Somerville and Bowen thus form a bridge between the times before and after 1922.

Despite the similarities between the Protestant women novelists and the two groups of Catholic writers in Ireland mentioned above, the novelists and novels of my study are clearly part of the Anglo-Irish tradition – the end or, as time went by, the postmortem part of it. The issue at stake was no longer holding power, but increasingly making amends and attempting reconciliation. It goes without saying that even though all the writers are Protestant Anglo-Irish women novelists, there are substantial differences between them (see Introduction, "The Novelists"). Even between two writers of very similar background and age, Edith Somerville and Emily Lawless, both spinsters, the difference in their way of negotiating is obvious. One thing they have in common is their unquestionable love of Ireland. However, Edith Somerville does not avoid tackling current Ireland, while Emily Lawless chooses to write about the west of Ireland where the Irish are still mere Irish. Edith Somerville adapted quite well to the changing

[219] Sean O'Faolain. Quoted in Cahalan, *The Irish Novel*, p. 181.

circumstances; Emily Lawless settled and died in England before Ireland became independent.

In *The Irish Novel*, James Cahalan agrees with Thomas Flanagan's view that the Irish novel of the beginning and middle of the nineteenth century "can be termed a kind of advocacy before the bar of the English opinion".[220] Times were changing. A number of Anglo-Irish novels written during the last two decades of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century give the impression of being apologias in two directions. Several novels make a seemingly deliberate effort to be impartial and avoid placing themselves firmly on either the English or the Irish side. A certain amount of negotiation and exchange takes place, a process not without inherent dangers. In the Preface to *An Enthusiast* by Somerville and Ross, the difficulties encountered by 'neutral' Irishmen are clearly delineated:

> There is something arrogant, if not offensive, in an attitude of Impartiality, and to be strictly impartial is to be equally disliked by all sides. In trying to keep an even keel in very stormy seas I have risked this disaster.
>
> The people in this story all view Ireland from different angles, and each speaks for him or herself, and not for me.
>
> On one point only are we all agreed – in love for the country that bore us, that ardent country in which the cold virtue of Impartiality is practically unknown. (May, 1921. E. Œ. S.)

In general, the Anglo-Irish characters in the novels do not identify with either an English or an Irish nationality. They seem to prefer to be a bit of both. To revert to the questions in my introduction: To what extent did the hyphen in Anglo-Irish remain intact? Did it in fact become a minus sign and if so, which side of it was reduced – 'Anglo' or 'Irish'? The impression I formed when reading the fifty novels of my study is that it is the Anglo part that tends to suffer. However, the dialogue discernible in the novels does not hide the pain of giving up and letting go of the past. In *The Study of Celtic Literature*, Matthew Arnold indicates that "the steady humdrum habit of the creeping Saxon" is better off commingled with "the sentimental Celtic temperament" (pp. 92–93), and it would seem that the Anglo-Irish see themselves as the racial mixture preferable to the pure Celt or Anglo-Saxon. They are a race apart – more comfortable while crossing the Channel than at either side of it. Ireland is without doubt their country, but it is not always their nation. Many Protestant Big-House owners left the twenty-six counties, even if their houses were left standing. Their friends had left, and they were driven away by intimidation and the disappearance of the landlord culture. For those who remained in Ireland, integration into the political and social main-

[220] Thomas Flanagan, *The Irish Novelists, 1800–1850* (New York: Columbia UP, 1958), p. 38. Cahalan, *The Irish Novel*, p. 37.

stream was difficult. Most families continued to keep one foot in Ireland and the other in Britain. This did not facilitate integration into either country.

One might ask how important it is to search out and read the novels by these generally forgotten Protestant women writers. Can we learn anything from reading them? It is my conviction that we can, and that it is now opportune to do so. Ireland has come of age and is today developing into a multi-cultural society. In it, there is surely room for the history of the works by Protestant women novelists. I hope that further research will follow and also involve the male novelists of the period, many of whom retreated into fantasy while the women remained devoted to the realist mode, albeit one that often incorporated romantic elements. Despite their modest literary virtues, these books raise sensitive issues whose enduring pertinence is felt in present-day Ireland. After long silence, it seems proper that their voices should be heard in the massive and multifarious chorus of Irish identity.

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This study deals with an area of Anglo-Irish literature neglected by present-day researchers: novels written by Protestant women from 1879 to 1922, at a time when the position of the previously dominant Protestant Anglo-Irish was transformed by the strikingly different nation which was developing around them. The outline of the study reflects the areas of contention: the four chapters – 'Land and Politics', 'Religion','Race', 'The New Irish and the Ould Stock' – deal with issues that were topical at the time.

The novels' plots and characters were generally invented; but behind the story they present, there is another narrative which keeps interfering with the reading. This second narrative is, of course, 'history'. Immensely popular in their day, the novels make interesting observations on contemporary events and deserve to be acknowledged for the important contribution they make to the history of this eventful period.

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Distribution and sales
Almqvist & Wiksell International
P.O. Box 7634
SE-103 94 STOCKHOLM Sweden

ISSN 0076-1451 ISBN 91-974023-5-4

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ISSN 0076-1451

ISBN 91-974023-5-4