

SPIRITUAL TYRANNY?: AN EXAMINATION OF POST-FAMINE CLERICAL  
INFLUENCE IN THE LOUGH MASK REGION

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## ABSTRACT

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Doctoral Dissertation by

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Local parish priests played a critical role in manipulating violence and agitation in the area surrounding Lough Mask (Counties Galway and Mayo) during the immediate Post-Famine era. Irish Catholic Church history and the evolution of the role of Irish clergy are presented as they are critical to recognizing the political and spiritual leadership of parish priests. Similarly, significant historical background is provided to highlight the political complexities and the tradition of rebellion in Pre- and Post-Famine Ireland. The contextual backdrop for the examination of such clerical manipulation is focused upon the Mayo Elections of 1852 and 1857, the Galway Election of 1872, and the Irish Land War. The aforementioned elections highlight mob behaviors and the behavioral actions of two local priests, Fr. Peter Conway and Fr. Patrick Lavelle. These behaviors are analyzed using sociological and psychological lenses. The Irish Land War provides a rich milieu for the study of the relationship between spiritual and secular leadership. As such, clerical leaders will be juxtaposed with the secular leadership of the Land League as the two groups, in some ways, became enmeshed during the Land War. Arguably, as the Land League's influence waned in the Lough Mask region, clerical influence waxed. This negative correlation is illustrated by the Land League Branch

President, Fr. John O'Malley's management of the Boycott affair, actions of warring parish priests (Fr. Patrick Lavelle and Fr. Walter Conway), and clerical connections to Lough Mask agrarian murders.

For my daughters, Julia Elizabeth and Sara Catherine --

*Always trust the strength that lies within you.*

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T. R. HANDERHAN



## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION

Historically, in Ireland as in many other countries, the measure of wealth and power has been directly correlated to the amount of land possessed. During the 1800s, the issue of land possession served as the impetus for a century laden with uprisings, famine, and movement towards unification. In *A New History of Ireland*, Christine Kinealy writes:

[T]here were approximately 20 million acres of land in Ireland, and by 1881 it was owned by fewer than 20,000 people: only 750 men owned half of the land, while the ten largest landowners owned 1 million acres. With few exceptions, the largest landowners were Anglican, Anglo-Irish and unionist. (175)

In the late 1870s, the land question literally exploded. Tenants were no longer tolerating a landlord system that precluded the masses from the security of their own holdings. This movement was a clear departure from the generational uprisings of the past. Between 1879 and 1882, the tenants declared a war of sorts on their landlords and respective governmental structures. Although the agitation, unrest and violence was evident throughout Ireland, the West served as the background for some of the most noteworthy examples of agrarian agitation and violence. Arguably, this disproportionate

violence can be attributed to regional clerical influence. The western province of Connacht's clergy was predominantly nationalist in ideology. In the years preceding the Irish Land War, this political view was cultivated by the Most Reverend John MacHale, Archbishop of Tuam (MacHale served as Archbishop of Tuam from 1834-1881). As such, most Connacht priests were not only spiritual leaders, but patriots as well. The resulting, synergistic effect of these "patriot priests" and their participation in secular collective action intensified the momentum of the Land War.

Research of the Connacht region in the west of Ireland reveals an area of particular interest during the Land War. The Lough Mask region bordering Counties Galway and Mayo, is arguably one of the most picturesque and tranquil areas in Ireland. The shores of Lough Mask and Lough Corrib provide an ideal setting for sports fishing, movie making (film location of *The Quiet Man*), and vacationing for the well-to-do (home of the former Guinness estate *Ashford Castle*). However, during the Land War this exact location could not be described as tranquil. In *Sixty Years of a Soldier's Life*, Major-General Sir Alfred E. Turner recalls, "[T]his district. . . bore a very sinister reputation at that time" (61).

In the midst of the "boycott," on September 25, 1880, Lord Mountmorres of County Galway was assassinated. An exhaustive investigation ensued rounding up numerous suspects such as Patrick Sweeney, one of Lord Mountmorres' herders. Patrick Sweeney believed his rent was reconciled by herding for Mountmorres ("Murder of Lord" 6). According to the *Freeman's Journal*, Mountmorres disagreed with this understanding as he did not perceive Sweeney to be a tenant ("Murder of Lord" 6). This

matter was handled in the local court and the court upheld Mountmorres' position ("Murder of Lord" 6). The matter was under appeal; this appeal was financed by the Land League ("Murder of Lord" 6). In a news account of the event in the *Freeman's Journal*, the reporter writes:

Just before reaching the scene of the murder, I was overtaken by the Rev. Father Conway, Curate of Clonbur, the parish in which the deceased lived. The priest, who has made himself very conspicuous among those who are agitating for a reform of Land Laws, very willingly dismounted at the spot where the deceased fell and gave his opinions freely as to the cause of the crime. ("Murder of Lord" 6)

Rev. Father Walter Conway of Clonbur enthusiastically defended Patrick Sweeney stating "I know he is no way versed in the use of a rifle. . .he is a simple-minded man, while the spot selected for the commission of this crime indicates a well-learned lesson" ("Murder of Lord" 6). Conway also shared with the journalist that "he had personally appealed to the deceased nobleman not to enforce his decree of eviction; 'but,' he said, 'my efforts in this respect had no avail'" ("Murder of Lord" 6).

Bailiff Joseph Huddy and his grandson John Huddy, both of Creevagh, set out at nine o'clock in the morning on January 3, 1882 to serve rent processes on the behalf of Lord Ardilaun of Ashford Castle (Lord Ardilaun, also known as Sir Arthur Guinness of the famed Guinness family) ("Lough" 10). Bailiff Joseph Huddy, "occupied the post of

bailiff on the estate for forty years, having acted in that capacity for the former for many years before the lands became the property of Lord Ardilaun" ("Lough" 10). The grandfather and his seventeen-year-old grandson traveled along the lakeside, on a country road towards the village of Clonbur; the same road taken by Lord Mountmorres ("Lough" 10). The Huddys never returned to their modest home in Creevagh. They were brutally murdered, bagged and wrapped, weighted with stones, and thrown in the middle of Lough Mask ("Lough" 10).

At first glance the motive of the Huddy Murders could be simply assigned to the violence associated with the Land War. However, beneath the surface there lies a pre-murder point of interest regarding a rather vocal priest from Clonbur. In October 1881, Father Walter Conway, parish priest of Clonbur, was sentenced to two months imprisonment, including hard labor, for assaulting Bailiff James McGrath as he served Conway with a "writ at the suit of Lord Ardilaun" ("Case of the Rev. Mr. Conway, Clonbur" 5; "Chancery Division" 2; "Present" 2).

It is curious that when the Mountmorres and Huddy cases are compared, there is a recurring character in the reporting of the aforementioned murders -- Father Walter Conway of Clonbur. Father Conway is worthy of examination. At first blush, it appears his leadership was not limited to the spiritual sense. Arguably, during the agrarian conflict, Father Conway was a political leader.

In "Church, State, and Nation in Modern Ireland," Irish Catholic Church historian Emmet Larkin contends, "In a word, the Church [Roman Catholic] does not exist independently of the Irish political system, but it is one of the basic elements in that

system." (1244). Politicization permeates each level of the Irish Catholic vertical hierarchy (parish priest, bishop, archbishop, etc.). In nineteenth-century Ireland, some factions of this political machine rebelled against Rome by prioritizing nationalist ideals over hierarchical demands. In the years leading up to the Great Famine, "the majority of the Irish hierarchy and the great body of the subordinate clergy threw themselves into a campaign whose objects were professedly extra-religious and politically radical, and which Rome and Westminster alike opposed" (MacDonagh, "Politicization" 38).

In the years following the Great Famine, church attendance escalated. "By 1870, it is estimated that regular attendance at mass had risen from a pre-famine level of 33 percent of the population to over 90 percent" (Taylor 703). With a population desperate for divine intervention to stave off famine flocking to weekly mass, the local parish priests found themselves to be the natural leaders of the masses and often the voices of the oppressed. In rural Connacht, the local parish priests were literally the voice of the oppressed as Irish was often the sole language of the peasantry (Wolf 68, 77).

Unfortunately, pragmatically speaking, "[T]he Irish-speaking poor were disconnected from the institutions of state" on account of the language barrier (O'Connell 16). Rural priests were usually the most schooled in the area and as such often served as a conduit between the English-speaking world and their Irish-speaking parishioners. Consequently, content was dependent upon the priests' translations.

Sociologist Anne E. Kane in "Theorizing Meaning and Construction in Social Movements: Symbolic Structures and Interpretation during the Irish Land War, 1879-1882," views:

movement organizations and leaders as the primary meaning makers, able to mobilize people through strategically manipulated cultural resources around predetermined goals. . . formulation of movement ideology, goals, and strategies-does not just happen 'at the top' and then get handed down. . . meaning construction is a multi-path process between movement leaders and participants. (254-255)

As such, mass mobilization through strategic manipulation requires hands-on leadership. Arguably, in Pre-Famine Ireland, parish priests were the natural, and expected hands-on leaders of their parish. As previously discussed, this leadership extended beyond spiritual guidance as many local parish priests became secular political advisors. But as the Post-Famine years progressed, the assumed head leadership position was challenged as another influential body emerged.

The tradition of oath-bound, secret societies morphed following the Great Famine. These organizations evolved from colloquial, sporadic, local assemblies (i.e. Whiteboys, Rightboys, Oak Boys, Steel Boys, Defenders, and Ribbon Societies) to an international network (i.e. Irish Republican Brotherhood and Fenian Brotherhood, both established in 1858.). As the I.R.B. gained momentum, the leadership position of local parish priests could no longer be taken for granted (Larkin, *Historical* 108). Dissenting views regarding this leadership tension exacerbated the chasm within the Irish Catholic hierarchy. This dissention manifested into regionally, inconsistent tolerance of secret

society activity. This regional inconsistency contributed to an increasing culture of violence in the Lough Mask region.

The forthcoming pages will examine the critical role local parish priests played in manipulating the violence and agitation in the area surrounding Lough Mask during the immediate Post-Famine era. The contextual backdrop for the examination of such clerical manipulation will be the Mayo Elections of 1852 and 1857, the Galway Election of 1872, and the Irish Land War. Clerical leaders will be juxtaposed with the secular leadership of the Land League as the two groups, in some ways, became enmeshed during the Land War.

A thorough understanding of the evolving role of Irish clergy and the Irish Catholic Church is critical to recognizing the political leadership of parish priests. Similarly, significant historical background is necessary to fully understand the political complexities and the tradition of rebellion in Pre- and Post-Famine Ireland. In addition to providing significant historical context, an examination of equivalent breadth of Irish Catholicism is presented.

One volume historical chronologies such as Christine Kinealy's *A New History of Ireland* and T.W. Moody and F.X. Martin's *The Course of Irish History* serve as the contextual foundation for this project. Primary source Post-Famine research, including the Irish Land War, is rooted in many installments of the *Agricultural Statistics in Ireland*, *Emigration Statistics*, *Hansard's Parliamentary Papers*, and the *Report of the Trial of the Queen Against Charles Stewart Parnell et al for Conspiracy*. Additional Post-Famine research encompasses Joseph Lee's *The Modernisation of Irish Society*,

1848-1918, Maurice Moore's *An Irish Gentleman: George Henry Moore*, Michael Davitt's *The Fall of Feudalism*, Desmond Ryan's *Fenian Chief*, John Devoy's *Recollections of an Irish Rebel*, T.W. Moody's *Davitt and the Irish Revolution, 1846-82*, D. B. Cashman's *The Life of Michael Davitt, with a History of the Rise and Development of the Irish National League*, Joan Haslip's *Parnell: A Biography*, R. Barry O'Brien's *The Life of Charles Stewart Parnell, 1846-1891*, Cruise O'Brien's *Parnell and His Party*, and William O'Brien's *Recollections*.

Regional scholarship is gathered from *Minutes of Evidence Taken before the Select Committee on the Mayo Election Petitions of 1853 and 1857*, and *Minutes of Evidence Taken at the Trial of the Galway County Election Petition of 1872*. It is also gathered from Donald E. Jordan, Jr.'s *Land and Popular Politics in Ireland: County Mayo from the Plantation to the Land War* and "John O'Connor Power, Charles Stewart Parnell and the Centralisation of Popular Politics in Ireland"; Gerard Moran's *A Radical Priest in Mayo* and "James Daly and the Rise and Fall of the Land League in the West of Ireland, 1879-1882"; Father Jarlath Waldron's *Maamtrasna: The Murders and the Mystery*; and from local archived periodicals such as the *Nation* and the *Freeman's Journal*. Irish events and happenings also documented through the *New York Times* and the *Times*.

Irish Catholic Church history and politics research is acquired from the work of Emmet Larkin through scholarly articles such as: "Church, State, and Nation in Modern Ireland," "Church and State in Ireland in the Nineteenth Century," "The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850-1875," and "Socialism and Catholicism in Ireland."



Additional Irish Catholic scholarship is extracted from Lawrence J. Taylor's "The Priest and the Agent: Social Drama and Class Consciousness in the West of Ireland"; Nicholas Atkin and Frank Tallett's *Priests, Prelates, and People: A History of European Catholicism Since 1750*; and Michael P. Carroll's *Irish Pilgrimage* and "Rethinking Popular Catholicism in Pre-Famine Ireland."

Scholarly writings pertaining to theories of sociological collective action and social movement such as Samuel Clark's *Social Origins of the Irish Land War* and "The Importance of Agrarian Classes: Agrarian Class Structure and Collective Action in Nineteenth-Century Ireland," Anne E. Kane's "Theorizing Meaning Construction in Social Movements: Symbolic Structures and Interpretation During the Irish Land War," and Gregory S. Kavka's "Rule By Fear" influence this work.

The sources listed above do not constitute an exhaustive list. The content and ideas found within the aforementioned titles contributed greatly to this project and facilitated further detailed research.

In general, late nineteenth-century books regarding this aspect of Irish History are written in the "revisionist" style. Books written during the Land War years often project a pro-English sentiment. An example of such skewed words is "The Land League advocates have been, and still are, much to blame for the foul crimes to the committal of which they have incited lawless portion of the people. They are responsible for the blood-besmeared history of that unfortunate land" (*Mysteries* 159). Revisionist words served as propaganda to marginalize the Irish and the nationalist efforts. (In this instance,

the term "revisionist" does not refer to the revisionist history debates spanning 1930s-1960s.)

Secondary resources serve as a springboard for acquiring names and events for extended research. The use of primary documentation is paramount in presenting as unbiased and cogent argument as possible. However, it is recognized that considerable primary and secondary documentation available during this time period is inherently skewed towards either the nationalist or unionist point of view. In an effort to achieve a theoretically balanced perspective, sources from both camps are examined. In addition to in-depth review of scholarly texts, the heart of this research is based in review and analysis of archived Irish, American, and British periodicals: memoirs, published letters, and commission reports. This compilation of research provides extensive historical, political, and religious back-story necessary to fully examine the aforementioned murders along with other crimes within the discussed locale.

The chapter following this introduction, *History Interrupted: Invasion, Subjugation, and Starvation* provides essential historical background beginning with the Norman invasion and concluding with the Great Famine. The next chapter, *Irish Catholicism: Evolution and Politicization*, details the unique brand of Irish Catholicism. Celtic-pagan influences and rituals will be discussed, as well as the transition to Roman doctrine. The political climate of the Irish Catholic hierarchy will also be explored. In *Post-Famine Ireland: Emigration and Reinvention*, an in-depth study of Post-Famine economy and society (including emigration) is presented. In addition, political movements such as the Tenants' Right and Home Rule are included. The history and

development of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (I.R.B.) and the Fenian Brotherhood are presented as well. *Before the Land League: Ideals and Ambitions* provides biographical information of founding members of the Land League. Special attention is placed upon the individual human experience of League members. The next three chapters begin the analysis needed to hone in on the proposed argument. *The Land War: Eviction and Agitation* details the evolution, events, and outcomes of the Irish Land War. This chapter also speaks to the Central Land League's abandonment of local grievances in favor of a national platform and its impact on County Mayo. The next chapter *Clerical Influence: Election and Intimidation* speaks to the actions taken by Lough Mask clergy during the Mayo Elections of 1852 and 1857 and the Galway Election 1872. Mob behaviors and the behaviors of two parish priests are analyzed using sociological and psychological lenses. *Clerical Influence: Tradition, Opposition, and Murder* speaks to activities in the Lough Mask regions. Activities include: a priest's management of the Boycott affair, actions of warring parish priests, and clerical involvement in agrarian murders. The conclusion punctuates areas of emphasis needed to ensure a cogent argument.

In "Conscience or Coercion? Clerical Influence at the General Election of 1868 in Wales," Matthew Cragoe states, "[G]iven the extent of their involvement [clergy in the United Kingdom], it is surprising that so little historical attention has been paid to the role of preachers and priests in politics" (140-141). Review and analysis of the *Minutes from the Mayo Election Petitions of 1853 and 1857* and the *Galway Election Petition of 1872* contained herein respond to Cragoe's acute observation.

This work encompasses another significant aspect. The murder of Lord Mountmorres, to this day, remains unsolved. Yet, three men were convicted and hanged for the Huddy murders. In December of 1882, Patrick Higgins, Thomas Higgins, and Michael Flynn were sentenced to death for the murder of the Huddys. Matthias Kerrigan was the Crown's witness in their prosecution and "[A]lthough he was involved himself in the Huddy murder, he informed on three of the villagers, one his next door neighbor and first cousin to his own wife" (Waldron, *Maamtrasna* 221). Kerrigan remained legally unpunished (Waldron, *Maamtrasna* 220). Largely due in part to Kerrigan's testimony, the trio was indicted on Tuesday, December 5 and the trials began on Thursday, December 7 ("Affairs" 1). Patrick Higgins was hanged on January 15, 1883 ("Irish Conspirators" 1). Thomas Higgins and Michael Flynn were hanged on January 17, 1883 ("Irish Criminal" 1). Aside from Matthias Kerrigan, there is another man that arguably was missing from the gallows -- Father Walter Conway.

The legacy of clerical control in the Lough Mask region is marked in the immediate Post-Famine era. This ethos enabled some priests to wield unconscionable control over their flock. Father Walter Conway was one of those priests. As the pages herein illustrate, Conway controlled the actions of some of his parishioners. This author contends the moral responsibility (at minimum) for the above murders rests with Father Walter Conway of Clonbur.

## Chapter 2

### HISTORY INTERRUPTED: INVASION, SUBJUGATION, AND STARVATION

Within a year of his coronation, King Henry II sought to extend the boundaries of his kingdom to include Ireland (Hays and Jones 295-297; Kinealy, *New* 46). Due to the fact he did not possess legal title nor were there grounds to wage war on the island, Henry II "colour[ed] his ambition with the pretense of religion" (Lyttleton 56). Henry II approached Englishman, Nicholas Breakspear, better known as Pope Adrian IV, for his blessing in annexing Ireland (Lyttleton 56). Adrian IV reigned between 1154 and 1159; he was England's first and only pope (Kinealy, *New* 46). In 1155, Adrian IV issued the *Bull Laudabiliter*<sup>1</sup> to Henry II, indicating:

Since then you have signified to us, most dear son in Christ, that  
you desire to enter into the island of Ireland, in order to subdue the  
people to the obedience of laws, and extirpate the vices which have

1. The authenticity of the Bull Laudabiliter has been questioned (Kinealy, *New* 46). However, "through the whole of the Middle Ages and up to late times the Bull was accepted without question as genuine both by the Irish nation and by the Vatican. The Privilege of Pope Alexander III, Adrian's successor, confirmed the Bull, and his letters to the King, to the clergy and bishops of Ireland, and to the nobles, enforced obedience to it" ("Pope Adrian's"). Its authenticity is moot in this context as subsequent action was a result of its perceived authenticity.

taken root, and that you are willing to pay an annual pension to St. Peter of one penny from every house therein, and to preserve the rights of the church in that land inviolate and entire, we seconding your pious and commendable intention with the favor it deserves, and granting a benignant assent to your petition, as well pleased, that for the enlargement of the bounds of the church, for the restraint of vice, the correction of evil manners, the culture of all virtues, and the advancement of the Christian religion, you should enter into that island, and effect what will conduce to the Salvation thereof and to the honour of God. (qtd. in Lyttelton 58).

Adrian IV literally "s[old] the independence of Ireland and the liberty of the Irish" (Lyttelton 60). While Henry II's motivation stemmed from a desire to expand his empire, Adrian IV's intentions stemmed from the desire to school the "ignorant and barbarous nations" in Roman doctrine (Kinealy, *New* 46; qtd. in Lyttelton 57). Regardless, when enacted, the *Bull Laudabiliter*, in the name of religion, altered Ireland's destiny.

In 1161, Murcertach MacLochlann of Ailech in the north was crowned high king of Ireland after a contentious struggle with Rory O'Connor, King of Connacht (Martin 95; O'Doherty 154). MacLochlann was supported by Dermot MacMourrough, King of Leinster and Tiernán O'Rourke of Breifne vied for O'Connor's interests (Martin 95). Unfortunately for MacMourrough, MacLochlann died in 1166 (O'Doherty 154). MacLochlann's death invited O'Connor to claim the title of high king (O'Doherty 154). O'Connor and O'Rourke were aligned and without the military assistance from the House of MacLochlann, MacMourrough was the odd man out (O'Doherty 154). Aside from the

former alliances, the battle between MacMourrough and the O'Connor camps was fueled by a very personal vendetta. In 1152, MacMourrough abducted O'Rourke's wife, Dervorgilla "with her own consent" (Lyttleton 63-64; Martin 96). O'Rourke "recovered her the following year" and was fixated on revenge (Martin 96). O'Connor's elevation to high king provided the opportunity for O'Rourke to settle the score. In 1166, O'Rourke attacked Leinster and "When Ferns was captured and his stone palace destroyed," MacMourrough escaped Ireland (Martin 96-97). In order to reclaim his lands and title, MacMourrough traveled to France<sup>2</sup> to seek the alliance of Henry II. After MacMourrough presented his proposal (and fealty) to Henry II, an alliance was forged (Martin 98). Although Henry II did not pledge his direct involvement, he did provide for the recruitment of Norman volunteers to assist in MacMourrough's operation (Kinealy, *New* 46; Martin 98). The time had come to enact the *Bull Laudabiliter*.

MacMourrough wisely approached the great Norman leader, Richard FitzGilbert de Clare, former 2nd Earl of Pembroke (better known as "Strongbow") to lead the charge (Kinealy, *New* 46; Martin 98). Strongbow had nothing to lose and everything to gain from joining MacMourrough. By not supporting Henry II's ascent to the throne, Strongbow was forced to surrender his titles (Hays and Jones 297; Kinealy,

2. Henry II was a French King of England. He was born in Normandy and essentially raised in France. His native language was Norman-French and most of his life was spent in the continental portion of his empire (Martin 97).

*New 46*). MacMourrough presented the opportunity for Strongbow to redeem himself in the eyes of the King (Kinealy, *New 46*). Additionally, Strongbow negotiated MacMourrough's daughter Aoífe's hand in marriage, land, and the right of succession to throne of Leinster (Kinealy, *New 46*; Martin 99). After the initial Norman victory in Norse-influenced Wexford, Strongbow joined MacMourrough's efforts and Norse-Irish settlements of Waterford and Dublin fell to the Norman knights in 1170 (Kinealy, *New 46-47*; Martin 100-102). Following MacMourrough's death in 1171, Strongbow assumed the title King of Leinster (Kinealy, *New 47*).

Concerned by Strongbow's growing power and position, Henry II (and a small army) travelled to Ireland in October 1171 and remained until April 1172 (Kinealy, *New 47*). The purpose of Henry II's journey was to reinforce loyalty to the crown and for Strongbow to submit to him (Kinealy, *New 47*). Henry II's position of power was extended in Ireland following High King Rory O'Connor's submission in the Treaty of Windsor, 1175 and reinforced by Strongbow's death in 1176 (Kinealy, *New 48-49*).

In the years that followed, Irish lands were seized and granted much to the whims of the inhabitant barons (Martin 104). The conquest advanced steadily and "By 1250 -- within eighty years of the invasion -- three-quarters of the country had been overrun by the Normans" (Martin 106). Consequently, the feudal system was established (Kinealy, *New 53*). Despite being outnumbered by the native people, the Normans' superior weapons and military tactics ensured a swift and sustained occupancy (Martin 106). The intermarrying of Normans and daughters of Irish Kings enmeshed the Normans into the cultural fabric (Kinealy, *New 52-53*).



The Normans brought with them a tendency for structure in terms of towns, Continental religion, cathedrals, government, and currency (Kinealy, *New* 53-55; Martin 107-110). Trade, including foreign, was established and "the customs duties on wool and hides alone brought a huge sum of money into the royal treasury" (Martin 109). Yet, despite the Normans' demonstrated commitment to Ireland, the Norman invasion was incomplete. The lack of resources for a full invasion stemmed from military distractions (i.e. a shrinking Angevin Empire) and royal financial difficulties (Kinealy, *New* 54-56; Martin 110-11). Kinealy writes "Although some Gaels became Anglicised and some Normans became Hibernicised, they were still separate" (*New* 56). Unlike the complete annexation of regions such as "Normandy, England and Sicily," Ireland remained divided (Martin 111). It is this division that set the stage for centuries of strife.

As time progressed, the *Bull Laudabiliter's* directive of "subdu[ing] the people to the obedience of laws, and extirpate the vices which have taken root" became synonymous with Anglicization (qtd. in Lyttelton 58). In the fourteenth-century, efforts were made to halt the Gaelicization of settlers through legislation such as the Statute of Kilkenny which "prohibit[ed] the use of Irish laws, customs and language" (Kinealy, *New* 57). In 1494, in response to Irish supporting the Yorkist cause, Henry VII<sup>3</sup> sent Sir Edward Poynings to Ireland "to reduce the country to 'whole and perfect obedience'"

3. Henry VII's coronation marks the start of the reign of the Welsh House of Tudor. The Tudor monarchs include: Henry VIII, Edward VI, Jane Grey ( "The Nine Days Queen"), Queen Mary I (Bloody Mary), and Elizabeth I (Hayes-McCoy 139-151; Barrow [projectbritain.com](http://projectbritain.com)).

(Lydon 133). The outcome of Poynings' mission was "Poynings' Law," a confirmation of the Statute of Kilkenny (excluding the ban on the Irish language) and the subordination of the Irish Parliament to the King of England (Lydon 133-134). Still, "unsuccessful" in the Anglicization of Ireland by the sixteenth-century, King Henry VIII reinvigorated a prior attempt to ban Gaelic clothing and hair styles (Kinealy, *New* 57).

More significant than his ban on Gaelic hairstyles, King Henry VIII's desire to marry Anne Boleyn in 1533 widened the chasm between the people of Ireland even further. Henry VIII's break with the Roman Catholic Church stripped the remaining common denominator -- religion -- away from the already divided Ireland (Hayes-McCoy 141; Kinealy, *New* 70; Morgan, "Hugh" 30). Historian G.A. Hayes-McCoy contends "Many people believed that the pope was the king of Ireland" and since Henry VIII was no longer a subject of the Roman Hierarchy, it apparently seemed fitting Henry VIII declare himself King of Ireland in 1541 (Hayes-McCoy 141). In an effort to expedite loyalty to the crown (and to raise money), Henry VIII implemented the "surrender and regrant" policy (Kinealy, *New* 69). Essentially, this policy stripped land ownership from "Gaelic and Gaelicised Anglo-Irish lords" (Kinealy, *New* 69). The lands were regranted in the form of "feudal fief," provided the lord recognized the supreme authority of the crown; surrendered his Gaelic title and financially supported imperialistic endeavors (i.e. military action); and guaranteed estate-wide loyalty to the king (Hayes-McCoy 143; Kinealy, *New* 69). They were expected to speak the English language and adopt English fashion standards (Hayes-McCoy 143). Henry VIII was successful to some degree in the Anglicization of the landed gentry (Hayes-McCoy 143). While the establishment of the

Church of Ireland, of which the king was earthly supreme, contributed to the dissolution of "monasteries, nunneries and friaries" in the Pale and Crown-loyal towns, it did not flourish (Kinealy, *New* 67; Hayes-McCoy 144). Ireland remained overwhelmingly Catholic (Hayes-McCoy 144; Morgan, "Hugh" 30).

The latter half of the sixteenth-century, during Queen Elizabeth I's reign, was peppered with rebellions as the heirs of Irish chieftains sought to drive out English rule (Kinealy, *New* 74). The series of revolts "culminat[ed] in the Nine Years War which cost them [monarchy] £2,000,000 to suppress between 1594 and 1603" (Morgan, "Hugh" 22). Although costly, from Queen Elizabeth I's perspective, securing Ireland was critical to preserving her empire (Kinealy, *New* 80). As a result of the Nine Years War, England's conquest of Ireland was complete (Kinealy, *New* 80). Historian Hiram Morgan argues that the conclusion of the Nine Years War planted the seeds for modern Irish nationalism ("Faith" 20).

A distinct symbol of Irish annexation is found in the "Flight of the Earls." In September 1607 "Gaelic Ulster nobility" defected by boarding a French warship and setting sail for Spain (McGurk 16). This defection left markedly resolute Ulster leaderless and paved the way for amplified Anglicization efforts (Clarke 153). Given the Irish resistance to Protestantism, the crown rationalized "If the Irish would not become Protestant, then Protestants must be brought to Ireland" (Clarke 153). The Province of Ulster was now fertile ground for "planting" loyal Protestants (Clarke 153). While smaller scale plantation efforts had taken place since Henry VIII's reign, the

concentration and magnitude of King James I's<sup>4</sup> scheme was incomparable (Clarke 153). The "Ulster Plantation" was accomplished through land confiscation from the native Irish and subsequent inexpensive land grants to English and Scottish settlers (Clarke 153; Kinealy, *New* 84-85). The initial "Ulster Plantation" was comprised of Counties Armagh, Cavan, Coleraine, Donegal, Fermanagh, and Tyrone (Clarke 153; Kinealy, *New* 84). Settlers in the "Ulster Plantation," as expected, Anglicized the area through the development of towns and villages complete with markets, schools and churches (Clarke 153-154; Kinealy, *New* 87). The demand of the settlers fell short of the supply of land (Clarke 54). While much of the native Irish were forced to occupy the less fertile lands, some remained within the plantation (Kinealy, *New* 86, 87, 89). The remaining native Irish did so by paying a premium (on lesser land) to fill vacancies intended for settlers that never came (Clarke 154; Kinealy, *New* 86, 87, 89). The confiscation of land coupled with preferential treatment of settlers elevated tensions between the native Irish Catholics and Protestant settlers (Kinealy, *New* 86-87).

King James I died in 1625 and was succeeded by his son Charles I. Since Charles I was married to a French Catholic and was Catholic tolerant, the Irish were cautiously hopeful but the English were suspicious (Kinealy, *New* 91, 94). Viewing Parliament as unnecessary to his reign, the Charles I "dissolved the English Parliament and ruled without it until 1640" (Kinealy, *New* 92). Charles I initiated war with Spain then France

4. James I of Scotland is the first monarch of the House of Stuart. The succession of Stuart monarchs includes: Charles I, Charles II, James II, William III and Mary II, and Anne (Barrow projectbritain.com).

(Kinealy, *New* 92). In an effort to finance the wars, Charles I found support from the Catholic "Old English" (in Ireland) (Kinealy, *New* 92). In return for financial support, Charles I "granted" security of land holdings to the "Old English," but "The Graces" proved to be nothing more than an empty promise (Clarke 156; Kinealy, *New* 92). Under Charles I's leadership, England was divided (Clarke 159). This division led to the English Civil War (Kinealy, *New* 96). The Civil War came to a close in 1645 with Charles I surrendering in 1646 (Kinealy, *New* 99). His escape in 1647 prompted a short-lived resurgence of the War in 1648 and Charles I was executed in 1649 (Kinealy, *New* 99). A wave of anti-Catholic sentiment and actions soon followed in response to Catholic-tolerant Charles I's defeat (Kinealy, *New* 99). Perhaps the most lethal of anti-Catholic action was Oliver Cromwell's tyrannous occupation of Ireland.

Oliver Cromwell was a Puritan member of English Parliament who served as Lieutenant-General in the New Model Army (against Charles I) in the English Civil War (Kinealy, *New* 98-99). He was instrumental in Charles I's surrender, trial, and execution (Kinealy, *New* 100). The abolishment of the English monarchy following the Civil War, yielded a republic of which Cromwell was deemed the highest title, "Protector" (Little 44). In August 1649, he traveled to Ireland with an army of 20,000 troops (Kinealy, *New* 100). Cromwell's expedition was intended to extinguish remaining Stuart support and to seek revenge (Clarke 162; Kinealy, *New* 100). In his August 1649 arrival speech in Dublin Cromwell referred to the Irish as "Barbarous and Bloodthirsty" (qtd. in Drake 265). Interestingly, Cromwell believed it was his duty as a servant of God to carry out these (and other) punishments (Drake 268). His "God made me do it" attitude must have

been an asset as he reconciled the "slaughter[ed] [of] priests and garrisons at Drogheda in September 1649" (Drake 265). At the conclusion of Cromwell's Irish expedition some rebels were executed and over 30,000 men found refuge on the Continent (Clarke, "Colonisation" 162). Cromwell's "special fury" was directed at Catholic property owners (Clarke 162). Catholics that supported Charles I lost all of their lands and those that remained loyal also lost their lands but were provided with land in Connacht and County Clare (Clarke 162). Due to their inability to finance Charles I, the poor were essentially left alone (Clarke 162). The confiscated lands were used to settle debts accrued during the Civil War and to reward loyalist soldiers and officers (Clarke 162). By doing so, Cromwell created a "Protestant upper class" (Clarke 162).

Cromwell left Ireland in triumph in May 1650 and in 1653 he was made "Lord Protector" of the Commonwealth (Kinealy, *New* 101). He positioned his son, Henry, as Governor of Ireland from 1655 to 1659 where he remained a disciple of Cromwellian policy (Kinealy, *New* 101). Cromwell refused the title of king in 1657 but remained commander-in-chief until his death in 1658 (Davies 131; Kinealy, *New* 101). Richard Cromwell succeeded his father for a brief period as "Protector" of the Commonwealth (Davies 132). In 1660, the republic was dismantled and the monarchy was restored (Simms 165). Stuart heir, Charles II emerged from exile to claim his throne (Simms 165).

Although Charles II was a religious liberal, he returned to a deeply Protestant, anti-Catholic England (Kinealy, *New* 104-105). Charles II's tempered his liberalism to ensure his position (Kinealy, *New* 106 ; Simms 165). Irish Catholic landowners gained

some lost ground under Charles II's reign, "but they had recovered only a fraction of their original estates" lost during the Cromwell confiscations (Simms 165). Kinealy writes "For almost twenty-five years, though his reign had brought peace to the three kingdoms, and the ferments of his father's reign appeared to have been calmed" (*New* 105). As he lacked a legitimate heir, Charles II was succeeded by his Catholic-convert brother (Kinealy, *New* 107).

King James II's Catholicism influenced his policy (Miller, "Earl" 805-810). While he had no interest in relinquishing English control in Ireland, James II "had long shown a fondness for Irishmen" (Miller, "Earl" 805, 809). He intended to "put more power into the hands of reliable Catholics (i.e. Old English)" (Miller, "Earl" 810). Under James II, armies welcomed Catholic recruits (Kinealy, *New* 109). The "first Catholic viceroy in over one-hundred years" was appointed as well as Catholic judges, privy councillors, and civil administrators (Simms 168). With respect to the Cromwellian land settlement, he "wished to preserve the Restoration land settlement while finding some ways to compensate those Catholics who had deserved to recover their lands but had been unable to do so" (Miller, "Earl" 819). The idealistic James II hoped to accomplish the aforementioned without alienating Protestants (Miller, "Earl" 810). Nevertheless, James II's "heretical," pro-Catholic policies threatened Protestants (Kinealy, *New* 109). However, due to the fact James II did not have a son, his Protestant daughter Mary was his heiress apparent (Kinealy, *New* 109; Miller, "Earl" 807). Mary was married to the Dutch "champion of Protestantism, William of Orange" (Miller, "Earl" 807). Arguably,

Protestants found comfort in the expected succession and were biding their time with Catholic James.

In 1688, the second wife of James II, Mary of Modena, gave birth to a son after fifteen years of marriage thus altering the right of succession (Kinealy, *New* 109). This unexpected turn of events was a game changer for Prince William and Protestant leaders (Kinealy, *New* 109; Speck 454). Shortly after, following the invitation from "seven English notables," William of Orange invaded England to seize James' throne (Simms 169). James II fled to France under the protection of Louis XIV (Simms 169). While he lost the kingship of England and Scotland, James II retained the Irish crown (Kinealy, *New* 111). Equipped with money, troops, and arms -- compliments of Louis XIV -- James II arrived in Ireland in March 1669 (Kinealy, *New* 112; Simms 170). Ireland, because if its Catholic backing was the only realistic locale for James II to regain his throne (Kinealy, *New* 110-111). The "War of the Two Kings" was fought with multi-national troops (Irish, English, Danish, French Huguenots, Dutch, French, German, and Belgian) (Kinealy, *New* 114). Catholics Leopold I, Holy Roman Emperor, Charles II, King of Spain, and even Pope Alexander VIII supported William of Orange (Simms 170). While the Irish viewed this war as a battle between Catholicism and Protestantism, the remainder of western Europe viewed it as a battle between Louis XIV and everyone else (Simms 170). William of Orange symbolically secured the Protestant succession on July 1, 1690 (July 12 on the reformed calendar) at the Battle of Boyne upon retreat of the Jacobite army (Kinealy, *New* 115; Simms 171). The war officially ended in October 1691 with the signing of the Treaty of Limerick (Simms 171). Following the Jacobite



War, Catholic land ownership in Ireland was less than 15% (Simms 175). But the Irish lost much more than land following this signing.

In an effort to prevent further rebellions and uprisings in Ireland, William III (of Orange) wanted power to remain with the Protestant gentry (Kinealy, *New* 119). To accomplish this, William enacted legislation to "keep the Catholics in a state of permanent subjection" (Wall 176). The Penal Laws affected Catholics in England, Scotland and Wales as well (Kinealy, *New* 120). The Penal Laws prevented Catholics from holding government office, serving in Parliament, "entering the legal profession and from holding commissions in the army and navy" (Wall 177-178). Catholics were not permitted to earn a degree at Trinity College (Kinealy, *New* 121). Penal land restrictions regarding inheritance "stipulated that all land had to be equally divided among all of his sons. If one son converted to Protestantism, he would become the sole inheritor" (Kinealy, *New* 121). Catholics were not permitted to carry "a pistol or sword, or rid[e] an expensive horse" (Kinealy, *New* 121). Irish Catholic gentry were forced to convert to Protestantism or give up their profession, land and status (Wall 177).

In the event the aforementioned prohibitions did not convert Catholics, William III attacked the source and raided the penniless. Priests could no longer be ordained in Ireland and for priests to remain in Ireland, they were required to "register with the authorities and recognise William as their king" (Kinealy, *New* 120). Catholic bishops were no longer permitted to serve in Ireland (Kinealy, *New* 120). All Catholics were now required to pay tithes to the Church of Ireland (Kinealy, *New* 120; Wall 178).

Economic Penal Laws sought to keep Ireland subordinate to England with

respect to trade. For example, the Wool Act "prevented the export of wool and woollen cloth from Ireland" (Kinealy, *New* 125). This economic policy affected both Catholics and Protestants (Kinealy, *New* 126). Protestant, eighteenth-century satirist Jonathan Swift popularized the notion of "England was the cause of Irish Poverty" (Kinealy, *New* 126-127). Swift's focus on economic policy transcended religious divide and fertilized the seeds of nationalism (Kinealy, *New* 127).

William III, through the Penal Laws, marginalized Catholics and ignited the Protestant ascendancy (Kinealy, *New* 121-127). Despite the religious, economical, and political tensions resulting from the Penal Laws, the eighteenth-century (for the most part) was a time of relative peace in Ireland (Green 218). During this time the population of Ireland steadily increased<sup>5</sup> (Green 219). This increase can be attributed to a lack of warfare and an improved diet -- the potato<sup>6</sup> diet (Green 219). The potato packs considerable nutrients and the yield per plot of land surpasses any of the grain crops (Green 219; Kinealy, *New* 162). Additionally, the potato "thrived in the damp and temperate climate of Ireland and demonstrated an unusual adaptability in its ability to

5. An outlying population data point worthy of discussion is the demographic implications of the great frost of 1739-1740. This frost was catastrophic to the food supply, resulting in the death of approximately 500,000 people (Kinealy, *New* 129-130).

6. The potato was introduced to Ireland in the late sixteenth-century (Kinealy, *New* 128; Wilde, "Potato" 357). Sir Walter Raleigh is generally credited for introducing it (Wilde, "Potato" 357). However, some evidence suggests it was brought to Ireland by a Spanish seaman (McNeill 218).

grow even in poor quality and rocky soil" (Kinealy, *Death* 32). By 1703, Catholics owned only 14% of the land, most of which was found within the least fertile regions (qtd. in Clarke 164). As such, the cultivation of an adaptable, high yield potato crop seemed to be the obvious choice for a growing Catholic peasantry (Kinealy, *New* 127).

Post-Jacobite War land settlements literally squeezed Catholics out of their lands. The native Irish were incensed and they began to fight back. In 1711, the influx of English settlers into the mountainous region of Connemara (Province of Connacht) forced locals from their land (Maguire, "Houghing" 1). The native Connemara people retaliated against the settlers by "houghing" or cutting the hamstrings of their cattle (Maguire, "Houghing" 1). This trend in agrarian outrage "swept along Lough Corrib and Lough Mask" (Counties Galway and Mayo) and continued on through Counties Sligo, Roscommon, and Clare (Maguire, "Houghing" 1).

Notwithstanding the relative "Irish" peace (i.e. absence of battles fought on Irish soil) of the eighteenth-century, the latter half of the century birthed locally-focused agitation. Catholics resented paying tithes to the Church of Ireland (McCormac 1). The fact that "Between 1735-1823 tithes were not due on pasturelands; graziers were exempt" amplified this resentment (McCormac 1). Essentially, this exemption shifted the burden of supporting the Church of England away from the rich and onto the poor (Donnelly, "Rightboys" 150). Religious subjugation and oppressive taxation "created an environment in which agrarian secret societies, the agents of rebellion, could flourish as champions of economic justice, as avengers of the religiously oppressed (Catholics) or the religiously threatened (Protestants)" (Donnelly, "Rightboys" 120).

Tithe-victims in parts of the Province of Munster and County Kilkenny acted out against unjust taxes and "enclosure of commonage"<sup>7</sup> (Donnelly, "Whiteboys" 20-25). The oath-bound, secret society "Whiteboys" originated in County Tipperary to revolt against said grievances. The intention of the Whiteboys (also known as "Levellers") was to level the fences, walls, hedges, and ditches of reclaimed commonage and extort financial reprieve through intimidation (Donnelly, "Whiteboys" 21-23). As a result of their successful outcomes, the tactics of the Tipperary Whiteboys "w[ere] quickly imitated in adjacent parts of neighboring counties" (Donnelly, "Whiteboys" 21). As the Whiteboy movement spread, grievances took on a regional flavor (Donnelly, "Whiteboys" 24-25). Acts of intimidation included: organized public demonstrations; threats to destroy homes; attacks upon property caretakers and new tenants; slaughter of gentry's deer; and cropping of horses' ears (Donnelly, "Whiteboys" 22, 33, 35). Whiteboys also "erected gallows, made coffins, and dug graves in public roads, all obviously intended as portents of the fate awaiting those who refused to obey their mandates" (Donnelly, "Whiteboys" 29). The Whiteboys were aggressive in their recruitment tactics: "Those who refused to swear [to the oath], they threatened to bury alive" (qtd. in Donnelly, "Whiteboy" 26). Many Protestants believed the Whiteboys' tactics were part of the "popish plot" (Donnelly, "Whiteboys" 38). Catholic priests were suspected of propagating the violent activities of Whiteboyism (Donnelly, "Whiteboys" 40). However, only one Catholic priest was convicted of such activity (Donnelly,

7. "Commonage" refers to the regional, customary practice of "landlords attach[ing] inferior ground [to a plot of rented land] without any specific addition to rent" (Donnelly, "Whiteboys" 32).

"Whiteboys" 40). In 1766, Father Nicholas Sheehy was found guilty and was "hanged, drawn and quartered" (Kinealy, *New* 125).

The emergence of Whiteboyism coincided with the "agricultural prosperity of the early 1760s" (Donnelly, "Whiteboys" 30). In 1766, the decline of this oath-bound society coincided with a significant drought which adversely affected Ireland's food supply and a small pox epidemic (Donnelly, "Whiteboy" 52-53). While scholars identify the Whiteboy movement as the first documented oath-bound, secret society in Ireland, it is unlikely this secret agrarian faction was the first (Donnelly, "Whiteboys" 27). The perennial nature of this form of agrarian society lends credence to this notion.

Secret societies were not strictly Catholic organizations. In 1763, mid-southern Ulster experienced the very public agitation of the "Oakboys" (Donnelly, "Hearts" 7). This short-lived Presbyterian society fought against Anglican tithes by employing intimidation tactics (Donnelly, "Hearts" 7-8; Garnham 413-414). In Northeast Ulster, between the summer of 1770 and the end of 1772, the Presbyterian Steelboys committed agrarian outrages, including murder (Donnelly, "Hearts" 7; Maguire, "Lord" 351-352). Unlike Oakboys, the Steelboys operated in secrecy under the cover of darkness to revolt against land rents and evictions (Donnelly, "Hearts" 7).

The oath-bound, agrarian secret society "Rightboys" of the 1780s differed from the Whiteboys et al in that its membership and support were more diverse (Donnelly, "Rightboys" 126-127). Whiteboyism was predominately a movement of the "landless and the land-poor," namely laborers and cottiers (Donnelly, "Rightboys" 126). Rightboy membership included small farmers, their sons, as well as Protestant gentry (Donnelly,

"Rightboys" 126-127, 137). Hence, the movement spread rapidly and encompassed eleven counties in the southern half of the country (Donnelly, "Rightboys" 120, 129). Rightboy grievances included tithes and access to land; however, the goals of rent reduction and discontinued use of migrant labor were prevalent (Donnelly, "Rightboys" 139). The Rightboys used the tried and true intimidations tactics of its predecessors (Whiteboys) as well as collective refusal to pay ministers' tithes (Donnelly, "Rightboys" 155-156). Widespread notification of such collective action was a result of priestly communication and the gentry financing placards for distribution (Donnelly, "Rightboys" 155-156). Despite the involvement of some parish priests, the Irish Catholic hierarchy did not support these oath-bound societies nor the violence in their wake (Donnelly, "Rightboys" 167-169).

In response to the expanding Rightboy movement, the government infused disturbed areas with troops and the passed the Riot Act of 1787 which authorized coercive measures (Donnelly, "Rightboys" 190, 198-199). Coercive measures quelled the agitation and deterred participation of Protestant gentry (Donnelly, "Rightboys" 199). The growing attention on rent reduction also discouraged the gentry's interest in Rightboyism (Donnelly, "Rightboys" 199). As a result, Rightboyism faded.

Politically speaking, "during the mid-[seventeen] eighties Irish politics were remarkably placid" (McDowell 194). However, the late 1780s saw burgeoning political activity amongst the Irish due largely in part to the French Revolution (Kinealy, *New* 138; McDowell 194-195). This revolutionary spirit sought to "unite all creeds in Ireland under the common banner of being Irish" (Kinealy, *New* 138). Young, Protestant

barrister Theobald "Wolfe Tone" and other middleclass radicals founded the Society of United Irishmen in the autumn of 1791 (Kinealy, *New* 138; McDowell 196). The initial objectives of the United Irishman were Parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation (Curtin, "Transformation" 463; Kinealy, *New* 138-139). This society's platform became increasingly radical as "some members support[ed] universal male suffrage and the establishment of an Irish republic" (Kinealy, *New* 139). With the prospect of war against France looming, the British government sought to pacify Irish political agitation (McDowell 198). Conciliation was found in the Relief Act of 1793 which lifted some of the Penal restrictions, including Catholic vote (McDowell 198). However, these concessions coincided with passing of the Gunpowder and Convention Acts (Curtin, "Transformations" 466; Kinealy, *New* 139). The former act prevented "the importation of arms and gunpowder into this kingdom, and the removing and keeping of gunpowder without licence [sic]" ("Gunpowder"). The latter act "prohibited large assemblies and thus effectively curtailed gatherings of the main political groups" (Kinealy, *New* 139). These acts were designed to complicate insurrection efforts. In 1794, the Society of United Irishmen was suppressed after being linked with a French agent (Curtin, "Transformations" 467). As a result, political movement was forced "underground and transform[ed] [them] into secret, oath-bound societies" (Kinealy, *New* 139).

The Catholic, secret society "Defenders" originated in Ulster (County Armagh) in 1784 (Garvin, "Defenders" 142). Defenderism was founded in response to the Protestant "Peep-O'-Day-Boys," also of Ulster (Davitt, *Fall* 16). These groups were fueled by "mutual fear" and "competition for land and markets" (Garvin, "Defenders" 142). By the

early 1790s the Defenders branched south to Dublin and had formed an alliance with the United Irishmen (Garvin, "Defenders" 142).

Shortly after the arrest of the French agent, Wolf Tone journeyed to America and then travelled onto France (Kinealy, *New* 139-140; McDowell 199). Upon his arrival in Paris in 1796, Wolf Tone proposed an invasion of Ireland to the French "revolutionary government" and he "convinced the French leaders that they would be welcomed in Ireland" (Kinealy, *New* 140). A failed French landing in December 1796, elevated the concern of the Irish government (Kinealy, *New* 140; McDowell, 199-200). Despite arrests and brutal force, support for the United Irishmen remained strong (Kinealy, *New* 141). Throughout the first half 1798, there was a series of uprisings (Kinealy, *New* 141; McDowell 201). In August 1798, another small, yet successful French invasion took place in Killala, County Mayo (Kinealy, *New* 142; McDowell, 201). The French were defeated shortly after in County Longford (Kinealy, *New* 142; McDowell, 201). This Killala invasion will be discussed further in the context of Chapter 3 - *Irish Catholicism: Evolution and Politicization*. Wolf Tone was arrested and committed suicide before he was executed (Kinealy, *New* 143; McDowell 202).

Despite the failure of the 1798 invasion and the subsequent loss of leadership, the ideological alliance between Defenders and the United Irishmen endured (Garvin, "Defenders" 144). It continued at the local level and "Unlike the Whiteboy and Rightboy agitations which occurred in the southern counties in the eighteenth century, this new network had some continuity and a definite sense of political identity and purpose" (Garvin, "Defenders" 144).



In the early years of the nineteenth-century, the politicized Defenders evolved into "Ribbonmen" (Garvin, "Defenders" 134). This Catholic, oath-bound secret society was named such because it is believed members were presented with two ribbons upon taking the oath: "the green ribbon being 'for Ireland and friendship' and the red being for 'revenge and blood'" (Garvin, "Defenders" 134, 146). The organizational structure of Ribbon lodges was as follows: "The basic unit, the lodge, was limited in theory to a maximum of forty men, divided into three splits of twelve men, each with a committee of four" (Garvin, "Defenderism" 146). Within the lodges, leaders "used portentous ritual phrases, exotic regalia, millennial slogans, rituals and references to [the] occult"(Garvin, "Defenders" 148). By the early 1820s, Ribbonism was divided into "two rival segments" with one based in Ulster, the other in Dublin (Garvin, "Defenders" 148). The Ulster faction spread into northern Connacht and the Dublin section did advance throughout Leinster and into Munster (Garvin, "Defenders" 148). In Connacht, Ribbonism incorporated an agrarian flavor (Garvin, "Defenders" 148). Although Ribbonism presumably lacked central administration, its ability to network discreetly provided a skeletal system for future movements (Garvin, "Defenders" 140).

On New Year's Day 1801, the Act of Union went into effect (Kinealy, *New* 146). Historian Nancy Curtin asserts: "It is perhaps the height of irony that rather than fostering the union of all Irishmen, the republicans and their rebellions precipitated that very unwanted union of Ireland with Great Britain" ("Transformations" 492). Although many of the Penal Laws had been repealed in the 1780s and 1790s, Catholics were still not permitted to serve as a parliamentarian nor could they hold important state or military

offices (Whyte, "Age" 205). Catholics remained hopeful for full emancipation with the union; however, King George III rejected this notion (Kinealy, *New* 146). Catholic emancipation was ultimately granted in 1829 as a result of the efforts of Daniel O'Connell and the Catholic Association (Kinealy, *New* 157). O'Connell's strategy and struggle is discussed at length in Chapter 3 - *Irish Catholicism: Evolution and Politicization*.

Daniel O'Connell's next battle sought to repeal the union between Ireland and Great Britain (Whyte, "Age" 210-211). With the formation of the Repeal Association in 1840, the O'Connell movement benefitted from the advent of the "monster meeting" (Whyte, "Age" 211). Mass meetings were of course used during the Emancipation campaign, however, the mass meetings of the Repeal movement "took place on a much greater scale" (Whyte, "Age" 211). Despite O'Connell's failed attempt at Repeal, the movement beget integral components to future political actions. One such component is the "monster meeting." The monster meeting took hold and found a prominent position in the nationalist war chest as an effective means of mass mobilization. Additionally, the Repeal efforts inadvertantly forged a new brand of nationalist leaders -- the Young Irelanders.

In 1846, as O'Connell's prominence and health began to fade (O'Connell died in 1847), "Young Ireland, a group of romantic intellectuals, was forced out of the repeal movement, ostensibly over a disagreement on the use of physical force" (Kinealy, *New* 160). The tenor of the Young Ireland movement was one of inclusion, "embracing everyone who lived in Ireland, regardless of creed or origin" (Whyte, "Age" 215). This

group of idealistic young men "established the *Nation*, and through it conducted a campaign of intense nationalism" (Devoy 9). These leaders strategized the use of Irish Parliamentary tactics, linked independence with the land question, and schemed for independence from England (using physical force if necessary) (Whyte, "Age" 215-216). Following a failed insurrection of 1848, leaders were arrested, some escaped, and some lived in exile (Whyte, "Age" 216). This scattering, combined with O'Connell's death in 1847, left a leadership vacuum in Ireland, however the seeds of Irish nationalism were now securely planted on foreign shores (Devoy 11).

The idealism of the Young Ireland movement was eclipsed by arguably the most significant watershed in modern Irish history. In July 1845, a "long spell of wet weather" was followed by a diseased potato crop in parts of Ireland in September (Green 220). This potato blight spread and ravaged approximately half of Ireland (Green 220). Ireland was no stranger to an annual failed crop, but this was different (Kinealy, *Death* 41). The potato blight endured for seven years (Kinealy, *Death* 41, 47). Kinealy details the impact on yield in *A Death Dealing Famine*:

By the end of 1845, one-third of the crop had been lost to blight, although most of the losses occurred in the more prosperous east of the country. In 1846, almost 80 percent of the crop was destroyed. In 1847, losses again were high, as much as one-third was destroyed of only a small crop. In 1848, approximately half was lost, although losses were primarily in the west. Between 1849 and 1852, blight reappeared, but was localised and centred mostly in

the counties of the south-west of the country. (52)

As previously mentioned, the increased population relegated to ever-shrinking plots of land had fostered a culture of overdependence upon the potato. This eight-season crop failure was apocalyptic to the poor, especially in the West (Lee 2). Tenants were evicted for their inability to pay rent (*Irish Landlord Accusers* 522) and disease and death became commonplace as:

Starving people crowded into the towns and flooded to the public works which the government was proposing to close. A fever epidemic now spread like wildfire through the country. What people called "famine fever" was in fact two separate diseases, typhus and relapsing fever. . . Dysentery was to be expected among people who had been eating raw turnips or seaweed or half-cooked Indian meal, as it too often led to the fatal bacillary dysentery, the "bloody flux". . . Scurvy became general among those who were forced to resort to Indian meal, which is lacking in vitamin C. "Famine dropsy". . . was widespread. (Green 224)

As a result of the Great Famine, approximately one million people died and another million had emigrated (Kinealy, *Death* 151). To date, the Irish population has yet to recover its Pre-Famine level (Kinealy, *New* 165; "Population"; "Population of Northern").

Prior to the Great Famine, crop failures had been assuaged by the limitation of exports facilitated by an Irish Parliament (Kinealy, *Death* 41). However, with the loss of

an Irish Parliament (as a result of the Act of Union) such decisions were left strictly to the English Parliament (Kinealy, *Death* 41). At the start of the Famine, Tory Sir Robert Peel served as prime minister (Green 221). Peel chose not to halt exportation of Irish agricultural goods (Green 222). However, Peel anticipated a food shortage and secured Indian meal shipments from the United States to not only fill a void, but prevent soaring prices due to high demand (Green, 221; Kinealy, *New* 162). Adhering to his belief in the principles of free trade, Peel repealed the Corn Laws<sup>8</sup> which ultimately created a chasm in the Tory Party leading to a Whig takeover (Green 222; Kinealy, *Death* 55; Kinealy, *New* 162). Peel was replaced by Lord John Russell (Green 222; Kinealy, *New* 163). Russell did not continue the importation of Indian meal (Kinealy, *New* 163). Instead, the Russell government addressed the starvation in Ireland with public works (Kinealy, *New* 163). Working conditions were grueling: "Employment was for twelve hours a day and entailed demanding, physical labor generally building 'roads that led nowhere and walls that surrounded nothing'" (Kinealy, *New* 163). This ineffective practice ceased in January 1847 in favor of direct relief in the form of soup kitchens (Green 223; Kinealy, *New* 163). Additionally, remaining tariffs were temporarily

8. The Corn Laws (which apply to grains, not just corn) are a series of English laws that were introduced in the fifteenth-century ("Marx"). These laws went through a series of amendments during the early nineteenth-century ("Marx"). These laws ensured a high tariff on all imported grain in order to prevent "cheap foreign grain" from lowering prices of grain grown in Great Britain (Kemp 190-191; Kinealy, *Death* 33; "Marx"). These laws favored the landed gentry (Kemp 194).

suspended on imported grains as well as the requirement of goods being transported on British-registered ships (Kinealy, *New* 164). Private funds were raised within Great Britain and overseas to supplement government relief efforts (Green 224).

As volunteers doled out government soup, ships were being loaded with Irish agricultural goods for export: "the export of cattle, dairy produce and alcohol increased after 1846" (Kinealy, *New* 163). In fact, the potato accounted "for only 20 percent of total agricultural production" (Kinealy, *New* 162). Clearly, the remaining 80 percent of these agricultural products did not find their way into the bellies of a starving peasantry. Irish nationalist, human rights activist and author Michael Davitt asserts:

There is possibly no chapter in the wide records of human suffering and wrong so full of shame -- measureless, unadulterated, sickening shame -- as that which tells us of (it is estimated) a million people -- including presumably, two hundred thousand adult men -- lying down to die in a land out of which forty-five millions' worth of food was being exported, in one year alone, for rent -- the product of their own toil. . . It stands unparalleled in human history, with nothing approaching to it in the complete surrender of all ordinary attributes of manhood by almost a whole nation, in the face of an artificial famine. (*Fall* 48)

It is the memory of this "artificial famine" that has indelibly influenced the consciousness of the Post-Famine Irish.

### Chapter 3

#### IRISH CATHOLICISM: EVOLUTION AND POLITICIZATION

One way to categorize Irish studies is in two distinct groups, Pre-Famine and Post-Famine; Irish Catholicism is no exception. Early nineteenth-century Ireland illustrates a financially fledgling sect of the Roman Catholic Empire, while the latter half of the century depicts a robust following with ample, financial and devotional sustenance: "By 1870, regular attendance at Mass had risen from a pre-Famine level of 33 percent of the population to over 90 percent" (Taylor 703). This "devotional revolution" (Larkin, "Devotional" 625) has superficially been solely attributed to fear of the Famine's return. While certainly a factor, fear -- coupled with residual guilt -- was not the lone culprit. Nineteenth-century politics played as strong a role as the emotional state of the survivors. With the height of the Great Famine near the mid-century mark, a natural question arises. Did the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland benefit from the Famine and British oppression? The answer is a definitive, simple yes. However, the back story is all but simple.

Early Irish Catholicism is described as a distinct manifestation of Catholicism (Carroll, *Pilgrimage* 16). Mass, when offered, was said in the open air, barns, homes, and "mass-houses" (an unadorned hut or shed). But Mass did not serve as the cornerstone of this regional interpretation of Catholicism; "Canonically sanctioned Catholic practice was complemented by a wide variety of practices which had survived

from pre-Celtic religion" (Miller, "Catholicism" 89). In *Priests, Prelates and People*, Nicholas Atkin and Frank Tallett assert:

Ireland, too, continued to manifest an essentially pre-Tridentine variant of Catholicism. . . . The parish church was not the apex of religious life, which was characterised by the plethora of superstitious practices and boisterous festivals; some of these, such as the patterns (communal visits to the local holy well) and wakes were unique to the country. (42)

Holy wells, patterns, stations, feasts, and pilgrimages associated with healing and agricultural promise served as a transition for the acceptance of early Christianity.

Devotions associated with the estimated 3000 naturally-occurring holy wells all over Ireland remained primary (Carroll, "Rethinking" 356). Sociologist Michael Carroll describes holy wells as "usually consist[ing] of a water source that flows out of the ground rather than being a deep hole in the ground that leads down to water" (*Pilgrimage* 21-22); essentially, holy wells are springs. The majority of holy wells were found in rural communities (Carroll, *Pilgrimage* 22). Irish Catholics frequented "the holy wells for two reasons. The first was to secure some favor. . . seeking a cure for some physical ailment. . . . Still, before the Famine, holy wells in Ireland were visited as much for penitential purposes as for curing" (Carroll, "Rethinking" 357). At the well, worshippers would "make rounds." Making rounds required the participant to "walk around the small stone structure that enclosed the well in a clockwise direction for a specified number of



times while saying certain prayers" (Carroll, "Rethinking" 357). The number of revolutions would vary by region or village, but essentially the practice was fairly consistent throughout Ireland. Typically, the wells were associated with a patron saint; the vast majority being male (Carroll, *Pilgrimage* 25). In an attempt to contrast the Catholicism of Ireland with Italy and Spain, sociologist Michael Carroll indicates:

Presumably the Italian analogue to holy wells would be sanctuaries, which are churches that were the object of pilgrimage and which were usually seen to contain objects that were a source of supernatural favors. . .87% of all Italian sanctuaries are dedicated to a madonna rather than to a saint. . .supernatural beings. . .tied to specific spots on the landscape were usually female; in Ireland they were usually male. ("Rethinking" 356)

Usually while "making rounds" worshippers negotiated the rocks in bare feet, knowingly drawing blood (Carroll, *Pilgrimage* 32). Bare feet (by necessity and choice) were also encouraged during pilgrimages to Croagh Patrick and St. Patrick's Purgatory (Carroll, *Pilgrimage* 39). These non-Roman, "paganesque" activities served as conduits for embracing Christianity. Celtic-Catholic fusion successfully transformed lunar celebrations into saintly feasts.

Pre-Famine Irish Catholicism was steeped in ritual and self-induced physical suffering. An interesting corollary is not what Pre-Famine Irish Catholicism was, but what it was not. The absence of imagery, especially Jesus and the Virgin Mary, is quite

remarkable. Emphasis on stacked stones and wells as opposed to iconic imagery were a clear departure from the images of crucifixion and the Blessed Mother of Roman tradition. As Carroll indicates in his analysis of Irish Catholicism in Pre-Famine Ireland, "the figure of Christ played only a small role" (Carroll, "Rethinking" 360). In fact, despite the lifting of the Penal Laws (1691-1778) which precluded blatant iconic imagery, Irish churches remained free of most traditional Roman human depictions (Connolly 94).

Many Pre-Famine priests not only condoned such pagan-like activities, they often participated in them as well. Local clergy were often products of rural constituencies. As such, these customs were a part of their upbringing. Therefore, "local clergy shared and encouraged prevailing beliefs about the supernatural power immanent in the water found at holy wells" (Carroll, "Rethinking" 360). In "Irish Catholicism and the Great Famine," David Miller writes of "priests of special powers to cure diseases, magically overcome landlords, miraculously escape from pursuers. . .and newly ordained priests who were thought to be especially effective in the exercise of such powers" (89). With considerable homegrown clerical belief structure in a region beyond the grasp of Rome, Celtic tradition was assimilated into Catholic tradition.

Under the Penal Law umbrella, "in 1697 an act was passed that banished Catholic bishops and clergy from the country. Parish priests were allowed to stay, though they had to register with authority and recognize William as their king" (Kinealy, *New* 120). Since priestly ordination was banned under this act, aspiring priests were forced to travel to mainland Europe, specifically France, for seminary training. Upon ordination, priests

returned to Ireland steeped in anti-English sentiment and intoxicated with revolutionary ideals, courtesy of the French. This "dangerous" combination was ultimately recognized and stopped by England in 1795.

The year 1795 marks the founding of a Roman Catholic Seminary at Maynooth, County Kildare, funded by the British government through a grant of £9,000 per year (Larkin, "Church and State" 302). With restored ability to ordain priests, an eager Irish Catholic Church was grateful for the opportunity. But the promise of this sustained grant came at a high price. In 1799,

in secret negotiations with the Irish executive before the passage of the act of union, the four archbishops and six bishops who constituted the trustees of Maynooth accepted, on behalf of the entire episcopate, an unlimited government veto on appointments to vacant sees. In the same year, 1799, the Irish bishops gave assurances of their support for the proposed union. (MacDonagh, "Politicization" 38)

The Irish Catholic Church surrendered its ability to self-govern and placed itself at the mercy and whims of the political needs of England.

Following the rebellion of 1798, the Act of Union, passed in the summer of 1800, represented Britain's attempt to address an ever-escalating political climate between Ireland and Britain (Kinealy, *New* 145). On January 1, 1801, Ireland became an official subset of the United Kingdom (McDowell 203). Politically speaking, this unification "brought to an end the Irish parliament, which had existed in Dublin since 1297,

replacing it with direct rule from London" (Kinealy, *New* 146). Despite passionate opposition from Irish nationalists, the union was thought to be a palatable solution to some stakeholders, especially the Catholic Church.

With the unification with Great Britain came the promise of full emancipation for Irish Catholics. To some, the surrender of the notion of an independent nation for the right to elect Roman Catholic Members of Parliament (MPs) was a practical trade-off. This sacrifice of an independent nation proved a foolish trade as King George III rejected Catholic Emancipation upon unification (Kinealy, *New* 147; Whyte, "Age" 206).

An Irish historian has declared the first half of the nineteenth-century as "The Age of Daniel O'Connell" (Whyte, "Age" 204). Born to a small Catholic landlord from County Kerry in 1775, he was one of the first Catholics to enter the legal profession in 1798 (Whyte, "Age" 204). The central issue during the "Age of O'Connell" was Catholic Emancipation.

The Irish Catholic Church's concession to allowing veto power did not sit well with most factions, "for the anti-vetoists argued that the proposed concession would render Irish bishops, in time, so many puppets of a government dedicated to the retention of both the protestant and the British ascendancy in Ireland." (MacDonagh, "Politicization" 39). The anti-vetoists found a natural alliance in the politics of Daniel O'Connell. According to Oliver MacDonagh, "O'Connell's support, even amongst the laity, had been small in 1800; but in the veto controversy of 1808 he carried all with him except for a small aristocratic and haut bourgeois element" ("Politicization" 38). In

September 1808, at a synod in Dublin, this veto was overwhelmingly condemned by a vote of 23 to 3 (MacDonagh, "Politicization" 39).

An appeal of the veto condemnation was advanced to Rome. Not until February 16, 1814 did the Vatican respond with the Quarantotti rescript (MacDonagh, "Politicization" 39). This veto "recommended acceptance of the veto on the ground that the British crown desired it only for reasons of public security, and not at all to wean Irish [c]atholics from their religion" (MacDonagh, "Politicization" 39). In response, Daniel O'Connell organized and led a series of protests echoing "his stand upon a liberal principle: any Roman intervention would constitute an invasion of civil liberty, and better that Irish [c]atholics should remain forever without emancipation than that they should purchase it at such a price" (MacDonagh, "Politicization" 39).

Concurrent to O'Connell's secular battle with the people, members of the Irish Catholic hierarchy began a congruent effort in Rome. On May 25, 1814, Irish bishops gathered and

Amongst other things, they determined to send two prelates to Rome for the purpose of remonstrating against the rescript of Monsignore Quarantotti.

'Only one Irish bishop, however,' says Husenbeth, 'was thus commissioned,' who was the most Rev.

Dr. Murray, coadjutor of the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Troy; the other deputy was their long-tried and faithful agent, Dr. Milner. (Amherst 176)

In a December 7, 1814 letter addressed to Dr. Milner (while in Rome) from his close friend Dr. Moylan, Bishop of Cork, Moylan conveys his heartfelt belief concerning the veto matter (Amherst 177). Bishop Moylan was in his eighties at the time of this writing; he died two months after writing this letter:

My dear and honoured lord, I am the oldest of the Catholic prelates in this kingdom, and expect soon to appear before the awful tribunal of the Almighty Judge, in whose sacred presence I solemnly declare that any compromise made or control whatever given to our Protestant Government or ministers, in the appointment or nomination of the Catholic bishops or clergy of this kingdom, or any interference whatsoever or influence over them in the exercise of their spiritual functions, will eventually lead to the subversion of our venerable hierarchy, and, in consequence, to the ruin of the Catholic religion in this long-suffering and oppressed Catholic country. It would certainly cause the greatest dissatisfaction in the minds of the Catholic body, lessen their attachment and respect to the Holy See, and by degrees dispose them for every bad change. (qtd. in Amherst 177)

Following the protests and the Irish bishops' appeal to Rome, "the Quarantotti rescript was withdrawn and reexamined by the pope and propaganda" (MacDonagh, "Politicization" 39). Following Drs. Murray's and Milner's visit to Rome, Pope Pius VII

through the hands of Cardinal Litta consented to "give the English government a very limited veto, Milner yielded and defended the action of his holiness" (Amherst 189).

This limited veto is detailed in William Amherst's *The History of Catholic Emancipation*:

In the plan laid down in the cardinal's letter, all the names were to be sent in at once to the Government. How, then, was the evil to be avoided to prevent which Milner devised his scheme of sending only one name at a time? The case was provided for in this way: if the Government were to desire one or more names to be expunged, they might point out the name or names; but in doing so, they were "to leave a sufficient number for his Holiness to choose there from, individuals whom he might deem best qualified in the Lord for governing the vacant churches." (Amherst 173)

Daniel O'Connell, unsatisfied with Pope Pius VII's ruling, denounced Dr. Milner's acquiescence, referring to Dr. Milner as "unmanly" among other insulting comments (Amherst 184) . After gaining greater perspective and context, O'Connell publically "made amends for this ungracious attack" (Amherst 184).

Following the veto question and the tempering of political complexities surrounding it, O'Connell expanded the efforts of emancipation. In 1823, to attain Catholic Emancipation, O'Connell devised a political strategy which essentially tapped a new resource. "His achievement was to put together a coalition of Irish Catholics of all kinds -- bishops, priests, gentry, tenants, labourers, journalists and merchants" (Atkin and

Tallett 96). While previous attempts to gain political relevance drained the few economically solvent Catholics, O'Connell's plan, the Catholic Association, enlisted the masses. This plan was a two-pronged attack: firstly, it required the aid of local Catholic clergy and secondly, it initiated the "Catholic Rent" of one penny per month (Whyte, "Age" 206). This previously untapped resource, the clergy, enabled regular, widespread communication; the Catholic Rent was an attainable sum for poor families and in turn it enabled them to become more emotionally invested in the cause. According to Emmet Larkin, "By incorporating the clergy he secured the only institutional apparatus that permeated, however imperfectly, to the grass roots, and from the masses he acquired all the strength and menace implicit in their aggregate numbers" ("Church, State, and Nation" 1248). This grassroots unification ultimately influenced politics as evidenced by the general election of 1826. In Counties Waterford, Louth, Westmeath, and Monaghan, Catholic opposing incumbents were replaced by Catholic supporting Protestants (Whyte, "Age" 207). In the County Clare election of 1828, Daniel O'Connell earned a symbolic victory (2,057 votes) over incumbent Vesey Fitzgerald (982 votes) (Whyte, "Age" 207). Due to the fact O'Connell was a Catholic, he was unable to assume this position in Parliament (Whyte, "Age" 207). This victory was arguably a product of the priests' involvement in activities such as:

Fr. Tom McGuire roared to Vesey Fitzgerald's tenants at the polling booth, "whose confederates have through all ages joined the descendents of the Dane, the Norman, and the Saxon, in burning your churches, in levelling [sic] your



altars, in slaughtering your clergy, in stamping out your religion. Let every renegade to God and his country follow Vesey Fitzgerald, and every true Catholic Irishman follow me." (qtd. in MacDonagh, "Politicization" 43)

In "The Politicization of the Irish Catholic Bishops, 1800-1850," Oliver MacDonagh asserts, "it was O'Connell's political activity, more than any other factor, which forced the hierarchy into secular politics in Ireland, and determined the role which it was to play" (37-38). William Amherst writes, "O'Connell was the only man who ever united the whole Catholic population; and O'Connell comes once in a thousand years" (199). O'Connell's strategy fostered a development even greater than eventual emancipation (1829), the politicization of the Irish Catholic Church.

Daniel O'Connell maintained a close relationship with the Irish Catholic hierarchy. Perhaps his greatest hierarchical ally was Archbishop John MacHale of Tuam (1791-1881). O'Connell fondly referred to Archbishop John MacHale as the "Light of the West [of Ireland]" (O'Reilly x) and the "Lion of the fold of Judah" (Waldron, "Making" 96).

John MacHale was born in Tubbernavine, County Mayo to a highly respected, devout Catholic family. John's father, Patrick MacHale, was an innkeeper, farmer, and fine woolen merchant (O'Reilly 8). John MacHale was the family's fifth son and was afforded an education at the local hedge school at Leath-Ardán, starting at the age of five (O'Reilly 16). At this hedge-school "he received the rudiments of knowledge. A rude cabin with turf seats along the whitewashed walls" (Bourke 34). At thirteen, John

attended school in the town of Castlebar where he studied Latin, Greek, and English ("Most Reverend Dr. John MacHale"). As the son of an innkeeper, John was continually exposed to contemporary and historic political discussions:

Patrick MacHale, as he sat, in the long winter evenings,  
with his guests, neighbors, and large circle of children  
around his own wide hearth and blazing fire of  
mountainpeat, would discourse intelligently on the  
speeches of Flood and Grattan, on the doings of Lord  
Charlemont and his Irish Volunteers, on the hoped-for  
aid from France, whose armies began to fill Europe and  
even England with just alarm. . . Such were the topics of  
conversation around the hospitable hearth of the MacHales.

(O'Reilly 14)

Stories of the French Revolution were often provided first hand from John's uncle, Father Rickard Mac Keale [earlier spelling] as he described his flight from France. His uncle for "three days and three nights [hid] in a box half filled with lumber, into which he had been stowed by the good Sisters of Charity, when the myrmidons of Robespierre were scouring the convent premises for some surplised 'suspect'" (Bourke 35). Often Father Mac Keale recalled:

by his brother's fireside at Tubbernavine, some of the horrors  
he had been doomed to witness in the French Capital, the death  
of the King and Queen, the massacre of September, the flight

of the nobles, the fearful persecutions to which religion was subjected, the working of the Guillotine, and the thrilling tales of the Reign of Terror. (O'Reilly 21)

As a child, John MacHale and his family maintained a close relationship with their parish priest, Father Andrew Conry of Laherdane. The young John MacHale began serving mass alongside Father Conry in 1796 (Bourke 31). Father Conry was schooled in France. As such, he as well was all too familiar with the violence and the Revolution's denouncement of Roman-controlled Catholicism. Father Conry had "more than once warned his flock against the infidel principles proclaimed by the Revolution" (O'Reilly 21). His message even supported English rule over French influence: "bad as the English are, they believe in God, but the French people, whom I know well have no faith in God; they have no religion; in name they are Catholic; infidel in act and life" (Bourke 31). In exalting his view, Father Conry had set a stage of fear in the people of his parish as General Humbert's army landed in nearby Kilcomin on August 22, 1798 (O'Reilly 21). One of John MacHale's biographers, Father Ulick Bourke, describes the anticipation of the French army as a result of Father Conry's warnings: "The old, the young, the married and single were all alike plunged into a sea of uncertainty and of the wildest dread" (Bourke 35).

On August 25, 1798, General Humbert's army had taken possession of Killala and Ballina (O'Reilly 21). Much to the surprise of the MacHales and their fellow villagers, "many a fervent prayer went up in thanksgiving that the people were spared the recurrence of the horrors attendant on Cromwell's wars" (O'Reilly 23). French rule in the

"Republic of Connacht" could not be sustained. On September 8, 1798, the French Army (in collaboration with ill-equipped, local Irish rebels) was defeated at Ballinamuck, County Longford (Beiner 202). On September 23, 1798, "the remaining rebel contingent in Killala was defeated putting an end to the French attempted invasion" (Beiner 202).

Following the French defeat, a tragic irony unfolded. Father Andrew Conry was hanged from a tree in Castlebar ("Most Reverend Dr. John MacHale"). Father Conry was court-martialed, condemned, and quickly hanged on the order of the Honorable Denis Browne. The following is a recollection of the circumstances reported to Denis Browne, Lieutenant of County Mayo regarding Father Andrew Conry:

Because, he as a gentlemen and a man of education, he had spoken kindly and courteously to the French officers and men, and gave them merely the show of humble hospitality which his poverty allowed, and because the soldiers bivouaced, and that without knowledge or leave, in the little thatched house which served as a chapel. (Bourke 37)

The man who instilled fear in his parishioners by convincing his flock they were better served by God-fearing English than "atheist" French Catholics was executed by that same God-fearing hand. This act, "made an indelible impression on his [John MacHale] youthful mind, and assisted in moulding his views regarding the minions of English cruelty and barbarity in Ireland. He had a horror for revolutions, French or Irish" (Bourke 38).

John MacHale entered Maynooth College in 1807 (Bradley 124). Upon graduation in the summer of 1814, MacHale was ordained and appointed Lecturer of Dogmatic Theology at Maynooth College; he maintained this position for six years (Bourke 56). In 1820, he was elevated to the position of Professor of Dogmatic Theology (Bourke 58). In 1820, Father John MacHale launched his alter-ego, Hierophilus. With his pen as his weapon, MacHale authored volumes of letters which were subsequently published as the *Chronicle* (Atkin and Tallett 96). The topics spanned the gamut of contemporary and enduring political rhetoric, such as "the tyranny of the upper classes; the still abiding 'spirit' of penal laws" (Bourke 68). Through the use of logic and theological knowledge, Hierophilus' skillful writings deemed him "champion of the Catholic people" (Bourke 64). The pseudonym, though steeped with mystery and intrigue at first, evolved into a transparent veil. It is documented Hierophilus' true identity was well known to the masses by 1825 at the latest (Bourke 74). Despite his political moonlighting, Father John MacHale was consecrated Bishop of Maronia in Greece and Coadjutor to his Lordship of Killala with right of succession to the See of St. Muiredach in 1825 (Bourke 71).

The letters of Hierophilus worked in tandem with the Catholic Emancipation efforts of Daniel O'Connell. Similarly, the political actions of Bishop John MacHale also supported the cause:

Dr. MacHale dashed with the people in the thick of the  
political fight; he roused the spirit of those that lay  
dormant, encouraged the timorous by his eloquence

and personal prestige, and finally routed completely  
the Tory Party, represented by Hon. Denis Browne and  
the House of Westport. (Bourke 80-81)

The quotation above refers to the Election of 1826. It is noteworthy to point out the Honorable Denis Browne is the same Denis Browne responsible for the death of the Bishop John MacHale's childhood priest, Father Conry. Yet another interesting, tangential point is Archbishop John MacHale's purchase of Denis Browne's home near Claremorris for use as a convent for the Sisters of Mercy years later (O'Reilly 26). Bishop John MacHale was appointed Archbishop of Tuam in 1834 (Bane 45).

Seemingly overnight, the Irish Catholic hierarchy demonstrated a change of heart with respect to grassroots political activity following the Catholic Emancipation of 1829:

In a joint statement of 1830, drawn up by Doyle (James Doyle, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin), the bishops counseled all clergy to keep aloof from political activity of every kind in the future; and in the following year, the priests of the ecclesiastical province of Leinster. . .were ordered to refuse to allow ecclesiastical buildings of any kind to be used for political purposes. (MacDonagh, "Politicization" 43-44)

The timing of this joint statement is particularly curious when it is analyzed in context. Following the success of the Catholic Association, the Irish Catholic Church seemed to be at a breaking point: "after 1830, the Church, faced with bankruptcy of the middle classes and the poverty of the peasantry, and with the need for capital every day

increasing because of population pressure, had either to do without or turn to the only possible alternative -- the British State" (Larkin, "Church and State" 303). The Irish Catholic Church was vulnerable.

One considerable concession made by the Irish Catholic Church came in the form of the Education Act of 1831. This act facilitated a nondenominational educational system of which only two of seven seats on the National Board could be filled by members of the Church hierarchy; additionally, the Church would have no input into curriculum and staffing (Larkin, "Church and State" 303).

The 1831 Education Act divided the Irish Catholic Church hierarchy. Bishop John MacHale:

led the opposition to the National Education system. . . on the grounds that it was anti-Catholic and anti-nationalist. Archbishops Crolly of Armagh and Murray of Dublin did not agree with him. Murray became a member of the Board of National Education and in the 1830s Crolly opened national schools in Armagh city and county and also in rural Louth. These two along with the influential Bishop Doyle of Kildare and Leighlin and fifteen other bishops were prepared to give the National system of education a fair trial but Machale [sic] and his following nine would not budge and Rome was asked to adjudicate. (Bradley 127)

In January 1834, the 1830 Leinster edict which dissuaded priests from political activity and banned the use of churches for political gatherings was, officially, applied to all of Ireland by hierarchically ordering:

priests stay clear of politics and concern themselves solely with their spiritual vocations, and the other making generally applicable throughout Ireland the Leinster prohibition against the use of church buildings for any secular purpose whatever 'except in cases connected with charity or religion.'

(MacDonagh, "Politicization" 44)

The timing of the Irish Catholic Church's change of heart in the early 1830s directly corresponds to Daniel O'Connell's second fight -- for the repeal of the Act of Union. For officially "calling off the dogs," the Church was rewarded over the next fifteen years with a generous pay-off from the British government in the form of:

a Charitable Bequests Act, a substantial increase in the grant at Maynooth, University Education for Catholics, and finally State endowment for the Catholic clergy. In fact, as one comes to realize that the financial position of the Church was growing more desperate each year, the whole pattern of ecclesiastic and secular politics in Ireland in the 1830's and 40's becomes more intelligible. (Larkin, "Church and State" 303).

The resolutions of the January 1843 Dublin Synod did little to curtail the political actions of the clergy. As Oliver MacDonagh quotes:



when in October 1834 Bishop Blake of Dromore presided over an O'Connell tribute meeting held in the grounds of his cathedral, he argued that all was in accordance with the resolutions, first, because the meeting took place outside and not within the church, and secondly because rewarding O'Connell for his past exertions was a charitable and not a political affair. (qtd. 45)

The Penal Laws had fostered an environment that operated without on-site supervision, i.e. bishop control. This facilitated a culture where:

hierarchical authority had been so weakened that the attempt to reassert Episcopal control was met with fierce and sustained resistance on the part of the lower clergy. With clerical corruption as their excuse, and the power of Rome over episcopal appointments coupled with the anti-clericalism of a disgusted laity as their weapons, the Bishops successfully broke the traditional power of their priests. (Larkin, "Church and State" 301)

Although the very grass root clerical efforts that ultimately led to Catholic Emancipation were officially weeded from O'Connell's political arsenal by upper-echelon Church officials, the seeds of repeal were sown in the local parish priests.

Population statistics of Ireland preceding the Famine are remarkable. In *A Death Dealing Famine*, Irish historian Christine Kinealy reports, "In 1800, the population of Ireland had been approximately 5.5 million, rising to 7 million in 1821 (the year of the first national census in Ireland) and to 8.5 million in 1841" (37). Emmet Larkin,

sociologist and professor, conservatively estimates in 1840, there was one priest per three thousand Catholics ("Devotional" 650). Escalating population and rural mileage fostered an environment of lax worship.

An illustrative example of the sporadic, pastoral care of Pre-Famine, rural Ireland is found in a letter dated February 6, 1826 written by the Bishop of Elphin, George T. Plunkett. In this correspondence, Bishop Plunkett disputes allegations brought upon him by the Augustinians of his diocese to Cardinal Somaglia, Prefect of Propaganda (Rome):

Hundreds of Person's had not been to confession for 20  
year's [sic]. Hundreds of couples had been married who  
had not made their first communion. The flock was ignorant  
generally of what was necessary to be known *necessitate  
medii* attendance at Mass on Sundays not to talk of festivals  
was disregarded and innumerable couples had lived as man  
and wife who had never been married and many others in  
flagrant and notorious adultery.

(qtd. in Larkin, "Church and State" 300)

Quantity was not the sole challenge faced by Irish Catholic Church leaders. Quality, by Roman standards, of clergy is another factor that continually precluded dogmatic Catholic practices. Published in Emmet Larkin's "Church and the State of Ireland," a series of letters from a priest to his agent in Rome regarding nominations for the next Archbishop to the See of Cashel (1823) illustrates the "Wild West" actions of Irish priests:

the people will say that the Bishops and Priests are all bad men otherwise they would not name such a profligate [Father Collins] -- He also said that 3 carts would not convey all the children Collins has in London over to Ireland. . .he [Father Slattery] was educated 4 years in a Protestant school, and he haunted the brothels of Dublin for 4 years -- This is the way with all Students of Trinity College. (295)

Whether the aforementioned was an accurate depiction of Collins' and Slattery's character, or whether the letter writer (Father Laffan) engineered a smear campaign to ensure personal promotion, these shenanigans did little to reign in dogmatically rebellious Irish Catholics.

In addition to questionable behaviors, parish priests were often accused during the early nineteenth-century of inflating tithes, fees for rites, and extorting relative luxuries. In *Land and Popular Politics in Ireland: County Mayo from the Plantation to the Land War*, historian Donald Jordan references a 1823 excerpt from the Blake Family's *Letters from the Irish Highlands*:

The rites of the Roman catholic church [sic], in Ireland at least, are all performed at home; except indeed the marriage ceremony, which occasionally takes place in the priest's house. Twice a year he comes round the parish, for the purpose of confession; and in the different villages, takes up his station in some snug cabin, where he expects to be treated with white

bread, tea, sugar, and whiskey. Those who, in more prosperous times, probably esteemed the entertainment of this reverend guest as an honour, now frequently complain of it as a burden. A poor woman who, on the last of these occasions, walked four miles in search of a teapot, gave as her reason, that neither bread, butter, nor milk, would be considered acceptable without the addition of tea and spirits. Nay, it is a fact, that a priest, on the Sunday previous to commencing his rounds, gave public notice after mass, that as tea, sugar, and flour were to be had in the neighborhood, there would be no excuse for those who were not prepared. (qtd. in Jordan, *Land* 91-92)

The 1820s brought a new challenge to the Irish Catholic Church. Protestant evangelicals known as "Biblicals" traveled throughout Ireland to spread their gospel. These religious zealots were perceived as fierce competition for the Irish Catholic Church. Bibles in arms, these missionaries were well-read and brimming with energy. "These evangelists founded schools, printed the Bible in Irish, distributed countless tracts, and preached their word wherever they found an audience" (Larkin, "Church and State," 303). To some, the "Biblicals" epitomized moral character. With some priests participating in less than Godly antics, the Irish Catholic Church was desperate to extinguish behaviors unbecoming of men of the cloth. The Biblicals were a primary target of the letters of Hierophilus. His second letter under the pseudonym (February 1820) was the first of many that "sounded against the insidious schemes of the Kildare Street Society and the Biblical Propaganda" (O'Reilly 76).

The founding of the Royal Catholic College of Maynooth in 1795 contributed greatly to the uniformity of the Irish Catholic clergy that was realized during the latter half of the nineteenth-century.

Between 1795 and 1845 Maynooth provided the Irish Church with perhaps something more than half the priests it needed.

After 1845, as a result of Sir Robert Peel's increased grant [from £9,000 to £26,000 annually], Maynooth produced priests enough, in the face of a declining population, to provide for the whole of the Irish Church. By 1850, for example, the great majority of bishops, and by 1875 the great majority of the priests, on the Irish mission had been trained at Maynooth.

(Larkin, "Church, State, and Nation" 1255)

Essentially, Maynooth served as an homogenized "priest factory" and from 1832-1878 the factory was complete with a prototype.

Paul Cullen served as the Rector of Irish College in Rome from 1832 through 1850. During his time as rector, Cullen wielded tremendous influence at Maynooth. But his influence would essentially dominate the Irish Catholic Church through his appointment in 1849 as Archbishop of Armagh and apostolic delegate to the Holy See; and through his appointment as the Archbishop of Dublin in 1852. In 1866, Paul Cullen was appointed the first Irish Cardinal. Cardinal Cullen exemplified the Roman ideal, being "a product of the new counter-reformation, a maximalist in doctrine and in pressing papal claims and the hierarchical principle and authoritarianism in the church"

(MacDonagh, "Politicization" 51). It was Cardinal Cullen who was at the helm during the "devotional revolution." Under his zealous leadership "new devotional exercises as the rosary, perpetual adoration, vespers, devotion to the Sacred Heart, and retreats and the use of such devotional aids as scapulars, missals, and holy pictures" became mainstream (Miller, "Catholicism" 82). Cardinal Cullen also introduced "new religious orders. . .including the Redemptorists and the Sisters of Mercy" (Atkin and Tallett 118).

Cullen's dogmatic militancy cannot be solely credited with the "devotional revolution." Irish circumstances complemented his leadership in attributing to the zealous integration of the Roman ideal. Leadership, coupled with timing, provided a fertile environment for change.

Crop failures were no stranger to Ireland's agricultural landscape. The latter half of the eighteenth-century brought fourteen barren seasons; however, "They were all. . .local or regional, and excess mortality tended to be slight" (Kinealy, *Death* 44). The first half of the nineteenth-century was also laden with regional crop failures. The food shortages following the end of the Napoleonic Wars were not confined to Ireland, but were evident throughout all of western Europe (Kinealy, *Death* 45). With respect to Ireland, it was not until "1845-48, however, three out of four harvests failed, and failed so completely that perhaps one million starved and another million were forced to emigrate" (Miller, "Catholicism" 91). It was at this pivotal time that pseudo-Catholic/Celtic traditions began to fall out of favor. With respect to holy wells, stations, feasts, and pilgrimages:

The magic of predictive celebration had broken down;

events had proved that it did not work. When an element in a religious structure ceases to perform its role, the structural-functionalist expects the structure to change so as to perform the role in a different way. (Miller, "Catholicism" 91)

Cardinal Paul Cullen (Archbishop at the time) seized the opportunity to "Vaticanize" Post-Famine Ireland. The transition from "rounds" to "rosary" was underway.

In "Church, State, and Nation in Modern Ireland," Emmet Larkin identifies the values of the Maynooth priest, "He was at once a patriot in politics and a rigorist in his moral theology" (1255). Groomed by Cullen in discipline and piety, the Maynooth priests channeled their energies towards the political arena as opposed to the outlets of days past. In a letter dated May 20, 1843 to Paul Cullen from his cousin Thomas Cullen (Maynooth seminarian) "There is no talk about anything else but Dan and Repeal" (qtd. Larkin, "Church, State, and Nation" 1257). Despite the Irish Catholic hierarchy's ban of political activity, "1839-1843, the majority of the Irish hierarchy and the great body of the subordinate clergy threw themselves into a campaign whose objects were professedly extra-religious and politically radical, and which Rome and Westminster alike opposed" (MacDonagh, "Politicization" 38).

Nineteenth-century Maynooth priests were absorbed in provincial matters. They were as much disciples of O'Connell as they were Jesus of Nazareth. Cardinal Cullen's emphasis on discipline and pastoral care provided heightened structure that eluded the Pre-Famine political arena. The nationalist movement had truly found its way to the pulpit; "what was created at Maynooth was a commitment to constitutional nationalism

that precluded the physical-force tradition in modern Irish politics" (Larkin, "Church, State, and Nation" 1257). Irish-nationalist writer Katharine Tynan recalls, "at that time[era of the Land League] the difference between the priest who had been educated abroad and the Maynooth priest was very marked" (Tynan 88-89).

The year 1858 marks the trans-Atlantic formation of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (I. R. B.), or more commonly the "Fenians" (Kinealy, *New* 171). With both Dublin and New York membership bases, the Fenian organization benefited from a less colloquial vision than other anti-British Rule organizations of the past (e.g. Young Ireland and 1848 Uprising) (Moody, "Fenianism" 231; Ryan, *Chief* 156-169). The American contingency was essentially comprised of Famine emigrants, sprinkled with 1848 Uprising exiles (Devoy 205; Kinealy, *New* 171; Ryan, *Chief* 160). But as the 1860s progressed, American Fenians acquired a new skill set (Kinealy, *New* 172).

Fresh from the battlefields of the American Civil War, many Irish emigrants had honed their marksmanship and military strategy skills (Devoy 268). A significant number returned to their homeland with renewed resources and a sole objective -- independence. Irish historian T.W. Moody describes this period as "fierce repudiation of constitutionalism and a fanatical reliance on physical force alone" ("Fenianism" 230).

Emmet Larkin writes, "By 1830, in any case, the priests were badly beaten in the game of ecclesiastical politics and for this reason, among others, they took up the newer game of secular politics, which had begun with Catholic Emancipation, with old relish and more" ("Church and State" 301-302). Despite the 1830 bishops' ban of clerical activity in politics, Fenianism was hardly discouraged by the Irish Catholic Church. A



letter dated February 6, 1866 from William Keane, Bishop of Cloyne, to the Irish College Rector in Rome, Tobias Kirby (Cullen's successor), illustrates the precariousness of the Irish Catholic Church's Fenian position:

The first question of the day is that of 'Fenianism'. . . It is destined to exercise an extraordinary influence on the future relations between priests and people. . . The mass of the public, down to the very children going to school are either Fenians or sympathise with the Fenians, not because they wish to give up the faith, or to neglect their religious duties, but because they hate England the enemy of their country and their creed, and of the Holy Father and of everything Catholic.

(qtd. in Larkin, "Church, State, and Nation" 1261)

Upon describing the pervasive ideology of the Fenian brotherhood, Keane concludes his message to Kirby by rationalizing tolerance for the movement: "If once the masses throw off the respect they have always had for their priests, then will come the real Irish difficulty for England and for all concerned" (Larkin, "Church, State, and Nation" 1261).

The Irish Catholic Church hierarchy was forced to quietly endure nationalist politics; Fenian violence was no exception. To forcibly admonish such activities would fracture the mission of attaining a true Irish Catholic state. As a result, "the Church was in the unenviable position of being assigned to the oars, while their constitutional lay allies took the helm, in a ship of state pursued by revolutionary pirates" (Larkin, "Church and State" 305).

Despite the dogmatic accomplishments of Cardinal Paul Cullen, the controversies surrounding the power of veto, the Education Act of 1831, and Rome's desire for politically abstinent clergy, the Irish Catholic Church's upper-echelon remained divided. Perhaps the strongest example of internal division speaks to the mutual disdain of Archbishop of Dublin (future Cardinal) Paul Cullen and Archbishop of Tuam John MacHale:

The beginnings of the conflict between Cullen and MacHale are usually sited in the late 1850's and early 1860's but the seeds were already sown as far back as 1840, when Paul Cullen, then Rector of the Irish College in Rome, came to Ireland to investigate the National Schools dispute. Cullen's evidence was very important on that occasion and the decision went against MacHale and his supporters. When, then, this same Paul Cullen arrived in Ireland in 1850 with his mission of disciplining the Irish church and fashioning a more centralised Roman church, it was fairly inevitable that there would be clashes with the independent-minded MacHale. (Bane 46-47)

Decades of internal disputes drove a wedge through Irish Church leadership efforts; their strength was weakened. Instead, the Irish Catholic Church's enduring strength fell to the capillary action of local parish priests.

In "The Priest and the Agent: Social Drama and Class Consciousness in the West of Ireland," anthropologist Lawrence J. Taylor contends: "While it is clear from the work

of Connolly, Larkin, and others that the place of the Church in local society changed through the middle decades of the nineteenth century, and that natural, folk-Catholicism suffered as a result, the magical attributes of priesthood may not have vanished" (703). To what degree did rural parishioners believe in the magical abilities of their priests? In Taylor's aforementioned article, the legend of Father Peter McDevitt is presented. Father McDevitt served as parish priest from 1886-1905 and he is characterized, "as the defender and avenger of the unfortunate, and his weapons are supernatural. Sometimes he simply freezes his opponents with his breath, but most often he delivers a damning prophecy of great ill fortune that is to befall enemies" (Taylor 709).

Under the influence of Archbishop of Dublin's (Cardinal) Cullen, Post-Famine priests were well-disciplined and upheld Vatican teachings (relatively speaking). Schooled at Maynooth, they were ingrained with passionate, nationalist ideals; clearly influenced by the politics of Archbishop of Tuam John MacHale. But how did the Post-Famine "priestly climate" differ from the priests' climate of the Repeal movement? The difference was, at last, the priests had a choir in which to preach. With escalating mass attendance, the Post-Famine, local parish priests enjoyed a stable, captive audience each week. In *Priests, Prelates and People*, Nicholas Atkin and Frank Tallett write:

In the 1870s, the better-trained and energetic clergy, produced by the earlier seminary reforms, went out of its way to stimulate religious fervour, resulting in higher attendance at mass, more and bigger churches and greater displays of public piety. Such features were especially prominent in the predominately agricultural western

counties where the faith had traditionally been weakest thanks to its isolation and distance from Dublin. (182)

Through starvation, disease, and emigration, the Irish peasantry was nearly eradicated as a result of the Famine. Additionally, grossly irresponsible landlords (like those parodied in Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent*, 1800) lost possession of their lands through continued mismanagement. This led to a mass real estate transaction in 1849 -- the Encumbered Estates Courts. This massive transaction provided land ownership for, in Darwinian terms, the "fittest." This new generation of landlords, were for the most part, present; unlike the majority of Pre-Famine landlords. These economic shifts initiated the rise of "a new Irish Catholic, Gaelic-speaking middle class" (Taylor 701).

In Post-Famine Ireland, the priest was typically a member of this emerging middle class (Taylor 700). This new middle class required a leader and the natural choice was the local parish priest. This leadership role not only provided spiritual guidance, but secular guidance as well since "rural priests were almost alone among local Catholics in such regions in their ability to communicate and even mobilize for political ends" (Taylor 706). The rural, Pre-Famine priest can be characterized as a figure whose vocational responsibilities were overwhelming. The inability to be "hands-on" within the congregation fostered a laissez-faire attitude with respect to devout practice. As such, priests placed great focus on high volume activities such as pilgrimages and saintly feasts; essentially these activities served as priestly "crowd-pleasers." But the Famine's rapid population decline contributed to a more favorable priest-to-worshipper ratio of

1:900 (Miller, "Catholicism" 83), while the failing crops left the rural Irish to question the effectiveness of their Celtic traditions. With the Irish language and Gaelic culture intentionally being eradicated by the British government, the Post-Famine Irish were literally faced with an identity crisis. How would the Post-Famine Irish identify themselves? Perhaps "Mother England's" sustained desire to Anglicize the Irish sealed the deal in terms of this new identity. This identity void was filled with the "forbidden fruit of the British Isles" -- the Roman Catholic Church. Following the Famine the Irish flocked to the Church in both a spiritual and physical sense. In "The Devotional Revolution of Ireland, 1850-1875," Emmet Larkin uses the notion of this identity crisis as the supposition for this devotional revolution: "The devotional revolution, I would argue further, provided the Irish with a substitute symbolic language and offered them a new cultural heritage with which they could identify and be identified and through which they could identify with one another" (649). From the first invasion of the Normans, the Irish have fought to realize independence. Through time, assimilation, and restriction a pure Gaelic state could never come to fruition. However, given an array of circumstances, many Irish chose to identify themselves on their own terms, as Catholics.

To say the Irish Catholic Church benefitted from the Famine and British oppression is an understatement. The preceding pages illustrate the evolution of belief structures and emerging political power. The resulting "devotional revolution" significantly altered the Irish culture in one generation. The goal of an Irish Catholic state was realized.

## Chapter 4

### POST-FAMINE IRELAND: EMIGRATION AND REINVENTION

During the Great Famine, Ireland experienced a seismic demographic shift. The loss of at least one million people due to famine related deaths, coupled with the concurrent emigration of one million people, decimated the Irish population by at least twenty-five percent between 1846-1851 (Kinealy, *Death 2*, 151). Post-Famine, residential Irish were left to adjust to a significantly smaller population and cope with the psychological aftermath of famine. The decades immediately following the Great Famine witnessed altered agrarian practices which ultimately shaped economic developments, societal norms, and burgeoning political activity.

The catastrophic failure of the potato crop did not curb the Irish peasantry's dependency upon it (Clark, *Social* 142). In the peasant-filled province of Connacht, in the year 1871 (Census year), potato production per capita was over 1.6 times the production of both Leinster and Ulster; it was 1.2 times the production in Munster (*Agricultural Statistics, 1871* xxix). Despite the continued dependence on the potato in the West, "The diet of the poor labourers slowly became more diverse" (Kinealy, *Death* 153). Figure 1 illustrates allocated acreage per crop, throughout Ireland, in the years following the Famine. There, acre dedication of the potato is set in context with other major crops. As the graph indicates, the potato crop experienced some peaks and valleys, but remained relatively stable, while oat cultivation declined steadily. Wheat, barley, and

turnip cultivation remained relatively stable. The graph's anomaly is clearly the hay crop. For over a quarter of a century, hay's trend line clearly increased. Perhaps hay cultivation is best juxtaposed with the data contained in Figure 2.

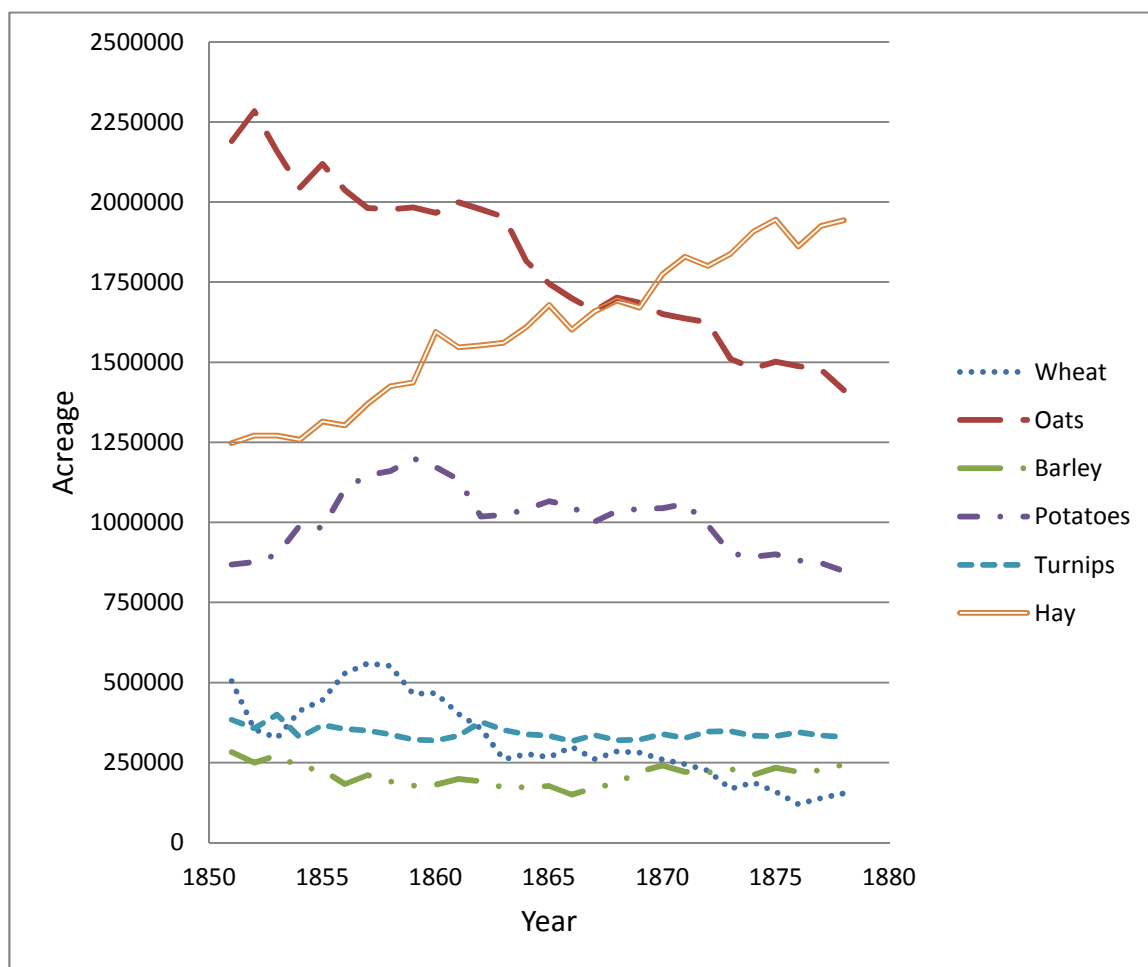


Figure 1. Acre Dedication to Each Major Crop, 1851-1878; data gathered from *Agricultural Statistics 1854, 1855, 1858, 1860, 1861, 1864, 1868, 1874, 1875, 1876, 1877, and 1880* and *General Abstracts of Acreage, Under Crops and Livestock, 1877-1878*.

As Figures 1 and 2 illustrate, the increased hay production corresponds to the increase of cattle and sheep rearing, while other species of livestock (horses, mules, asses, pigs, and goats) remain relatively stable during this indicated time period. Husbandry practices of this period identified hay as a primary staple for cattle and sheep (Coleman 342). These data not only suggest, but affirm Post-Famine Ireland's evolution

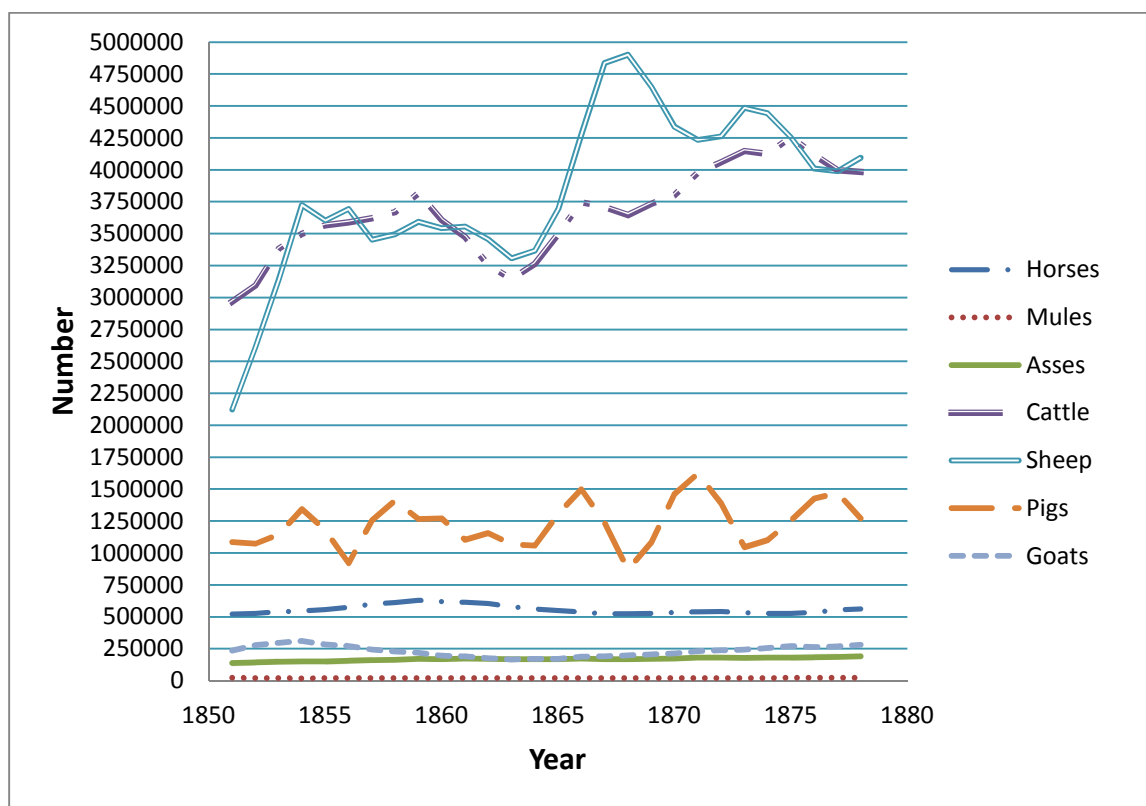


Figure 2. Number of Livestock Per Species, 1851-1878; ; data gathered from *Agricultural Statistics 1855, 1857, 1860, 1861, 1864, 1863, 1865, 1868, 1869, 1870, 1871, 1872, 1874, 1875, 1876, 1877, and 1880* and *General Abstracts of Acreage Under Crops and Livestock, 1869, 1876-77 and 1877-1878*.



from a primarily tillage society to one of pastoral dominance: "By 1881 twice as much land was used for pasture as was used for growing crops" (Kinealy, *New* 175). This relatively swift shift of agrarian practice is attributed to Post-Famine economic conditions and political actions of lawmakers.

In 1841, the price of cattle and sheep per unit, respectively was £6 10s and £1 2s (*Agricultural Statistics, 1857* xiv). As indicated by Table 1, farmers -- both large and small -- had good reason to put down the hoe; cattle prices climbed considerably between 1841 and 1875. (It is interesting to note by 1875 fourth class cattle prices declined slightly in spite of the increases in the other classes.)

Table 1

Average Price Fetched for Cattle at the Ballinasloe Fair<sup>9</sup>

	<b>Cattle (First Class)</b>			<b>Cattle (Second Class)</b>			<b>Cattle (Third Class)</b>			<b>Cattle (Fourth Class)</b>		
<b>1855</b>	£21	17s	6d	£18	5s	0d	£15	0s	0d	£9	5s	0d
<b>1865</b>	£22	10s	0d	£18	10s	0d	£13	10s	0d	£9	0s	0d
<b>1875</b>	£25	10s	0d	£18	10s	0d	£12	10s	0d	£7	0s	0d

Source: Pim, Joseph Todhunter. *The Economic and Social Condition of Ireland, 1899*, 457.

According to the report, *The Economic and Social Condition of Ireland, 1899*, the "price of livestock reached their highest level in 1875 and 1876" (Pim 456). In addition to the

9. The Ballinasloe Fair of County Galway held in October served as the largest livestock trading event in West of Ireland (Jordan, *Land* 54, 65, 116). Still held in October, the fair is an international event primarily showcasing horses (Mac Con Uladh).

escalating cattle prices, labor cost savings were an incentive to farm pastorally as crops required a "great deal of extra effort" (Lee 10). Added encouragement to transition to grazier farming came with the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 (Kinealy, *New* 175; McKeown 353).

Cattle and sheep husbandry require pasture which is spatially inconsistent with the traditional land parceling structure of Pre-Famine, agricultural Ireland. The land parceling structure, or "rundale" was an open-field system of cultivation (McCourt 69). In the rundale system, the lands "surrounding a settlement was worked as a joint farm, with individual plots and strips scattered through the arable land, some on the constantly tilled infield and some on the shifting outfield patches reclaimed periodically from the waste [land]. Sometimes the land was periodically redistributed among the joint tenants" (Johnson 167). Donald Jordan suggests the rundale system "may have its roots in Celtic, Iron Age Ireland" (*Land* 54).

As the population in rural Pre-Famine Ireland increased, the rundale system became geometrically more complicated through the continual subdivision for subsequent generation farmers: "A traditional practice common in Ireland was the division of a farm among the male heirs of a family; and although this practice was illegal, unless a landlord managed his estate with rigid vigour it was impossible to suppress, if only because subdivision of this nature could take place privately on an informal basis" (Johnson 167).

The rundale system was an obstacle for landowners as it precluded them from cashing in on the fiscal benefits of grazier farming. For many landlords during and after

the Famine, the solution rested in the consolidation of small plots of land through mass eviction: "Whole districts are being cleared and re-let in larger holdings" ("Extracts" 3). Landlords "hoped that after clearing their lands of insolvent small farmers they could guarantee their incomes by letting land to large graziers, hopefully from England or Scotland, who would be capable of making improvements on the land and working it profitably" (Jordan, *Land* 117). To facilitate the consolidation without "the expense and trouble of a legal process," some landlords financed their tenants' emigration to America (Lane 48).

While many small tenants were evicted for inability to pay rent, many were just simply evicted. On November 25, 1847, Kilrush Poor Law Union (County Clare) Inspector Captain Arthur Edward Kennedy documents, "An immense number of small landholders are under ejectment, or notice to quit, even where the rents have been paid up" ("Extracts" 3). The Great Famine left the populous tenantry helpless, thus enabling "A large number of the landed elite and their agents [to] view[ed] the social dislocation as an opportunity to clear their estates without fear of resistance" (Kinealy, *Death* 126). While country-wide eviction statistics were not compiled for 1847 and 1848, incidental mass evictions were newsworthy. In a letter published in the April 29, 1848 edition of the *Freeman's Journal*, the mass eviction of the Strokestown Estate in County Roscommon indicates "3006 souls" were evicted (3). Eviction continued through and beyond the Famine: "in 1849 some 16,000 families were evicted. In 1850 the number was 20,000. In the three years from 1849 to 1851 50,000 families. . .were thrown out on the roadside" (O'Neill, "Famine" 162).

For many landlords, mass clearances were necessary due to their own grim economic circumstances. "Impoverished landlords whose estates had been mortgaged by many generations of riotous living" (O'Neill, "Famine" 162) and exorbitant marriage settlements (Curtis 338) could not absorb the absence of steady rent income and the burdens of poor rates<sup>10</sup> during the Famine years (Jordan, *Land* 117; O'Neill, "Famine" 162). Over ten-percent of the landlords fell bankrupt due to the decline in rent collection (Lee 37). Historian J.S. Donnelly, Jr. estimates bankruptcy rates may have been as high as twenty-five percent (qtd. in Jordan, *Land* 117)

In an effort to revitalize Irish agrarian life with enthusiastic, resident Union landlords and to assuage the plight of the indebted landlord, Parliament passed the Encumbered Estates Acts of 1848 and 1849 (revised in 1849). This legislation enabled these heavily mortgaged estates to be sold more easily (O'Neill, "Famine" 168). With the hopes of making their lands more attractive for resale, indebted landlords "cleared their properties of uneconomic tenants" and consolidated their holdings (Lane 48). The Encumbered Estates Acts did not protect the rights of the tenants (O'Neill, "Famine" 168). In *The Fall of Feudalism in Ireland*, social activist Michael Davitt asserts:

In 1849 the humane rulers of Ireland passed an Encumbered Estates Act, to enable the impecunious Irish landlords to break

10. The poor rates (taxes) financed Famine relief and was the responsibility of the landowner. In essence, "[A]s Poor Law taxation increased, this placed a heavier burden on landlords whose estates were highly subdivided and provided an added incentive to clear their estates of smallholders" (Kinealy, *Death* 125).

the legal bonds of English law of primogeniture and to sell their estates. A large number of them disposed of their properties and removed from the country, to make way for a new class who were induced to invest capital in Irish land as a purely profit-making enterprise, and for the social distinction which the ownership of estates offers to the members of English society. The tenants were virtually bought with the land, under the operations of this act-that is, their improvements and occupancy rights were. In order to better dispose of their properties, old owners began. . .a system of clearances in wholesale evictions. . . This system was carried on and extended by the new class of landlords, too, whenever possible during the early fifties. (67-68)

Over 7000 estates were sold as a result of the Encumbered Estates Act ("Introduction" 3). Unfortunately, the goal of rejuvenating the economic-agricultural landscape was not realized. The desired English and Scotch gentry ignored the call to invest in Irish estates: "Over ninety-five percent of the five-thousand purchasers were Irish, mainly younger sons of gentry, solicitors and shopkeepers who did well out of the famine" (Lee 38). Most of the new landlords were "middlemen who bought speculatively. A few settled in Ireland but the majority installed more bailiffs and agents, with profit as the overall objective" ("Introduction" 3).

As indicated, the clearances, largely prompted by the Encumbered Estates Act of 1849, facilitated a significant shift in landholdings. Table 2 illustrates the radical decrease in smaller farms and the equally drastic increase of larger farms.

Table 2

Classification of Holdings in 1841 and 1860

	1841	1860	% Change (1841-1860)
Above 1 acre and not exceeding 5 (in farms)	310,436	82,844	-73.3%
Above 5 acres and not exceeding 15 (in farms)	252,799	181,358	-28.3%
Above 15 acres and not exceeding 30 (in farms)	79,342	140,873	+77.6%
Above 30 acres (in farms)	48,625	158,154	+225.3%

Sources: *Agricultural Statistics, 1859*, x-xi.

Small holdings sized above one but below fifteen acres, "dropped in numbers and contributed to an increase in both the under-one [acre] category and to both the small-family farm of fifteen acres and the grazier farms of thirty acres and upwards" (Lane 51). Smaller landholders' (and subletters') land was taken from under them. Some were fortunate enough to secure smaller plots of land (under one acre): In 1851, 36,474 farms were less than one acre; in 1867, this number jumped to 50,670 (*Agricultural Statistics, 1857* viii; *Agricultural Statistics, 1867* ix). Still, their relative "security" was tenuous: "The leases commonly prevailing after the Famine were of short nature" (Lane 69).

Between 1852 and 1865, Irish geologist and civil engineer Sir Richard Griffith was charged with ascertaining fair rents given the geological value of land parcels (Hussey, "Sir" 57; Locke 345-346; Moody, *Davitt* 320). Essentially, this third act of Parliament in 1852 (15 and 16 Vict. c. 63) since 1839 pertaining to government

valuation, required the "soundest data for ascertaining the productive capabilities of its soil" (Locke 345-346). Simply, the more arable the lands, the higher the rent (Locke 347). These "Griffith's Valuations" were based upon the economic conditions present between 1849-1851; these values remained the standard during the latter part of the nineteenth-century, despite the fluctuation in agrarian economic conditions (Moody, *Davitt* 320). Griffith's valuations served as a "yardstick of rent for which, on average, holdings might reasonably be expected to let" (Moody, *Davitt* 320).

Despite a near twenty-five percent drop in population between 1846-1851 (Kinealy, *Death* 2, 151), land was at a premium for the small tenant farmer. This tillable land shortage contributed to a significant swing in Post-Famine demographics. As previously discussed, the rundale system was pervasive in rural Ireland. This Pre-Famine land distribution structure enabled "the peasant children, for the most part, [to] marr[y]ied whom they pleased, when they pleased" (Connell 512). In 1845, the approximate age of marriage for a male was twenty-five, twenty-one for females (Lee 3). Pre-Famine marriage trends indicate "little to no relationship between land pressure and marriage" (McKenna 242). Due in part to the land consolidations, this trend was reversed during the Post-Famine period, "Marriage rates declined and ages of marriage increased" (McKenna 239). By 1914, the approximate average age of males and female at marriage rose to 33 and 28, respectively<sup>11</sup> (Lee 3). Post-Famine land pressures coupled with the

11. This trend is further examined by social and economic historian, K. H. Connell as he splintered the Irish Republican farmer from the general Irish Republic sample and reported the average age of marriage in 1945-46 was 38.2 for males and 30.3 for females (Connell 502).

desire for higher standard of living in the West of Ireland altered traditional marital trends (Walsh 162).

For the inheriting son, the "timing of a man's marriage was determined, not by his emotions, but by a household's need for labor" (Connell 503). Selecting a spouse or finding a "match" was an economic decision: "the average Irish peasant takes unto himself a mate with as clear a head, as placid a heart, and as steady a nerve, as if he were buying a cow at Ballinasloe Fair" (qtd. in Connell 503). Typically, the nuptials were arranged by both families and "A prospective groom was judged as much as a prospective bride" (Connell 509). The search for a suitable spouse usually was a narrow one:

Parents, moreover, liked to have their children settle near home; and the family of a distant bride gave little help on a rainy day. . . families in Mayo, of any substance of all, married friends or cousins, lest alien hands should grasp their "riches"; and there was much muttering about the bride from an unknown family: "God knows *what* she has!" Traditionally, then, people would marry their next-door neighbour. . . the intermarriage of second-cousins was a common occurrence [sic] in Mayo, and, as a result, all the inhabitants of the town-lands were related to one another; "the oftener a blanket's doubled the warmer it is." (Connell 519)



Regardless of familiarity between the potential bride and groom, the more favorable a bride's dowry, the more favorable the farm she could command (Connell 509).

Unfortunately, due to land and economic pressures, most families had only one farm to pass on to the next generation and similarly, families could usually only afford one dowry (Connell 514). Essentially, the effects of the land "consolidation condemned the younger children to the ship or the shelf" (Lee 3).

Most of the children choosing the "ship," believed they were forced from their beloved Ireland, equating their plight to that of political exile; British oppression and landlordism was deemed the cause of their Diaspora (Miller, "Emigration" 516, 520). Some emigrated to Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada (*Emigration Statistics, 1876* 6); but most chose America (Moody, *Davitt* 26). Figure 3 illustrates the number of emigrants leaving Irish ports between 1851 and 1882. The graph clearly identifies the emigration pattern reflecting the impact of the land clearances and consolidations as a result of the Encumbered Estates Act of 1849 in the early 1850s. The graph also indicates "The flow declined after the mid-1850s, fluctuating according to the relative prosperity of America and Ireland. Numbers rose to over 100,000 in 1863 and 1864 following bad harvests" (Lee 7, 8). Often emigration was financed and arranged by those (usually family) that had emigrated earlier (Kinealy, *New* 165).

Emigration, along with lower regional fertility rates, continued to erode the Post-Famine Irish population: "12 percent between 1851 and 1861, 7 percent between 1861 and 1871, and 4 percent between 1871 and 1881" (Clark, *Social* 107). Until 1851, small farmers and their families were the largest demographic group to emigrate; after 1851

farmers' children and agricultural laborers topped the ships' registries (Lee 6). As noted in the "Emigration from Irish Ports in 1860," "These emigrants included persons of every age from infancy to fourscore years; but as might be expected, the great majority was composed of the young and vigorous thus, in Leinster, 71.9, in Munster, 73.4, in Ulster, 69.6, and in Connaught, 77.1 percent of the total number of emigrants were between the ages of 15 and 35" (7). This account is representative of this Post-Famine period.<sup>12</sup> It is also sardonically referenced in Sir William R. Willis Wilde's 1864 publication *Ireland, Past and Present; The Land and The People*:

the fact that, within a space of little more than twenty years, two and three-quarter millions of people, or, in exact figures, 2,718,567 (a number greater than that of the entire population of Denmark, now so bravely waging an unequal war with half of Europe), emigrated from these shores between 1841 and 1863 -- leaving us, as a legacy upon our charity, the *caput mortuum* of the population -- the poor, the weak, the old, the lame, the sick, the blind, the dumb, and the imbecile and insane. (40 and qtd. in Fitzpatrick, "Irish" 126).

With the emigration of demographic profile arguably at their peak in terms of physical

12. This assertion is substantiated from the review of the following: *Emigration, 1856* (8) and *Emigration, 1857* (10); *Emigration from Irish Ports, 1859* (7), *1860* (7), *1861* (10), *1862* (9), *1863* (9), *1864* (9), *1870* (9), *1871* (9), *1872* (9), *1874* (9), and *1875* (9); *Emigration Statistics from Ireland, 1876* (5), *1877* (5), *1878* (5), *1879* (5), *1880* (5), and *1882* (5).

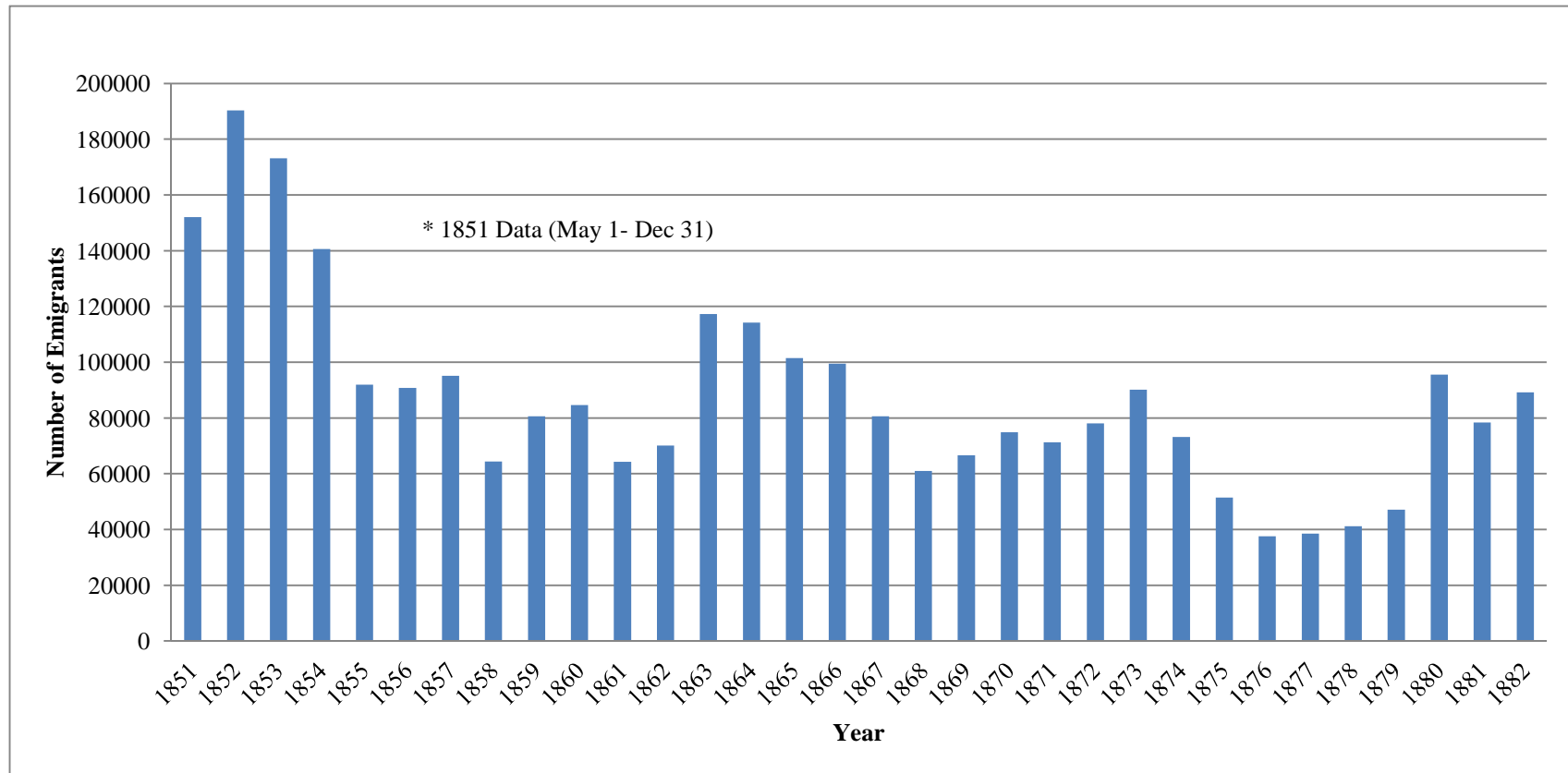


Figure 3. Number of Emigrants, 1851-1882; data gathered from *Emigration Statistics of Ireland, 1882*; 4.

fitness, it begs the question: Who remained to work the farms? (Recall the importance of a farmer selecting a bride.) Sociologist Samuel Clark states "within a space of forty years the social composition of the rural society was transformed from one in which laborers were in the majority to one in which farmers were in the majority" (*Social* 113). This shift in work force benefited the skilled laborer: "Between the early 1840s and the late 1860s, wages in most places rose by at least 50 percent, and in some places doubled" (Clark, *Social* 116).

The labor premium was exacerbated in rural Ireland due to the tradition of seasonal migration:

During the summer months. . .especially during the turf-cutting and harvest season, there was often a shortage of labor. This was the time of year when Irish farmers most needed hands and also the time when many laborers went to England and Scotland to work on the harvests. In some western districts, such as west Galway, almost no able-bodied workers remained during the months of June, July, and August. (Clark, *Social* 116)

This seasonal migration was historically instrumental to the western families' survival; their rents could not be paid otherwise (Moody, *Davitt* 3).

Despite the heartache of watching a loved one board a steamship, there were financial benefits. In "Irish Emigration in the Late Nineteenth Century," David Fitzpatrick attributes the "survival of larger families on 'uneconomic' holdings. . .to a

steady flow of cash remittances from relatives already prospering overseas" (127). By continuing to send money home, emigrants remained emotionally invested in their homeland (Miller, "Emigration" 526). The impact of this unwavering, displaced nationalist spirit will be discussed at great length in subsequent chapters.

This infusion of money coupled with increased wages contributed to an increased standard of living during the Post-Famine period (O'Rourke 408, 411). Additionally, "rents did not advance at the same rate as did agricultural prices" (Clark, *Social* 153). Donald Jordan points out, "Landlords were hardly objects of pity. Their rents were paid regularly and their tenants were relatively docile until the agricultural crisis of 1877-80" (*Land* 146). Following the clearances and subsequent consolidations, "an era of conflict had given way to an era of accommodation between Irish landlords and their tenants" (Clark, *Social* 153).

The effects of the Encumbered Estates Act of 1849 and the chain of events that followed did not go unanswered. In 1850, Young Irelander and co-founder and editor of the *Nation*, Charles Gavan Duffy "adopted the Callan Tenants' Protection Society founded the year before by Father O'Shea and Father Keefe as a nucleus for a new political movement" (O'Neill, "Famine" 165). Duffy's actions were essentially a

rekindling of the efforts of James Fintan Lalor<sup>13</sup> (O'Neill, "Irish" 333-334). At a "Conference of Tenant Farmers" in August 1850, the Irish Tenant League was founded and it established this mission:

Rents, it was declared, must be fixed by valuation of the land; and the power of raising them at will or recovering a higher rent than the one so established taken away from landlords. The tenant must have a fixed tenure, and not be liable to disturbance so long as he paid the rent settled by the proposed valuation. If he chose to quit, or if he could not pay his rent, he must have the right to sell his interest, -- with all its incidents, for the highest market value; neither the landlord nor any other person being entitled to enter on possession, except on condition of buying it at a just price. The tenant's property, and his improvements, past and future, must be sacred; his to hold or to sell as freely as the landlord could sell his estate.

(Duffy, *League* 53-54)

13. In 1847, Young Irelander and son of Patt Lalor, MP, James Fintan Lalor attempted to "appeal to the tenants through the tenant right leagues" in an effort to advance the tenant agenda that would ultimately become known as the "three Fs" (O'Neill, "Irish" 333-334). In a January 1847 letter to Charles Gavan Duffy, James Fintan Lalor suggested the newly formed Irish Confederation (Young Irelanders who abandoned O'Connell's Repeal movement) "should link the national and agrarian movements by calling on the people to withhold their rents"(O'Neill, "Irish" 333-334). This notion will be revisited in Chapter 6.

The aforementioned principles became known as the "'the three Fs,' that is, the right to freedom of sale, fixity of tenure and fair rents" (Kinealy, *New* 176). The "three Fs" were rooted in the "Ulster Custom."<sup>14</sup>

"This new movement, the Tenant Right League, aimed at uniting north and south in a movement for land reform" (O'Neill, "Famine" 165). Charles Gavan Duffy attributed this unity to the fact "Presbyterian ministers and Catholic priests were seen side by side, and almost in equal numbers, in the ranks of the new organisation" and by Frederick Lucas, owner of the *Tablet* transferring his newspaper operations from London to Dublin (Duffy, *Four* 764). Cooperation with the editor of the Belfast Presbyterian periodical the *Banner of Ulster*, Dr. McNight also helped to cement the cause (Davitt, *Fall* 69). In 1852, Charles Gavan Duffy<sup>15</sup> was elected MP for New Ross, County Wexford and believed a non-violent, constitutional agitation was the approach needed to advance the land question ("Extracts" 3; O'Farrell 63). He served the people of New Ross until the

14. The "Ulster Custom" generally provided tenants security in their holdings if rents were paid; tenants were also compensated for improvements to the land if the landlord-tenant relationship ended. While not law, this custom is presumed to have originated in the Stuart Plantation; its implementation varied between estates in parts of Ulster (O'Neill, "Irish" 326).

15. Charles Gavan Duffy, son of a Catholic shopkeeper was born on April 12, 1816 in County Monaghan (Duffy, *Life Vol. I* 2-3; O'Farrell, 63). Prior to his involvement with the Tenants' League, Duffy was arrested for conspiracy alongside Daniel O'Connell in October 1843; his conviction was overturned and he was released in September 1844 (Duffy, *Life Vol. I* 93-95; Williams 81). His second arrest occurred in July 1848; he stood trial for high treason in connection with the *Nation*. His release was assisted by the "great rhetorical powers" of Irish barrister Isaac Butt (Duffy, *Life Vol. I* 293, 301).

autumn of 1855 (Duffy, *Life Vol. II* 103-107). Despite the unity between the north and south, the Tenants' Leagues did not gain momentum in the West (Lee 41). The Tenants' Leagues did not appeal to the peasantry as the members were identified as "'a class of respectable and sturdy farmers who were possessed of competent means'" (qtd. in Lee 41).

In his Parliamentary fight for Tenants' Rights, Duffy benefited from a philosophical kindred spirit, George Henry Moore, MP for Mayo. Born in 1810, George Henry Moore of Moore Hall was a Catholic landlord and tenant philanthropist (Moore 3, 124-128). In Michael Davitt's memoir, *The Fall of Feudalism*, George Henry Moore was described as "a loyal member of Gavan Duffy's Tenant League Party in the fifties. He was a moderate but earnest land-reformer" (145).

The Tenants' Leagues' resolve waned as the tenants' financial situation improved: "The fact that the grain farmers were responding more to short-term cyclical depression than to basic feelings concerning the fundamental injustice of the land system ensured that once the depression passed their agitational ardour would cool" (Lee 41). As sociologist Samuel Clark points out, "It is difficult, as a rule, to keep people interested in political agitation when times are prosperous" ("Composition" 448).

Political apathy was not the only challenge faced by the Tenants' League. In September 1852, following the general election in July, the Irish Independent Party was formed (Lee 43). The Irish Independent Party "pledged to oppose any English party



which did not repeal the Ecclesiastical Titles act<sup>16</sup> and adopt the Tenant League programme" (Lee 43). The religious condition of this Party weakened the newly forged Presbyterian support for the Tenants' League (Lee 43). But arguably, significant damage emerged from within the Party itself. Following the general election of July 1852, the Irish MPs were well-positioned:

Indeed the Irish party was fairly equipped for success; its numbers had been doubled at the general election; twenty-five had been turned into fifty, and such a party was nearly omnipotent in such a house. The Whigs and Radicals were very loosely bound together, and the Peelites were nearly as much inclined to the Tories as to the Liberals. The Tories were the most compact party, but no party could hope for a majority if opposed by the Irish, and they hated each other far too cordially to coalesce. (Moore 221)

This position of power radically shifted when Irish Independent Party zealots, William

16. The Ecclesiastical Titles Act of 1851 precluded Roman Catholic clergy from using a location already held by Anglican bishops, e.g. Archbishop of Tuam (Maclear 149).

Keogh,<sup>17</sup> John Sadleir<sup>18</sup> and their followers betrayed the Party by taking the Queen's office: "Keogh was Solicitor-General, Sadleir Lord of the Treasury; Monsell and O'Flaherty had minor appointments" (Moore 220-223). Essentially, "The Government had solved the parliamentary situation by bribing the leaders of the people" (Moore 224). In a letter to his partyman, George Henry Moore, William Keogh attempts to justify his

"Private and confidential.

"MY DEAR MOORE, I am Solicitor-General, and I ask you to believe until you see the contrary, that I would not be so if I were not satisfied that full justice would be done to Ireland and Irishmen. I am satisfied that you will see good reason, not only not to oppose, but to support this Government. Time and trial is all they want. But this has nothing to do with the subject of your letter. Whether you oppose or support I hope your friendship will remain unbroken, and as far as I can you will always find me ready to carry out your views.

" WILLIAM KEOGH." (Moore 223-224)

17. Barrister and MP, William Keogh was named Attorney General for Ireland in 1855 and was called to the bench in 1866 (Naughten, 11,22, 24). Judge Keogh would find himself at center of high profile trials until his death in 1878 (Naughten, 24-29). He "ended a tempestuous life by a miserably tragic death" (Duffy, *League* 376).

18. John Sadleir was the founder of Tipperary Bank where he "indulged in swindles of epic proportion"; he committed suicide in 1856 when his crimes were discovered (Lee 43).

But to the recipient there could be no justification for the actions of Keogh, Sadlier et al. George Henry Moore's disdain is perhaps best captured in an excerpt from a letter sent to John Sadleir:

But there is a deadlier foe to the honest cause than the open adversary; there is the fatal friend that opens the gate to the besieger; there is the deserter that passes over to the enemy at the hour of trial. If it be true as you say it is that there has lurked in the people's camp a man who for years has been pining, yearning to betray, joining our councils, marching in our ranks, sharing in our victories, in order to turn to his own account and the account of the enemy the toils we have shared, the experience we have gained, and the laurels we have won. . . . If it be true that the people of Ireland have been sold, and sold at a base price, a price that carries with it a thousand other meaner sales, and opens out a system of corruption and venality, the province of which is to debauch every honest heart and dry up every sort of political morality in the country; if this be true, what act of hostility that a wretched Orangeman can perpetrate can be compared to the organisation of such systematic villainy?

(Moore 227-228)

Nationalist opinion of the traitors mirrored that of Moore ("Pillory" 9; "Guilty" 9; Moore, 229). However, the traitors were heralded by the Archbishop of Dublin Paul

Cullen and his devotees (Davitt, *Fall* 70; Moore 230). With a series of whispers and a strike of a gavel, the nationalist effort was setback considerably: "These men and their followers became known in Parliament as 'The Pope's Brass Band,' and it was their successful disruption of the parliamentary party and organization built up by Duffy and others which gave a death blow to constitutional agitation in the fifties" (Davitt, *Fall* 71).

Disheartened by the political arena in Ireland at the time, Charles Gavan Duffy left for Australia in 1855 (Duffy, *Life Vol. II* 103-107; O'Farrell, 63-77). There, he enjoyed a prominent political career and wrote prolifically. Twentieth-century historians believe he was a man ahead of his time (O'Farrell 63-77).

Although the Irish Tenants' League did not endure, its leaders crafted a blueprint detailing the potential of the power of the press, local League branches, non-Catholic objectives, and genuine Parliamentary action (Davitt, *Fall* 69; Kinealy, *New* 176). Charles Gavan Duffy "put the land question in the forefront of Irish politics and there it remained giving strength to the national aspirations until near the end of the century" (O'Neill, "Irish" 336).

Following Duffy's emigration to Australia, George Henry Moore continued to use his moderate approach to fight for tenants' rights both in and out of Parliament (unseated in 1857 and returned in 1868) (Frazier 2, 8, 12). In 1860, while on hiatus from Parliament, Moore was inspired by British sympathy for the Italians in their pursuit to unify and limit the Pope's rule (Moore 273-277). In 1861, Moore engineered a strategic plan to organize a volunteer army with troops from every barony; this plan included the solicitation of support from other nations (Moore 281-285). Essentially, the plan was to

overthrow the English government in Ireland while the British were preoccupied with other military operations (Moore 281-285).

However, the year was 1861. The Irish people were still sickened by the constitutional betrayal of Sadleir, Keogh et al. The tenor of nationalists was now influenced by the undercurrent of a more discreet and violent program:

these young men soon began to make their presence felt in Irish politics, and Moore, in the course of his investigations, found they were already beginning to conspire against the Government, and were in no humour to wait the initiation of more cautious tactics. They were the very men on whom he relied to form the backbone of his own army. It was impossible to turn them back; it was equally impossible to found a rival organisation without plunging the country into a faction fight. Therefore this scheme died stillborn.

(Moore 298)

Moore could not fight the building momentum of the Irish Republican Brotherhood.

Ultimately, their efforts were coordinated: "the [I.R.B.] Council consulted Moore on all important questions and that he was practically a member of the Council" (Devoy 322).

In his biographical tribute to his father, Maurice Moore indicates that Moore had taken the oath (Moore 350). Regardless of the degree of involvement with the I.R.B., Moore was involved. This new brand of revolutionaries had crept into Catholic gentry circles and, to some degree, Parliament.

After living in exile in Paris with fellow Young Irishman, John O'Mahony,<sup>19</sup> James Stephens<sup>20</sup> grew tired of his work as an English-French translator, journalist and tutor; he yearned to return to his revolutionary past (Ryan, *Chief* 54-56). This craving was arguably fueled by his witness of the French Coup d'Etat of 1851 and his ties with French revolutionaries (Ryan, *Chief* 54). Upon Stephens' return to Ireland in 1856, he found himself "depressed by the universal lethargy in the capital, as he was later in the countryside" (Ryan, *Chief* 58-59). To satiate his nationalistic calling, John O'Mahony left Paris and set sail for New York in 1853 to garner support for a more discreet rising (Ryan, *Chief* 52-53).

Early in 1855, Young Irishmen Michael Doheny and John O'Mahony founded the Emmet Monument Association in New York (Ryan, *Chief* 53). The purpose of this organization was to prepare members for "revolutionary work for Ireland whenever the opportunity should arrive" (Davitt, *Fall* 74). Following the establishment of the short-lived Emmet Monument Society, emissaries of O'Mahony and Doheny approached Stephens "to organise a revolutionary movement in Ireland" (Lee 55). Stephens accepted this charge on the condition he maintained "absolute control of the proposed movement"

19. John O'Mahony (est. 1816-1877) was born in County Cork and educated at Trinity College (Ryan, *Chief* 362). Aside from his Fenian leadership, he is known as an Irish Scholar who looked forward to the revival of the Irish Language (Moody, *Davitt* 41). His most enduring work is his translation of Keating's *History of Ireland*, heralded for its Gaelic scholarship (Ryan, *Chief* 362).

20. James Stephens was born a Catholic in County Kilkenny in 1824. When he was fourteen he briefly attended St. Kieran's College. At the age of twenty, he worked as a civil engineer and contributed to the Limerick and Waterford Railways projects (Ryan, *Chief* 1-2).

(Davitt, *Fall* 74) and adequate funding was furnished through Irish-American channels (Lee 55).

In 1858, the Irish Republican Brotherhood and Fenian Brotherhood were founded concurrently in Dublin and New York, respectively; nearly all of the founding members were Young Irelanders: "James Stephens, John O'Mahony, Charles Kickham, John O'Leary, Thomas Clarke Luby, and Michael Doheny" (Moody, "Fenianism" 230). Stephens took the helm and O'Mahony served as transatlantic head centre in North America (Davitt, *Fall* 74-75). The focus of this organization was singular -- independence (Moody, "Fenianism" 231). Fenians believed independence could only be accomplished through physical force "and they therefore [must] prepare[d] by secret military organisation for an armed uprising, to be launched when Britain should be at a disadvantage" (Moody, "Fenianism" 231). These were men of writing, poetry, thinking, and engineering; a lot demographically unlikely to carry out of violent aspects of revolution (Moody, *Davitt* 42; Ryan, *Chief* 2). The Fenians' narrow view did not permit secondary issues such as social programs (e.g. land reform) to interfere with their goal of attaining independence (Moody, *Davitt* 41). Constitutional agitation was viewed as a waste of time since they believed, "The British parliament was a 'talking shop', membership of which was injurious to the military virtues and consumed energies that could be more usefully employed" (Moody, *Davitt* 40).

In *The Fall of Feudalism*, Michael Davitt contends, "Men with estates and banking accounts are not the most ready or most reliable leaders of movements which demand risks and sacrifices in a cause that worldly wisdom condemns as desperate or

illegal" (75). Stephens' recruitment practices reflected this sentiment. While he witnessed much political apathy amongst the middle class, "he found the old national fire burning mainly among the common people, and it was in the working class that he was to win his main support" (Ryan, *Chief* 77). Stephens recognized the value of the locally-based Ribbon Societies in realizing his goal of creating a secret society poised for military action (Ryan, *Chief* 77). He travelled throughout Ireland from the inception of the I.R.B. through 1859 (Davitt, *Fall* 75). Stephens recruited primarily through Ribbon Societies where he found it easier to convince the younger Ribbonmen (Davitt, *Fall* 75). The most notable of Stephens' recruits was "Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, founder of the radical Phoenix Society" (Kinealy, *New* 172). O'Donovan Rossa "traveled constantly for the organization in Ireland, England, and Scotland, and made one more trip to America. He swore in more numbers than any ten men in the movement and had a wider personal knowledge of the membership than Stephens himself" (Devoy 31). Stephens also embarked on his first trip to America in October 1858 and remained through January 1859 to meet with O'Mahony and other '48 exiles in an effort to affirm organizational logistics and garner additional support for the movement (Ryan, *Chief* 105, 154-155).

Despite its condemnation from the Catholic church, enthusiasm for this oath-bound, secret society continued to spread (Larkin, *Historical* 107-108). Its wide-spread appeal can be seen through the funeral of Terrence Bellew McManus. McManus, convicted in the Young Ireland Rising of 1848 and sentenced to Van Dieman's Land (Tasmania), escaped with other Young Ireland alumni to the United States (Ryan, *Chief* 170-171). Following his death and burial in 1861, American-based Fenians transported



his body to Ireland for burial (Ryan, *Chief* 175). Archbishop Paul Cullen forbade the clergy from participating in this very public funeral (although a few priests ignored his order), thereby intensifying national Fenian sentiment; following the funeral, I.R.B. membership swelled (Moran, *Radical* 46-48). The I.R.B. membership broadened despite the Church's censure: "No previous movement in Irish history, Catholic or Protestant, relied so little on clerical support" (Lee 58).

Unfortunately for the I.R.B., delivery of arms and influx of money did not keep up with the pace of membership: "Stephens, sensing the size of potential public support, became increasingly impatient with the miserable trickle of money from America -- only £1,500 between 1858 and 1864" (Lee 57). This paltry amount could hardly finance Stephens' promise of an 1865 insurrection (Lee 57; Ryan, *Chief* 205).

In November 1863, Stephens founded *Irish People*, a Dublin-based newspaper which, ironically, served as the organ of this secret society (Lee 57; Moody, *Davitt* 42). Chief Centre Stephens exercised his ultimate control of the I.R.B. by ignoring O'Mahony's wishes to remain underground (Lee 57). This newspaper fell under the editorial leadership of John O'Leary (editor-in-chief), Thomas Clarke Luby, and Charles Kickham (Moody, *Davitt* 42). Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa served as manager (Ryan, *Chief* 187).

Stephens' escalating complaints regarding the lack of capital from America and his attacks upon O'Mahony's leadership and nature eroded the O'Mahony-Stephens' relationship (Ryan, *Chief* 167-169). Stephens' unilateral decision to found the newspaper, coupled with other "internal dissensions[,] provoked O'Mahony to depose

Stephens to mere 'representative for Europe' and have himself elected head centre by the American organisation" (Lee 57). O'Mahony accomplished this through the adoption of three secret resolutions at the Fenian Brotherhood Convention in November 1863 (Ryan, *Chief* 191). With this action, O'Mahony denounced his subordination to Stephens (Ryan, *Chief* 192).

The end of the American Civil War in 1865 saw trained Irish-American soldiers recruited and primed for Stephens' 1865 insurrection (Kinealy, *New* 172). Several hundred trained Irish-American officers arrived in Ireland in 1865 to participate in this promised uprising (Moody, *Davitt* 42). However, when the shipment of arms failed to arrive due to dissension amongst North American Fenians, Stephens postponed the insurrection (Moody, *Davitt* 43; Ryan, *Chief* 197, 218-219). The "year of action" was anything but for the Fenian movement; however, the promise rang true for the British government (Ryan, *Chief* 205-206). Late in the evening on September 14, 1865, the Dublin office of *Irish People* was raided (Ryan, *Chief* 206). The newspaper was suppressed and its editorial staff of Thomas Clarke Luby, Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, and John O'Leary were arrested (Moody, *Davitt* 43). During the raid and subsequent arrests, the British government seized documents and other evidence which linked the men to the I.R.B. (Ryan, *Chief* 206). The three men were tried in front of Judge William Keogh (the same William Keogh that betrayed the nationalist-constitutionalist efforts of the 1850s) and were sentenced to penal servitude (Naughten 24-25). Shortly after, on the morning of November 11, 1865, Charles Kickham and the Fenian Chief, James Stephens, were arrested (Moody, *Davitt* 43; Ryan, *Chief* 213-215). Kickham was also sentenced to

penal servitude (Ryan, *Chief* 206). The story of Stephens' incarceration is not as straight forward. To the court Stephens professed:

I have employed no lawyer or attorney in this case, and that I mean to employ none, because in making a plea of any kind or filing any defence -- I am not particularly well up in those legal terms -- I should be recognizing British law in Ireland. Now I deliberately and conscientiously repudiate the existence of that law in Ireland -- its right or even its existence in Ireland. I defy and despise any punishment it can inflict on me. I have spoken. (qtd. in Devoy 72)

Ten days after declaring his refusal to acknowledge British law in Ireland, Stephens scaled the formidable, shard-capped walls of Richmond Prison with a ladder propped upon two tables (Devoy 83-84). His freedom was due to the strategic planning and execution efforts of his clever Fenian brothers (Devoy 77-87).

Publicity of the Fenian trials coupled with Stephens' romantic escape amplified enthusiasm for the Fenian organization (Ryan, *Chief* 218). As 1865 came to a close, the movement welcomed thousands of new sworn recruits (Devoy 88). The demographic profile of the recruits now included "the commercial and professional classes" and "the mass of sympathizers grew steadily" (Ryan, *Chief* 218). This renewed zeal helped to gloss over some of the popular disappointment brought on by Stephens' inaction of 1865, at least temporarily. However, by February 1866, many Fenian soldiers were frustrated with waiting by idly and Stephens' ability to lead was clearly in question (Ryan, *Chief*

227). Fenian leaders were also disenchanted with Stephens: "They [Dublin Centres] were all dissatisfied at Stephens' inaction and a spirit of impatience and almost open mutiny was growing fast" (Devoy 101). This frustration was compounded by the perceived need to act immediately due to the English government suspending Habeas Corpus during the same month (Devoy 89). In the weeks following the suspension of Habeas Corpus, "the jails were filled with fully 3,000 prisoners, and those believed to be the most important [to the movement] were sent up to Dublin" (Devoy 112). The opportunity for an uprising had passed (Devoy 111). On December 15, 1866 at a Fenian officer meeting in New York, due to the belief he would not fight for Ireland, James Stephens was deposed from the position of Head Centre of the Fenian Brotherhood in America and "his overthrow as head of the I.R.B. at the hands of the same group was not to be long delayed" (Ryan, *Chief* 243).

Whether Stephens had the will to lead a revolution, is certainly debatable. But, what is clear is the mere fact the I.R.B. did not have the resources (finances and arms) to engage in an insurrection with any hope of winning independence (Ryan, *Chief* 243). This point is clearly underscored by the "decision of his Irish-American successors to fight early in 1867 was taken by desperate men unable to endure further inaction. So the 'rising' of March 1867 was no more than a gesture" (Moody, *Davitt* 43).

As mentioned, Stephens was continually frustrated with the lack of money and arms being sent from America. The main cause for the lack of resources was a split within the American Fenian Brotherhood in 1865 (Moody, *Davitt* 135). The organization polarized "over personalities, organisation, and whether it was more important to strike at

Britain in Ireland or through invasion in Canada" (Moody, *Davitt* 135). In summer 1867, these two factions were reunited under the newly formed, Irish-American organization, Clan na Gael (Devoy 239; Moody, *Davitt* 135). The Clan na Gael and its influence will be explored in succeeding chapters.

Although the Fenian movement did not realize its dream of independence through discreet military action, it forged a sustainable, extended network. Fenianism "differed from all previous national movements in that it drew its support from not only the Irish at home but also the new Ireland that the famine emigration had created in Britain and America" (Moody, *Davitt* 42). The power of channeled Diaspora proved to be vital weapon in the nationalist war chest. Another networking skill honed during the movement was Stephens' use of established Ribbon Societies as strategic recruitment centers. The efficiency of utilizing the local organizations enabled the I.R.B. to permeate throughout Ireland; this strategy contrasted with the stratified approach taken by Tenants' Leagues of the 1850s. Further discussion on the fruit of such networking strategies will be found in subsequent chapters.

Another result from the spread of Fenianism is that it entered the consciousness of leading British politicians. Liberal Prime Minister William Gladstone's "conscience had long been troubled on the subject of Ireland, but he confessed that it was the Fenian rising that had awakened him to a sense of 'the vast importance of the Irish question'" (Moody, "Fenianism" 233). As such, Gladstone "moved Irish issues to the top of his political agenda" (Kinealy, *New* 173). Gladstone's "Church Act of 1869 disestablished and disendowed the Anglican Church of Ireland" (Moody, "Fenianism" 233). University

reform was a central concern of his agenda as well (Lee 61). Gladstone's Land Act of 1870, was the first Parliamentary movement that attempted to address tenants' needs (Moody, "Fenianism" 233). Christine Kinealy credits the Land Act of 1870 with giving "legal validity to tenant right where it existed and extended it to other parts of the country. This legislation made it difficult to evict tenants for reasons other than non-payment of rent, and allowed outgoing tenants to receive compensation for improvements" (*New* 176). Although the Land Act of 1870 ultimately did little to stop evictions, it was significant in that its intention "was a landmark in British legislation" (Moody, "Fenianism" 233).

Lastly, the Fenian trials of 1865 provided the backdrop for a leader to emerge who possessed the ability to redirect some Irish sentiment towards constitutional advancement. Isaac Butt won the respect of the "Irish masses" due to the fact "At a considerable financial sacrifice and against impossible odds, Butt defended the political prisoners, and, after their conviction, led a movement for amnesty and release from prison" (McCaffrey, "Isaac" 77). (As previously mentioned, Isaac Butt lent his legal prowess to the Young Irelander, Charles Gavan Duffy's defense team [Duffy, *Life Vol. I* 293, 301]. He had also defended Young Irelanders William Smith O'Brien and Thomas Francis Meagher in 1848 [Kinealy, *New* 173]).

Isaac Butt was born in 1813 to a Protestant vicar in County Donegal (McCaffrey, "Isaac" 73). At Trinity College he excelled academically and, upon graduation, Butt was appointed Professor of Political Economy at his alma mater in 1836 (McCaffrey, "Isaac" 73). In 1838, Butt was "called to the bar" (Butt, "Letters" 45). As his upbringing would

suggest, Butt was a unionist (Moody, "Fenianism" 234). Early in his career he "distinguished himself in Tory political circles by speeches defending the privileged position of the Protestant Ascendency and attacking all concessions made by the Government to the demands of Roman Catholics" (McCaffrey, "Isaac" 77). He demonstrated a deep love for Ireland and believed the power of Union would be beneficial to all Irish (McCaffrey, "Isaac" 73). Butt believed, "Catholics comprised the superstitious, unenlightened, and radical lower class which threatened the maintenance of the Union" (McCaffrey, "Isaac" 74). However, Butt "had been converted to nationalism by his experience of Irish suffering in the great famine and by the courage and integrity first of Young Irelanders and then of the Fenians" (Moody, "Fenianism" 234). His change of heart led to this realization:

[I]t was not the Catholic masses that threatened social stability and conservative principles of government.

The real source of the discontent that encouraged revolutionary ferment was the Protestant Ascendency: a vicious system that economically exploited tenant farmers and insisted upon undeserved, unnecessary, and extreme economic, social, political, and religious privileges. (McCaffrey, "Isaac" 74)

Prior to the Fenian trials, Butt served as an unremarkable conservative Member of Parliament between 1852-1865 (McCaffrey, "Isaac" 76). Following his defeat in 1865, Butt focused on his legal career in Dublin and wrote about the land question (McCaffrey,

"Isaac" 76). Benefitting from the high profile nature of the Fenian trials and his popularity due to his leadership in seeking amnesty for political prisoners,<sup>21</sup> Butt founded the Home Rule Party, a "moderate national party" in May 1870 (Butt, "Letters" 45; McCaffrey, "Isaac" 77). The Home Rule Party "was a movement with the purpose of having a parliament which would have control over Irish affairs while more important matters would be left to the Imperial Parliament" (Butt, "Letters" 45). In his book *Irish Federalism!*, Isaac Butt contended railways and post-office operations should be left to the discretion of the Irish; an example of a "more important matter" better left for the Imperial Parliament includes military operations (Butt 23, 24). Butt believed:

Home Rule would prevent rather than encourage radical excesses in Ireland. He maintained that once Irishmen came to enjoy the benefits of self-government, they would cease rebellious activities and become the most loyal supporters of the Crown and Constitution in the Empire. Irish Catholics, influenced by their religious training, were basically hostile to democratic and radical ideologies, and under normal conditions would support conservative leaders and principles. (McCaffrey, "Isaac" 79)

Isaac Butt returned to Parliament in 1871 as a representative for Limerick (Butt, "Letters"

21. Isaac Butt collaborated with George Henry Moore, MP in the pursuit to gain amnesty for political prisoners. This collaboration continued until Moore's death in April 1870 (Moore 354, 377).



45).

The Irish Catholic hierarchy was initially hostile to the home rule movement because they did not wish to jeopardize their movement on the university question, i.e. separate and government funded Catholic education: "They [Irish Catholic hierarchy] were convinced that the Prime Minister [Gladstone] intended to endow the Catholic University of Ireland with Government funds, and were suspicious of any agitation that might focus attention on the national rather than the religious education issue" (McCaffrey, "Isaac" 82). Upon presentation of Gladstone's Irish University Bill in 1873, it became apparent the Irish hierarchy's belief was incorrect; Gladstone's University Bill "perpetuated the system of mixed education and left the Catholic University without Government financial support" (McCaffrey, "Isaac" 83). Capitalizing on the hierarchy's disappointment, Home Rulers seized the opportunity to acquire clerical support: "a number of priests publicly [to] embrace[d] the Home Rule agitation" (McCaffrey, "Isaac" 83-84).

The Home Rule Party quickly became a force in Parliament. By the general election of 1874,<sup>22</sup> "The Conservatives lost eight seats, falling from 40 to 32, the Liberals collapsed from 65 to 12, and Home Rulers won 59 seats" (Lee 65). Even Prime Minister William Gladstone "became a champion of Irish home rule" (Kinealy, *New* 173). Although dismissed by Clan na Gael, "a number of Fenians in Ireland and

22. The general election of 1874 was the first election conducted with secret ballots pursuant to the Ballot Act of 1872 (Moody, "Fenianism" 235).

England joined the Home Rule League and the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain" (McCaffrey, "Isaac" 92). Even though they violated the Fenian Oath to do so, Home Rule Fenians were found in the House of Commons (O'Brien, *Parnell* 4). Fenian sensibilities in the constitutional arena would come to serve as a catalyst for change in the years to come.

## Chapter Five

### BEFORE THE LAND LEAGUE: IDEALS AND AMBITIONS

Born to a poor, small tenant farmer on March 25, 1846 in Straide, County Mayo, Michael Davitt<sup>23</sup> was destined to alter the course of Irish political and social structures (King 4; Sheehy-Skeffington 1). Michael Davitt was the second child to Martin and Catherine Davitt; he was raised in an Irish-speaking home (Moody, *Davitt* 5). Martin Davitt's command of the English language deemed him a relative scholar in the area (Moody, *Davitt* 5). Although the Davitt Family survived the Great Famine, they could not overcome the accrued arrears during that time. As a result, the Davitts were evicted in 1850 (Curtain, "Archival" 83). Michael Davitt recalled:

We were evicted in Mayo shortly after the great famine,  
and the house in which I was born was burned down  
by the agents of the landlord, aided by the agents of the  
law. That fact in my history was not calculated to make me  
the friend of Irish landlordism or a warm supporter of that  
law that had enabled Mayo landlords to perpetrate deeds of  
that kind under those circumstances. I remember, though I

23. It is notable this Irish patriot's first act of strength is evidenced in his own survival as he was born during the height of the Great Hunger in the bleakest of provinces (Lee 2)

was but a child, we went to the workhouse a few miles away,  
and we were refused admission because my mother would not  
submit to certain conditions which were imposed upon all those  
who sought the shelter of those abodes of misery and degradation.  
("Speech in Defence" 202)

Irish historian T.W. Moody writes, "The eviction became permanently stamped on  
Davitt's consciousness" (*Davitt* 8).

Following the Straide eviction, the Davitts traveled to England and settled in the  
industrial town of "Haslingden, near Manchester, in Lancashire" (Cashman 9).  
Following their stay as lodgers in a home on Wilkinson Street, the Davitts secured a more  
permanent arrangement: "It was one of an isolated row of ten small houses at a place  
called Rock Hall, high up on the north-east edge of Haslingden, where the town ended on  
a green hillside against which they crouched" (Moody, *Davitt* 11-12). Locally, "Rock  
Hall" was known as "Little Ireland" since its occupants were primarily Irish immigrants  
(Moody, *Davitt* 12). Though a laborer by day, as in Ireland, Martin Davitt assumed the  
role of community scholar, committed to the betterment of his fellow countrymen:

he started an evening school in his house, where by the  
light of two farthing candles he would patiently struggle  
with the illiteracy of his huge quarrymen pupils. To  
stimulate scholastic ambition he offered a prize, usually a  
clay pipe, to the best pupil of the evening. But the highest  
trophy of the school, a copy of Archbishop MacHale's Irish

Catechism, was never won, and Michael was confident his father never intended this treasure to be taken from his library of six books except for some supreme intellectual feat.

(Moody, *Davitt*, 13)

It is not surprising that Martin Davitt held nationalist Archbishop MacHale in such high esteem. In *The Fall of Feudalism in Ireland*, Davitt recounts, "[his] father who had been the head of some agrarian secret society in Mayo in 1837, and who had to fly to England in that year to escape a threatened prosecution for Ribbonism" (222).

This quasi-communal life at "Rock Hall" was filled with traditional Irish music and song; political discussion and storytelling also served as a source of entertainment (Moody, *Davitt* 13). While the Irish music often echoed the happier times of their home country, storytelling usually recalled day-to-day struggles of oppression and starvation. Davitt spoke of one of his mother's oral famine accounts to the "Times"- Parnell Commission, "I remember hearing from her a graphic account of how 300 poor people who had died of starvation round about where I was born, between Strade [sic] and Swinford, had been thrown into one pit in the corner of the workhouse yard, without coffin, without sermon, without anything which denotes respect for the dead" (202).

At the age of nine, Michael Davitt left school to work in local cotton and textile mills to supplement the family income (King 5; Dunleavy 116). Davitt's co-worker and childhood friend from "Rock Hall" was killed in an industrial accident; Davitt found his tattered body (Moody, *Davitt* 17). Consequently, Davitt's parents forbade him from returning to this particular mill (Moody, *Davitt* 17). He secured employment at another

mill at Baxenden (Dunleavy 116). There, he worked for eighteen months until the fateful day of May 8, 1857 (Moody, *Davitt* 17). In the *Life of Michael Davitt*, D. B. Cashman conveys, "Here he learned the sufferings of the factory slave, and suffered a mishap which caused the loss of his right arm; that limb having been caught in the machinery and crushed, it had to be amputated at the shoulder" (9). After recovering from his amputation, the eleven-year old was enrolled in a local Wesleyan day school; he was the only Catholic student during that time (Dunleavy 113). Moody writes, "The disaster that cost him his arm thus led to the blessings of an education that fostered his mental powers, and taught him to accept religious diversity as a social fact and not a source of estrangement among men" (*Davitt* 19).

With his Wesleyan tuition underwritten by a local prominent Wesleyan and cotton manufacturer, Davitt secured a progressive education (Moody, *Davitt*, 19). The Wesleyan day school was led by "an alumnus of Stow's Normal School in Glasgow, an institution promoting one of the nineteenth century's most enlightened systems of education." (Dunleavy 113). At fifteen, Davitt gained employment as an assistant letter-carrier and bookkeeper in the printing office adjacent to the post office (Cashman 9).

By his actions, it is evident Michael Davitt valued education. Fairly fluent in French and Italian (in addition to Irish and English), his readings were not limited to the Queen's language (Cashman 12). Since 1858, tandem to and beyond his scholastic responsibilities at the Wesleyan day school, Davitt enrolled in evening classes at the Mechanics' Institute (Moody, *Davitt* 20-21). There, he took advantage of the extensive library and collection of contemporary periodicals to further his studies of Irish history

(Moody, *Davitt* 21). Despite the Mechanics' Institute's rules prohibiting flagrant political and religious expressions, Davitt regularly interacted with influential liberals while frequenting this institute (Dunleavy 115). Even the individual behind the Institute's revival, Dr. John Binns, was a Chartist and "the co-proprietor of a short-lived radical weekly, a founder member of the local Liberal Association, and in 1869 became one of Haslingden's first two Liberal magistrates" (Dunleavy 115). Though Davitt lacked formal university schooling, he possessed innate intellect and naturally gravitated toward liberal ideals.

It is clear that witnessing the eviction and the destruction of his childhood home left an indelible impression on young Davitt. His father's revolutionary roots coupled with his mother's vivid Famine accusations contributed to a staunch anti-English upbringing; this sentiment was amplified as a result of his "Rock Hall" influences. It is of no surprise that in 1865, with his parents' support, Michael Davitt joined the Irish Republican Brotherhood (Moody, *Davitt* 44).

Davitt embraced the Fenian revolutionary objectives and quickly assumed a leadership role. In the authorized biography, *The Life of Michael Davitt*, Cashman writes, "Davitt went into the movement with all the sincerity of a man who felt that a great wrong had been and was being done his country and that it was his duty to do all that he could to overthrow that wrong" (11). Within the Fenian organization, Davitt was quickly elevated to "'Centre' of the Rossendale Circle," a chapter of roughly 50 members (King 6; Moody, *Davitt* 44).

The year 1868 was eventful for Michael Davitt. During a rash of desecrating attacks, the "Murphy-riots," on Roman Catholic Churches in the greater Lancashire area, Davitt organized his contemporaries (presumably other local Fenians) to protect them: "Michael Davitt and his faithful and gallant band were to be found ready to prevent the desecration of House of God or die in the attempt" (Cashman 10). During this year, Davitt left his letter-carrying and bookkeeping position and "became a commercial traveller dealing extensively in fire arms" (Cashman 9). Moody clarifies Davitt's responsibilities with respect to arms dealing: "appointed organising secretary and -- in succession to the imprisoned Richard O'Sullivan Burke -- arms agent of the I.R.B. for England and Scotland. This was a key position, the holder of which was the link between all Fenian circles in Britain (over 100) and the supreme council of the I.R.B." (Moody, *Davitt* 53). Davitt was built for covert activities: "When Davitt was aware that the police were watching him he showed extraordinary skill in eluding their vigilance, slipping into a house by front door and out by the back so quickly and nimbly that he seemed to disappear before their eyes" (Moody, *Davitt* 67).

Despite operating stealthily among the shadows, Davitt was arrested at Paddington train station on May 14, 1870 (Cashman 13; "Capture" 5). Initially, Davitt was charged with loitering as he awaited the 10:40 PM train from Birmingham ("Capture" 5; Sheehy-Skeffington 28). Davitt's alleged accomplice, gunsmith John Wilson, was charged with being in possession of fifty, six-barreled revolvers ("Capture" 5). Davitt's and Wilson's charges were soon amended to treason-felony when the two



were connected by Davitt's keys which unlocked a carpetbag found at the address found on Wilson (Moody, *Davitt* 81; "Capture" 5).

During the inquiry and trial there were some instances that provide insight into the character of Michael Davitt. The first is an interchange during witness testimony during the inquiry. Witness John Joseph Corydon admitted to taking the Fenian Oath in 1862 in America; he travelled to Ireland in 1865 and was in Liverpool in 1866 and 1867 ("Fenians" 3). Corydon confirmed the mission of the Fenian brotherhood as overthrowing the Queen's government; he testified he recognized Davitt from various Fenian meetings throughout Liverpool ("Fenians" 3). To this testimony, Davitt responded to Corydon, "You can't live in Ireland. Reptiles cannot live there, you know" ("Fenians" 3). Davitt's cool words to the Queen's informant demonstrate his collected manner. Davitt was not a hot-headed, boisterous Fenian. The second instance speaks to his loyalty and integrity. During the closing proceedings of the trial, Davitt appeals to the Judge by assuming responsibility and minimizing Wilson's role:

Upon that, the prisoner Davitt, as sentence was about to be passed, made an earnest appeal to the judge, not for himself, but for Wilson, stating that if Wilson was guilty he (Davitt) was to blame for his guilt, and that Wilson never knew until he arrived at the Paddington station that he (Davitt) was an Irishman, or that his name was not Robert Jackson. He would cheerfully undergo any additional punishment if Wilson's wife and family could be saved from a work-house, and he

begged that his punishment, if the sentence against Wilson was irrevocable, might be added to his (Davitt's) sentence.

("European Mail News" 2)

It appears the judge heard Davitt's appeal due to the differentiated sentences. Davitt received fifteen years of penal servitude and Wilson received seven years of penal servitude ("European Mail News" 2).

Michael Davitt's days at Millbank, Dartmoor, and Portsmouth Prisons (May 1870-December 1877) were bleak. In *The Life of Michael Davitt*, Davitt provides an eyewitness account of the horrors he experienced. Despite having only one arm, Davitt was assigned to stone-breaking and bone pulverizing (Cashman 35; King 8). These laborious assignments were worsened by their environmental conditions, "cold, damp, foggy weather" and the stench of the bone pulverizing, "These bones have often lain putrifying for weeks in the broiling heat of the summer sun, ere they were brought into be broken" (Cashman 35). The "bone-shed's" location-next to the prison's cesspool-contributed to the foul surroundings (Sheehy-Skeffington 48). The condition of Davitt's cell and the air quality within 'No. 2 Prison' at Dartmoor are described as, "corrugated iron cages, seven feet long, four feet wide, and about seven feet high, with floors and roofs of slate. . . As the cells had no direct access to daylight or the open air, the light in them was bad and the ventilation was worse" (Cashman 31; *Davitt* 150). The food rations were meager, hardly enough to support hard labor (Cashman 33). Despite the limited quantity, the quality limited Davitt's food supply even further: "I have often come in from work weak with fatigue and hunger, and found it impossible to eat the putrid

meat or stinking soup supplied me for dinner, and had to return to labor again after 'dining' on six ounces of bad bread" (Cashman 33).

Michael Davitt believed, as a political prisoner, he had less rights than the common criminal (Sheehy-Skeffington 52-53, 56). As other Catholic inmates, Davitt was supplied with very limited reading material, "The class of books supplied to the Catholic prisoners was such as would be suitable to children, or people ignorant of the truths of the Catholic faith" (Cashman 27). The frequency of book exchange was once a fortnight; when asked to increase frequency, Davitt was denied (Cashman 27). Despite being a model prisoner, Davitt was refused the right to visitation with friends and family for the duration of his imprisonment, while other well-behaved inmates were afforded this privilege (Cashman 43). Perhaps Davitt's excessive denial of human dignity is best illustrated with the following:

In cases of transfer from prison to prison, convicts are handcuffed, by one hand only, to a chain that runs the whole length of the number of prisoners. . .each convict has one hand at liberty to eat his food, attend to calls of nature, etc., if he is fortunate enough to be possessed of two; and, if not, it is customary to substitute a body-belt for a handcuff, in order to give him the use of one hand also. No such consideration was shown to me. I was purposely placed between two of the filthiest of the twenty-nine convicts, and had my wrist handcuffed back to back with one of them. I

appealed against this ere I left Dartmoor, and requested a belt in lieu of a handcuff, or at least to be put at the end of the chain; but neither would be granted. . . During the journey to Portsmouth, this latter one, to whose hand mine was linked, had an attack of diarrhoea, and I had to submit to the horrors of such a situation, as my hand would not be unlocked from his. (Cashman 45)

The aforementioned conditions became public in the summer of 1872 when a letter from Michael Davitt was smuggled out of Dartmoor in the hands of a discharged prisoner (Moody, *Davitt* 152). The letter, signed by Davitt, was published in several Irish and English newspapers (Moody, *Davitt* 152). When published in the nationalist newspaper, the *Nation*, the following title was assigned, "Sufferings of a Political Prisoner" (3). The wide circulation of this letter helped to ensure the plight of the Irish political prisoner was not forgotten.

Michael Davitt's letter "Sufferings of a Political Prisoner" and his correspondences to Home Rule leader Isaac Butt, MP and John O'Connor Power, MP were far from an irrational attempt to attain freedom (Moody, *Davitt*, 174-175). The Home-Rule Party, led by Isaac Butt and the Amnesty Association (founded in 1869) fought to keep the political prisoners on the active agenda of the House of Commons (Moody, *Davitt* 120). The fight for amnesty was productive. In March 1869, forty-nine political prisoners were released; in January 1871, another thirty-three political prisoners were released (Moody, *Davitt* 121). The second round included very high profile

Fenians, including Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, John O'Leary (editor of the Fenian newspaper, *Irish People*), Thomas Clarke Luby (staff, *Irish People*), and John Devoy (Moody, *Davitt* 121; O'Brien, *Life* 45).<sup>24</sup>

John Devoy was born near Kill, County Kildare on September 3, 1842 (Devoy 375-377). After losing the half-acre, family farm during the Great Famine, William Devoy moved his family to Dublin where he found work in a brewery ("Devoy, McGarrity" 1; Golway 1). The third of seven children, young Devoy was described as, "stubborn, headstrong, but brilliant young man who was forever at odds with teachers, priests, civil authorities, and sometimes William [his father] himself" (Golway 1). Devoy's father was active in local nationalist circles; his maternal grandfather was a veteran of the rising of 1798 ("John Devoy: The Greatest" 3). Given his upbringing, it is not surprising Devoy took the Fenian oath in 1861 ("Devoy, McGarrity" 1). Ignoring James Stephens' recommendations to join the American Union army to train for upcoming Fenian risings, Devoy enlisted in the French Foreign Legion to secure, in his opinion, combat skills from the finest military in the world (Devoy 273; Ryan, "Stephens" 50). Devoy joined the French army and he remained active in Algeria until

24. Charles Kickham, third staff member of the *Irish People* arrested in 1865 was released in the first wave of amnesty (Moody, *Davitt*, 121).

becoming aware of the McManus funeral;<sup>25</sup> he then returned to Ireland and assumed a leadership position in the I.R.B. (Ryan, "Stephens" 50). On November 24, 1865, Devoy co-engineered and led the successful escape of the imprisoned founder of the I.R.B., James Stephens, from Richmond Prison (Ryan, *Chief* 215-216). Habeas Corpus was suspended in Ireland in February 1866, thus leading to the arrest and imprisonment of John Devoy (Ryan, *Chief* 227-228). As other political prisoners, upon his release, John Devoy was to remain in exile; he, along with other leading Fenians, set sail for America (Ryan, "Stephens" 53). Devoy's Fenian spirit only amplified in exile. Shortly after his arrival in New York, he joined and soon gained a leadership position in the Irish American nationalist organization, Clan na Gael ("Devoy, McGarrity" 1). Concurrently, Devoy became a staff journalist for the *New York Herald* (Davitt, *Fall* 127).

The release of eighty-two political prisoners between 1869-1871, which coincided with the start of Davitt's sentencing, left "such cases as Davitt's. . .very likely to be overlooked thereafter, especially as his imprisonment began just at the time this jail delivery was being carried out" (Sheehy-Skeffington 60). Isaac Butt continued to shine light on Davitt's and other remaining political prisoners' incarceration: "In 1872 Butt

25. Terrence Bellew McManus, convicted in the Young Ireland Rising of 1848 and sentenced to death, but changed to transportation to Tasmania, escaped with other Young Ireland alumni to the United States. Following his death and burial in 1861, American-based Irish nationalists exhumed his body and transported it to Ireland for burial. Archbishop Paul Cullen forbade the clergy from participating in this very public funeral (although a few priests ignored his order), thereby intensifying national Fenianism sentiment; following the funeral, I.R.B. membership swelled (Moran, *Radical*, 46-48).

wrote to a friend, also interested in the amnesty movement, asking him to look up full particulars concerning the case of 'a poor young fellow who seems to have been forgotten by everybody. He was tried and sentenced to penal servitude the year after the other Fenians were liberated.'" (Sheehy-Skeffington 60).

In 1875, the cause for amnesty was rejuvenated by Davitt's Lancashire acquaintance the newly-elected, Fenian John O'Connor Power, MP for Mayo<sup>26</sup> ("Parliamentary Debates" 3 ccxxvi 26 Jul. 1875- 13; 26 Feb. [222] 942; "Parliamentary Debates" 3 ccxxx 1 Aug. 1876, 286; "Parliamentary Debates" 3 ccxxvi 14, Aug. 1877, 826). Power was joined by other obstructionists specifically Fenian and Catholic convert Joseph Biggar, MP for Cavan,<sup>27</sup> Frank Hugh O'Donnell, MP for Galway City and representing County Meath, Protestant junior MP Charles Stewart Parnell (Moody, *Davitt* 129-134). In *The Fall of Feudalism*, Davitt recalls looking forward to meeting Charles Stewart Parnell, MP (110). Parnell et al's obstructionist campaign "made me [him] curious to see what manner of man the coming leader was in the flesh" (Davitt, *Fall* 110).

After being imprisoned for seven years and seven months, Michael Davitt was released on December 19, 1877 on a ticket of leave (Cashman 49). That same evening,

26. Despite long term membership and leadership within the Fenian organization, John O'Connor Power, MP was ultimately expelled in March 1877 due to the I.R.B.'s permanent stance against taking the conflicting oath to the crown (Moody, *Davitt* 134).

27. John Biggar, MP was also expelled from the I.R.B. Supreme Council in March 1877 alongside Power. Biggar was sworn in into the I.R.B. following his appointment to parliament in 1874 (Moody, *Davitt* 129, 134).

Isaac Butt and other members of the political prisoners visiting committee greeted Davitt upon his return to London (Moody, *Davitt* 186). On January 12, 1878, alongside fellow former political prisoners, Charles McCarthy, Thomas Chambers, and John Patrick O'Brien, Michael Davitt "arrived in the city of Dublin, via the Holyhead steamer, on Saturday night, January 12. A magnificent ovation awaited them at the Westland Row Station of the Dublin and Kingstown Railway" (Cashman 51). Fireworks, bon-fire, music and great cheers, welcomed the prisoners; the reception committee's address spoke of appreciation, respect, and well-wishes ("Released" 10). Davitt served as spokesman for the released political prisoners exuding patriot spirit and much appreciation ("Released" 10).

Following this heroes' welcome at Westland Row, the former prisoners and the committee traveled to Morrison's Hotel, Charles Stewart Parnell's Dublin headquarters (Haslip 71). As the group assembled for breakfast, "Sergeant McCarthy staggered, fainted, and never regained consciousness. Worn out by his prison sufferings, he was dead before his wife could reach him" (Haslip 71). In addition to Parnell and the former prisoners, breakfast guests included leading home-rule party members, Fenians, Fenian-sympathizing journalists, and most notably John O'Connor Power, MP and Joseph Biggar, MP (Moody, *Davitt* 189). Refusing to allow Sergeant Charles' McCarthy's death to have been in vain, on January 29, 1878, John O'Connor Power, MP raised the question in the House of Commons of McCarthy's treatment in prison ("Parliamentary Debates" 3, ccxxxvii 29 Jan. 1878, 622). This led to a full inquiry of which concluded nothing; medical officer, "Dr. Pitman" gave his seal of approval of the living conditions in prison



("Sham" 8). This judgment sensationalized this issue; Davitt's and other former prisoners' detailed letters of appeal and public meetings amplified public consciousness and outrage (Moody, *Davitt*, 196; "Sham" 8).

Shortly after McCarthy's death, Davitt traveled to County Mayo (the first time he returned since the eviction.); there he visited with kin and in Castlebar was the guest of James Daly, editor of the *Connaught Telegraph* (Moody, *Davitt* 190). James Daly was the eldest of eight children born in Boghadoon, County Mayo in 1838 ("Forgotten" 1). The son of a successful tenant farmer, James Daly: "In 1869 won a seat on the Castlebar board of guardians for the electoral district of Breaghwy and in 1874 he succeeded his father as guardian for the Litterbrick division in Ballina union" (Moran, "Daly" 189). Daly's local political career and his recurring, printed voice in the *Connaught Telegraph* beget a true local leader. Daly channeled his efforts to "become the ardent defender of the tenants' cause and was by far the most prominent of the local politicians to advocate their demands" (Moran, "Daly" 190). Daly's fight for the local tenantry was no doubt forged by a nationalist family tradition: "when General Humbert and the French arrived in Killala in 1798, the Daly family provided 100 horsemen to participate in the battles against the English" (Garavan, "Daly" 2). Daly was even kin (by marriage) to the Most Reverend Dr. John MacHale, Archbishop of Tuam (Garavan, "Daly" 1). Daly wholeheartedly believed that peasant proprietorship was the only solution to the land question (Moran, "Daly" 190). Though a supporter of John O'Connor Power, Daly refrained from taking the oath of the I.R.B. (Moran, "Daly" 201). This was largely due to his strict Catholicism and disdain for violence ("Forgotten" 1). When asked if James

Daly was a Fenian, Michael Davitt thought "Daly had not in him the stuff out of which conspirators were made" (Macdonald 281).

In the months following his release, Davitt traveled in the same political circles as Parnell (Davitt, *Fall* 111). Davitt believed in order to settle the land question, the masses must engage war on the landlords, however, "The first line of defence ought to be an open movement on constitutional lines" (Davitt, *Fall* 112). By May of 1878, it was clear to Davitt, Parnell would be beneficial to achieving his parliamentary goals; as such, Davitt:

asked him [Parnell] to join the revolutionary organization; not, however, to subscribe to the silly oath of secrecy or to become a mere figure-head in a do-nothing conspiracy. These were the chief features of the Irish revolutionary movement which had appeared weak and absurd to me after several years' thought upon the problem of how best to rid Ireland of English rule. Irishmen were poor conspirators, at best, as Celtic qualities did not lend themselves very successfully to self-suppression or to the silent agencies of occult action. Men who would break a pledge of loyalty to a cause would not be bound to fealty by a hundred oaths. What was essential in order to create a really effective revolutionary movement in the Irish race was to have an organization of selection-relatively small in numbers, but strong in reliable

and representative membership and in the negative safeguards  
of less "conspirators" with more character. (Davitt, *Fall* 111)

Although Parnell did agree with much of Davitt's reasoning, he rejected his offer to join the I.R.B. indicating it would "hinder and not assist me [Parnell] in my work for Ireland" (Davitt, *Fall* 112). Parnell's refusal was not one of disrespect; he made it clear his parliamentary work was to be his focus (Davitt, *Fall* 112). Parnell maintained a practical outlook: "His aim was to bring all Irish forces into line, and he would no more fight with the Church than with the Fenians. His one credo was 'Irish Unity,' and he would go to any lengths to prevent quarrels or dissensions among his own people" (Haslip 71).

Charles Stewart Parnell was born on June 27, 1846 at his family home, Avondale, in County Wicklow (O'Brien, *Life* 32, 35). Charles Stewart Parnell's lineage was one of pedigree and subsequent privilege. His father John Henry Parnell descended from a line of barristers and members of Parliament, most notable, Sir John Parnell, Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Irish Parliament in 1788 (Davitt, *Fall* 105). Sir John Parnell lost this position due to his opposition to the Act of Union in 1800 (Callanan 51). Charles Stewart Parnell's grandfather, William Parnell penned, *A Historical Apology for the Irish Catholics* which called for religious tolerance (Davitt, *Fall* 105). His American-born mother, Delia Tudor Stewart Parnell's lineage is equally, if not more so, prominent. Delia Tudor Stewart Parnell's father was Commodore Charles Stewart, or more commonly known in American history as "Old Ironsides" (Davitt, *Fall* 106). Delia's Bostonian-socialite mother descended from the Royal British family (Davitt, *Fall* 106). His father, John Henry was described as, "a good landlord, a staunch Liberal, a kind

friend, he was respected and esteemed by all classes in the country" (O'Brien, *Life* 20). His mother, Delia was a "critic of American slavery and had supported women's rights" (Kinealy, *New* 180). She was "animated by one fixed idea, a rooted hatred of England" (O'Brien, *Life* 29). Delia's character was described as possessing "superabundant vitality . . . hysterical enthusiasms, and inordinate vanity, she was hardly likely to be a peaceful wife" (Haslip 2). Despite birthing twelve babies, her "exuberant spirits" endured (Haslip 2, 11). Members of both sides of Charles Stewart Parnell's family were politically charged. His kinsmen's demonstrated resistance to unionization; desire for free religious expression; a track record of defeating "Mother England"; and staunch Liberalism fostered a covertly nationalist,<sup>28</sup> yet insular environment in which young Charles Stewart Parnell was reared.

As prominent land owners and landlords in County Wicklow, the Parnell family was sheltered from the atrocities of the Great Famine; their philanthropic gestures included surrendering tenants' rent and charitable donations (Haslip 6-7). Delia was "indifferent to established conventions" (O'Brien, *Life* 29). Essentially, the Parnell children were raised by domestics as Delia, "though she was devoted to her children, she was quite incapable of looking after them" (Haslip 9).

Despite his mother instilling intense anti-English sentiment, Parnell was sent to an English girls' school at the age of six (O'Brien, *Life* 37). In 1853, Parnell's father secured special permission for his son to attend the girls' school because he "was anxious that

28. Charles Stewart's father had declared political discussion as "taboo" (Haslip 9; O'Brien, *Life* 43).

Charlie should 'spend some of his earlier years in England, with someone who would mother him and cure his stammering'" (O'Brien, *Life* 37). He contracted typhoid fever in 1854 and returned to Avondale in 1855 (O'Brien, *Life* 37-38). As a result of his susceptibilities, Parnell was homeschooled by tutors and governesses to which he was quite obstinate (O'Brien, *Life* 38). His passion for practical science was satiated by studying the mechanical devices used at the family quarry (Haslip 12). He was sent to an English boys' school where, "He was idle, read little, resisted the authority of the masters (though submissive to the head of the establishment), disliked his fellow-pupils, and was disliked by them" (O'Brien, *Life* 38). He showed great aptitude for mathematics and cricket (O'Brien, *Life* 38, 41). According to his older brother John, "He liked fighting for fighting sake" (O'Brien, *Life* 37).

In 1859, Charles Stewart's father, John Henry Parnell died suddenly in a cricket match in the Phoenix Park, Dublin (Haslip 14). Thirteen-year old Charles Stewart, "was old enough to realize that the one steadying influence in his life had gone" (Haslip 14).

Ultimately, he returned to England as a student of Cambridge University in 1865 (O'Brien, *Life* 40). While at Cambridge, Parnell's widowed mother, Delia and younger sister, Fanny became embroiled in the Fenian brotherhood (O'Brien, *Life* 44-45). The Fenian newspaper *Irish People*, which began circulation in 1863, regularly accepted the work of Fanny Parnell (O'Brien, *Life* 44). Seeing Fenianism as an ideal outlet for her anti-English sentiment, "Mrs. Parnell especially took a keen interest in the movement, and did not hesitate to express her views and sympathies in the Government circles in which she moved" (O'Brien, *Life* 45). Mrs. Parnell did not simply dabble in the

romanticism of Dublin's I.R.B., she plunged in: "In her passion for sensational excitement, Mrs. Parnell allowed her house to become one of the chief meeting places for the rough-and-ready Irish-American officers, who slouched in her drawing-room smelling of whiskey and wet tweeds" (Haslip 19). In *Recollections of an Irish Rebel*, American Fenian leader John Devoy accounts, "Mrs. Parnell was a strong sympathizer with the movement [Fenian], and in 1866 paid the passage to New York of several American officers, released from Mountjoy Prison. . .she even sheltered. . .several men who were 'on the run'" (43). Mrs. Parnell established herself on the revolutionary map as her Dublin home was under police surveillance (O'Brien, *Life* 47). Fanny, too, was on the authorities' radar as she found herself being followed by detectives as she left the courthouse during Fenian O'Donovan Rossa's trial for high treason (Haslip 22). Ironically, during this time, Delia's son and Fanny's brother, Charles Stewart was an officer in the Wicklow Militia (O'Brien, *Life* 47).

The year 1865 was a watershed for the Fenian movement. The office of the Fenian newspaper, *Irish People* was raided and the editor John O'Leary and leading staff members were arrested (O'Brien, *Life* 45). O'Leary was sentenced to twenty years penal servitude, staff members were also sentenced to penal servitude (O'Brien, *Life* 46). Home-Rule leader, Isaac Butt served as defense counsel for the *Irish People* Fenians (as he had done for Young Ireland leadership in 1848); Mrs. Parnell financed a considerable portion of the legal fees (Haslip 23). Charles Stewart found their Fenian involvement irritating and resented their participation (Haslip 25). It was not until September 1867 that Charles Stewart Parnell began to contemplate Irish politics (Haslip 29).

A number of Fenian uprisings were taking place in England, most notable was the attack on Chester Castle (Kinealy, *New* 173). "When two of the leading Fenians, Thomas Kelly and Timothy Deasy, were being taken to jail in Manchester, the police van was attacked and the prisoners released. During the commotion an unarmed policeman was killed" (Kinealy, *New* 173). In November 1867, William O'Meara Allen, Michael Larkin, and William O'Brien were hanged for this accidental killing and since then have been identified as the Manchester Martyrs (Kinealy, *New* 173; Haslip 28). Charles Stewart Parnell was in Cambridge during this tumultuous time and "his natural dislike of the English became intensified by this travesty of justice" (Haslip 29)

After three and one-half years at Cambridge University, Charles Stewart Parnell was suspended for an off-campus altercation and what may have been bribery (Davitt, *Fall* 107). He never completed his studies at Cambridge (O'Brien, *Life* 43). Instead he assumed his responsibilities at Avondale which included developing the slate quarries, building saw mills, and reclaiming land (Haslip 31). During this time he travelled to his uncle's home in the Champs-Élysées to visit his immediate family as they spent a great deal of time there since the Fenian tribulations of 1867 (Haslip 25, 32). In Paris, Parnell met and fell in love with American Mary Woods and became engaged (Haslip 32). His fiancée remained reserved to the notion of marriage as she traveled to Rome and then onto America without mentioning either trip to Parnell (Haslip 33). Frustrated by his distant fiancée, Parnell traveled to America only to be told "their engagement was canceled, as she could never bring herself to marry an obscure Irish country gentleman, who had no higher ambitions than the running of his estate. She added that she needed a

brilliant and famous husband whom she could respect as well as love" (Haslip 34). She devastated him deeply (Haslip 35). Capitalizing on his Atlantic crossing, Parnell traveled to Alabama in 1871 to see his brother, John (Haslip 34; O'Brien, *Life* 54). When he first arrived in Alabama, Parnell "suffered acute indigestion and insomnia, and he would spend hours shut up in his room, sunk in a state of apathy" (Haslip 36). During his months in America he found interest in the cotton mills, factories, coal fields, and lumber operations; he speculated on Wall Street and set up exporting relationships for Avondale-made goods (Haslip 36; O'Brien, *Life* 54). During their travels, the Parnell brothers were in a serious railway accident; while Charles Stewart was unhurt, his brother was seriously injured (O'Brien, *Life* 55). After nursing John back to health, Charles Stewart convinced his brother to return with him to Avondale (O'Brien, *Life* 56).

As the brothers sat for breakfast at Avondale one summer morning in 1873, John Parnell suggested Charles Stewart become a member of Parliament (Haslip 41; O'Brien, *Life* 56-57). Though he did not act on John's suggestion in 1873, he did serve a term as high sheriff of County Wicklow (Davitt, *Fall* 107). However, Parnell entered the political arena during the General Election of 1874 when he contested the seat for County Dublin (Callanan 51). Home-Rule Party leader Isaac Butt supported his candidacy and "convinced his colleagues that they had a splendid recruit"<sup>29</sup> (Haslip 46). In the election, Colonel Taylor beat him badly (Davitt, *Fall* 107). In *The Fall of Feudalism*, Michael

29. Butt had been acquainted with Charles Stewart during his mother's involvement with the Fenian trials (Haslip 23, 46).



Davitt attributed this loss to Parnell's oration skills: "Mr. Parnell's speaking abilities were of the poorest order during this election contest, and did not earn for him the promise or prophecy of future distinction. Like Disraeli, however, he commenced badly to end powerfully, and to command the fame which modesty rather than demerit had at first turned away" (107-108). Charles Stewart Parnell was not deterred and on April 17, 1875, he was elected a member of Parliament for County Meath<sup>30</sup> (Callanan 51). On April 22, 1875, Parnell assumed his seat in the House of Commons, to witness Joseph Biggar MP for Cavan launching "his first experiment in obstruction" (Haslip 48).

Frustrated by the inattention to Irish issues in Parliament, Joseph Gillis Biggar, MP crafted a strategy to completely irritate non-Home Rule supporters. He set about "deliberately exploiting the procedure of the house, without any traditional restraint, for the purpose of delaying or disorganising or blocking not simply the government's but the house's business. This way of harassing the enemy, and the anger and hatred it drew upon him showed how effective it was" (Moody, *Davitt* 130). The junior member of Parliament, Charles Stewart Parnell was taken by the man that seemed immune from English intimidation and defied the example of Home-Rule leader, Isaac Butt, MP (Haslip 52). Charles Stewart Parnell, "quickly gained notoriety as Biggar's most distinguished pupil in the art of parliamentary obstruction" (Moody, *Davitt* 131). On April 12, 1877 Isaac Butt publically condemned Parnell in front of the House of Commons for his active obstruction to the mutiny bill (Moody, *Davitt* 132). As Butt

30. To represent a constituency in Parliament, residency was not required (e.g. Parnell lived in County Wexford and represented County Meath.).

"rose, amidst the cheers of the English members, to denounce one of his own countrymen, he might of realized that he was sealing his political doom in Ireland" (Haslip 60). Butt's fate was confirmed at the August 1877 Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain convention when Parnell defeated Butt for the presidency (Moody, *Davitt* 132). In *The Fall of Feudalism*, Davitt reflects upon:

the constitutional movement, which had Home Rule, land reform, and the franchise for its programme, lacked both popularity and combativeness. It was mainly Mr. Butt's movement. His great qualities had given it form and life out of the debris of the previous moral-force agitation, which Duffy, Lucas, Moore, and others had, in turn, rescued from the shipwreck of O'Connell's Repeal failure. Possibly the father of Home Rule was too old to lead his offspring in the field of more vigorous action. In any case, his party was not in any real sense a fighting force. He was not to blame for this. The country had been appealed to by him for a reliable parliamentary delegation, and those whom it elected to his standard shared with him the right and authority of deciding upon the plans and policies to be put into operation. He was held in constraint between his right and left wings -- between the more numerous nominal Home-Rulers and the small Parnell-Biggar contingent -- compelled to recognize the paramount claims and influence of numbers where his own views and predilections might incline him to the side of the more militant section.

Had the membership of his party been in an inverse proportion to such composition, it is more than probable that Mr. Butt would have reconciled his views of parliamentary tactics to the exigencies of a more combative Irish representation in the House of Commons, backed by an organized, semi-revolutionary agitation in Ireland. (118-119)

With the obstructionists leading the helm of the Home-Rule Party, movement on Irish issues seemed possible (Cashman 68-69). But parliamentary progress was just one aspect in realizing the goal towards national independence. Any parliamentary movement in England, though promising, was a remote concept to the Irish tenant farmer. As Daniel O'Connell successfully empowered the peasantry with the "Catholic Rent" (one penny per month) in 1823 (Whyte, "Age" 206), Davitt recognized the necessity of harnessing the power of the masses to ensure unity and mobilization (Kane 259). As such, it was critical to channel efforts towards a common, national grievance, namely landlordism:

Landlordism, in its effects and record, was to tenants and others the symbol and expression of social injustice resting upon foreign rule. It stood for the menace of eviction, the dark, dread shadow which almost always loomed over three or four hundred thousand households. The landlord's right meant eviction or emigration to the tenant when it did not stand for rack-rent and poverty. Hatred of this system was all but universal at home, while among the exiled Irish across the Atlantic there was

perhaps a more relentless feeling still against Irish landlordism.

(Davitt, *Fall* 120)

After traveling to America (summer 1878) to visit with his family and speak in a multi-state lecture series regarding his experiences as a political prisoner, Davitt recognized the power of the grieved Diaspora (Cashman 67-68, 71). Davitt's speaking engagements were organized by Dr. William Carroll, Clan na Gael executive (Moody, *Davitt* 225-226). Davitt traveled incessantly through December 1878 speaking in most instances to the Clan na Gael membership (King 12; Moody, *Davitt*, 224-270). During this time, Davitt's relationship with American Fenian leader, John Devoy was honed (Cashman 71). In *The Fall of Feudalism*, Davitt details his agenda during such meetings:

An "alliance " between the revolutionary or Fenian organization and Mr. Parnell was neither directly nor indirectly urged or advised in any way, at any of such meetings, or otherwise by me. What was proposed was an open participation in public movements in Ireland by extreme men, not in opposition to Mr. Parnell or moral-force supporters, but with the view of bringing an advanced nationalist spirit and revolutionary purpose into Irish public life, in a friendly rivalry with moderate nationalists, in the work of making English rule more difficult or impossible, and for such a line of action I appealed both for Clan-na-Gael and general Irish-American approval and support. (Davitt, *Fall* 125)

Devoy shared Davitt's belief of uniting nationalists and constitutionalists towards a common purpose, namely the land question. This philosophical agreement was publically confirmed at the October 13, 1878 Brooklyn speaking engagement (Davitt, *Fall* 125; Moody, *Davitt* 238-239). Moody in referencing Devoy's more radical impromptu presentation at the Brooklyn meeting, suggests, "Davitt was learning more from American Fenians than they were learning from him" (Moody, *Davitt* 239-240).

On December 8, 1878 during his final American lecture of the tour, Devoy's influence became apparent (Moody, *Davitt* 260-263). During this lecture, Davitt spoke of the shortcomings of historic and contemporary Irish nationalist policy (Moody, *Davitt* 260). He underscores the self-defeating, divided strategies that undermined advancement as he proposed a new alliance:

The difficulties in the way of such an united Irish public movement are to be found in the unreasonable prejudice and suicidal antagonism which exists between the two parties who each assume to be Ireland's benefactor, -- the Nationalist and the Irish-Constitutional bodies. This mutual opposition has weakened both, diffused bad blood among the community, increased the number of non-participants in the political life of the country, and strengthened the position of the coercive faction. . . They [Constitutionalists] are as prominent in the political arena as the Nationalists, -- more so, in fact, as they have a public policy to catch the public ear and eye. They have a following in

Ireland which is at once powerful and influential, and cannot, therefore, be ignored. They have enlisted the support of the Catholic clergy, and count the middle class of the country as belonging to their party. (qtd. in Cashman 85-87)

This very public declaration for the desire for cooperation between nationalists and constitutionalists also detailed a seven-point program proposal (Cashman 89-90). The seven-point proposal included aspirations for Irish self-government; the story of the Irish to be known world-wide and its opposition to prejudice and coercive policy; immediate land reform; development of natural resources; local governmental structures; educational reform; and the right to bear arms (Cashman 89-90). The third proposition calling for land reform became priority on the eve of his Boston lecture on December 8. Davitt and American Fenians "agreed that the land should be made the basis of the national fight, and that all nationalist energies should be enlisted in a contest with the English landlord and political garrison for the ownership of the land and the control of the public bodies in the country" (Davitt, *Fall* 130).

In a letter dated December 11, 1878, John Devoy (with input from Davitt and leading American Fenians) detailed the "New Departure" (Moody *Davitt* 264). This New Departure of aligning constitutionalists with the I.R.B. and the I.R.B.'s involvement with agrarian agitation did not receive the support of I.R.B. leadership at a Paris summit in January 1879 (Moody, *Davitt* 277-281). Cashman reports:

James Stephens [Fenian Chief]. . .in an interview. . .in February, '79, on being asked whether the 'New Departure' would not take

the place of the Home Rule movement, and keep the Irish people's minds in the groove of constitutional agitation and action, replied: 'Not at all; this New Departure has failed. It never could succeed. The Home Rule movement sprung up after the defeat of the Fenian physical force movement at that time, and Nationalists joined it because, temporarily dispirited by this failure', they hoped such a movement might accomplish something. In this they have been woefully [sic] disappointed, and the fall of the Home Rule party rang the death knell of constitutional agitation among Irish Nationalists. (96)

Davitt's and Devoy's vision of December 1878 was not supported by I.R.B. leadership. However, the circumstances that would unfold in Ireland in the months to come would validate the notions of these Fenian idealists.

## Chapter Six

### THE LAND WAR: EVICTION AND AGITATION

In the General Election of 1874, devout Catholic James Daly of Castelbar,<sup>31</sup> ignored the wishes of local bishops and clergy and supported the candidacy of the then, "Connacht representative for the Supreme Council of the I.R.B.," John O'Connor Power<sup>32</sup> for member of Parliament for County Mayo (Moran, "Daly" 190). In addition to his commitment to freeing Fenian prisoners, Galway native Power believed home rule could be obtained by incorporating both constitutional and revolutionary means (Jordan, "Power" 47, 49, 54). After a high-profile, contested election,<sup>33</sup> John O'Connor Power prevailed in a by-election in May 1874 (Jordan, "Power" 51). After taking his seat in Parliament, he "quickly identified himself in parliament as a supporter of the moderate home-rule platform of Butt" (Jordan, "Power" 53).

31. Not to be confused with his contemporary, James Daly of Irishtown (Moody, *Davitt*, 284).

32. As Davitt and Parnell, John O'Connor Power was also born in the year 1846 (Jordan, "Power" 47).

33. Anticipating Archbishop MacHale's support of O'Connor Power's candidacy, Father Patrick Lavelle of Cong and Bishop Conway of Killala nominated two other candidates prior to MacHale's arrival. This maneuver essentially forced a checkmate with the nominations, thereby denying Power clerical support and ultimately the MP position. However, a fourth candidate appealed the candidacy on a technicality regarding the timely appointment of an expense agent; Power was added to the ballot and defeated Lavelle's and Conway's candidate (Moran, *Radical* 146-150).



Former student of St. Jarlath's College, John O'Connor Power, "was politically and culturally the representative of local initiative in Irish politics. He was heir to the tradition of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century secret societies, the local committees of the Catholic Association of the 1820s and the post-famine farmers' associations, all of which operated independently of central direction" (Jordan, "Power" 46). Power's commitment to local grievances was certainly in concert with James Daly of Castlebar's local sensibilities (Jordan, "Daly" 198). With consistent philosophies in respect to regional agrarian needs, the union of a Fenian-obstructionist member of Parliament with a farmer-editor-in-chief of the *Connaught Telegraph* would prove to be a powerful force in the nationalist movement: "Daly and Power saw that the land movement could mobilize the tenant farmers in defense of their economic interests while linking the struggle against landlordism with that for national independence" (Jordan, *Land* 211).

The year 1877 marks the first year of a three-year agricultural depression ("A Chronology" 416). The unusual combination of failing crops (attributed to exceptionally wet weather) and falling prices fostered an environment rich in "bankruptcy, starvation, and eviction" (Moody, "Fenianism" 237). This agricultural crisis of the late 1870s was not solely an Irish issue, it was a European-wide agricultural depression (Kane 251).

North-Dublin farmer Andrew J. Kettle described the crops of 1877 as "very inferior" and "that the crop of 1878, though it had in some areas been promising, had turned out to be the least profitable of any raised in Ireland during the last thirty years" (qtd. in Moody, *Davitt* 273). In *Priests and People in Ireland*, barrister and author Michael J. F. McCarthy recalls, "that dreadful harvest of '79. The corn was not only

miserably poor, but the weather was so bad that it was almost impossible to save it. I happened to be riding with my uncle to Bartlemy Fair in county Cork, on the 17th of September that year; and we passed several fields of corn which was still as green as grass!" (232).

The preceding passage speaks to the weather during the time of the agricultural crisis in Ireland. While anecdotal recollections paint a gruesome picture, the observational data yields unequivocal hardship (*Preliminary 1879* 14). The crops of 1879 had little chance of salvage given the year-round cooler temperatures, increased cloud coverage, and extreme rain conditions (excessive during the second and third quarters; lacking in the fourth quarter) (*Preliminary 1879* 14).

Economic and survival conditions of the Irish farming class and peasantry were deteriorating rapidly. "According to official statistics issued by the Irish registrar-general, the total value of Irish crops in 1876 was estimated to be worth £36,000,000; in 1877, £28,000,000; in 1879, £22,000,000" (Davitt, *Fall* 187). In addition to the cold and driving rains, "competition from American beef drove down prices in an English market" (Jordan, *Land* 200). In *Davitt and Irish Revolution*, Moody describes the American impact, "the mid-west corn-belt, was one of the most thriving regions of America and a source of those cheap agricultural products whose influx into Europe was contributing to the increasing agricultural depression in Ireland" (241).

In the Connacht region, much of the annual income was derived from migrant work in both England and Scotland. By far, County Mayo supplied "the largest number of seasonal migrants for harvest work. . . From being one-fifth of the national total [of

migrant workers] in 1841 they amounted to about one-half in 1880 (10,198 out of 22,900). Of these 10,198 migrants, about 44 per cent were farmers" (Moody, *Davitt* 3). In "James Daly and the Rise and Fall of the Land League in the West of Ireland," Irish historian Gerard Moran attributes the "dramatic decline in seasonal migration remittances" and "major reduction in credit facilities from shopkeepers" as key factors in the west of Ireland's relative economic catastrophe ("Daly" 192). During the prosperous, Post-Famine years prior to the downturn in 1877:

The willingness of bankers and shopkeepers to allow small farmers to run up debts was strengthened by Gladstone's land act of 1870 which gave tenants a tangible interest in their holdings that creditors could accept as security for loans. Nearly half the occupiers of land were heavily in debt when in 1877 the banks became seriously alarmed by the bad harvest of that year and began to put a curb on further advances. (Moody, *Davitt* 329-330)

With shopkeepers and banks reining in speculative lending, farmers faced yet another challenge in their pursuit to earn a living. Yet, the shopkeepers and bankers were far from insensitive to the farmers; their livelihood depended upon them: "Fortunately for farmers, the economic position of townsmen was such that they had an interest in the farmers' cause. . .if the depression meant that farmers could no longer afford to buy the luxuries and even necessities to which they have become accustomed. . .a return to subsistence living by farmers was disastrous" (Clark, "Social" 450).

In Connacht, where the Great Famine took its greatest toll on human life (Lee 2), the rural classes feared its return (Moody, *Davitt* 3). As in the years leading up to the Great Famine, potatoes were the primary food source in the westerly counties. During these years, the potato was the greatest of the crop failures (Davitt, Fall 187).

Table 3

Average Rate of Potato Crop to the Statute Acre (in Tons), in Each Year from 1870 to 1879

	<b>Galway</b>	<b>Mayo</b>	<b>Roscommon</b>	<b>Sligo</b>
<b>1870</b>	3.9	3.7	3.2	3.4
<b>1871</b>	3.1	2.7	2.4	2.6
<b>1872</b>	2.8	2.0	1.8	1.9
<b>1873</b>	2.9	2.4	3.1	2.6
<b>1874</b>	3.9	4.0	3.6	3.3
<b>1875</b>	3.9	3.4	3.1	3.2
<b>1876</b>	4.8	5.1	5.7	5.3
<b>1877</b>	2.5	1.8	1.8	1.3
<b>1878</b>	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.1
<b>1879</b>	1.4	1.4	1.3	0.8

Source: *Preliminary Report on the Returns of Agricultural Produce in Ireland in the Year 1879*, 37-38.

The challenges went far beyond the failed potato crop. An avian cholera outbreak in County Mayo annihilated the chicken population with an average county-wide loss of twenty percent, thirty-eight percent in eastern Mayo (Jordan, *Land* 204). Even the plentiful turf proved unreliable as a fuel source during this time of inclement weather since ample drying time was not afforded between rains (Jordan, *Land* 200). The scarcity of fuel and its effect on the small farmers and laborers is specifically speculated upon in the *Preliminary Report on the Returns of Agricultural Produce in Ireland in 1879* (16).

With memories of the Great Famine aged less than thirty years, and economic indicators paving the road to homelessness, Irish farming families' concerns were rational and founded. In *A Death-Dealing Famine*, Irish historian Christine Kinealy states, "The memory of the Famine provided an additional sense of injustice against land owners and, increasingly, the British state" (154). Despite William Gladstone's Landlord and Tenant Act of 1870, which limited justification of evictions due to non-payment of rent, "Evictions increased after 1879. . . In 1880 alone, over 2,000 families were evicted" (Kinealy, *New* 176). Table 4 illustrates eviction data per province and Ireland as a whole in a year prior to and the years following the Land Act of 1870 through the first half of the land agitation. Table 5 is presented to provide perspective with respect to evictions following the Great Famine; while the number evictions did rise, they did not materialize into the vast numbers during the Post-Famine clearances.

Table 4

Number of Families Evicted in 1865, and 1872-1880

	1865	1872	1873	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880
<b>Ulster</b>	291	139	129	196	106	164	68	88	172	497
<b>Leinster</b>	232	113	131	107	124	151	160	275	354	484
<b>Munster</b>	183	101	208	177	161	134	117	252	399	742
<b>Connacht</b>	236	173	203	246	276	104	118	365	313	387
<b>Ireland</b>	942	526	671	726	667	555	463	980	1238	2110

Source: *The Irish Landlord and his Accusers with an Account of Misguided Legislation and Consequent Demoralization and Danger, Social and Political*, 522.

Table 5

Number of Families Evicted, 1849-1854

	1849	1850	1851	1852	1853	1854
<b>Ulster</b>	1893	1961	1140	770	454	226
<b>Leinster</b>	3353	4015	3192	1827	1354	534
<b>Munster</b>	7287	8957	5010	3067	1148	633
<b>Connacht</b>	4153	5016	3855	2927	1877	763
<b>Ireland</b>	16686	19949	13197	8591	4833	2156

Source: *The Irish Landlord and his Accusers with an Account of Misguided Legislation and Consequent Demoralization and Danger, Social and Political*, 522.

In *The Fall of Feudalism*, Michael Davitt reflects upon this time of despair in Ireland:

It was a matter of indifference to the Downing Street rulers of Ireland how or to what extent the bad harvests and falling prices of the years 1877 and 1878 could or should affect the payments of rents after culminating crop failure in the summer of 1879. A domestic government would not be blind to such a condition of things, but an English government of Ireland was extra blind where it did not wish to see or know the truth. (186-87)

The sentiment behind these words united large graziers and tenant farmers for the first time. Together, they demanded "immediate relief from economic distress and for the end of landlordism and the establishment of peasant land ownership" (Jordan, *Land* 208-09).

To communicate such demands, James Daly of Castlebar, Mayo farmers and shopkeepers sought out to organize "a protest meeting of aggrieved farmers, to be held at Irishtown" (Moody, *Davitt* 284). Irishtown is essentially the center of Connacht (Moody, *Davitt* 284). James Daly served as the chairman<sup>34</sup> (Moran, "Daly" 193). John O'Connor Power the MP for County Mayo committed to speaking (Davitt, *Fall* 146). Following his Atlantic crossing, Davitt traveled throughout the country-side of his native Connacht

34. Local priests usually served as the chair for public events during the 1860s-1870s. Due to the Archbishop of Tuam John MacHale forbidding priests from participating in such political activities, this honor was left to the laity; James Daly's role as chair speaks to his local prominence (Moran, "Daly" 191-192).

(Davitt, *Fall* 146). During this time, Davitt became aware of Daly and other Mayo men's pending demonstration for the anticipated eviction of parish priest Canon Geoffrey Bourke's tenants<sup>35</sup> (Moody, *Davitt* 284). The Irishtown meeting is described by Michael Davitt:

The old landlord of Quinaltagh, a townland near the village of Irishtown, was a Mr. R. Kirwan. His estate was purchased in 1857 by one Walter Burke [Bourke]. The new landlord doubled the old rent immediately on the twenty-two tenants of the property, and in addition fined each a half-year's rental with the alternative of eviction. Some of the land was of poor quality, and the increased rents could only be paid by the smaller tenants out of remittances from relatives in America. Early in 1879 Mr. Burke [Bourke] died. All the tenants on the estate were in arrears. The executor under the landlord's will was his brother, the late Rev. Geoffrey Canon Burke, of Irishtown. It was represented to me by the tenants that the executor had threatened to dispossess them unless the arrears were paid, while

35. Moody debates the traditional view of the portrayal of Canon Geoffrey Bourke. He contends the owner was the Canon's nephew Joseph Bourke and provides *Connaught Telegraph's* reference leases established in 1855 thereby precluding them from being doubled. According to Moody, Daly of Castlebar insisted the Irishtown meeting was not about a single-estate event, but about regional, wide-spread objections (*Davitt* 292-294).



they complained that because he was a clergyman they could not obtain a hearing for their case in the local press. (*Fall* 146-147)

Although he did not attend the Irishtown meeting, Davitt assisted with its promotion (Moody, *Davitt* 288,290): "find[ing] speakers, and prepare[ing] the necessary resolutions" (Davitt, *Fall* 147). This Irishtown gathering attracted thousands (estimates range from four to fifteen thousand) and it is credited with "precipitat[ing] a general agitation in the west" (Moody, "Fenianism" 237). The result of this relatively peaceful protest was the Canon Bourke's withdrawal of the evictions and a twenty-five percent abatement in rents (Davitt, *Fall* 150). This April 20, 1879 event was widely publicized by the Catholic-owned the *Connaught Telegraph* (Forgotten 1-2). It is without question that, "Daly's. . .newspaper was the most important vehicle for spreading the ideals and principles of this demonstration throughout the region" (Moran, "Daly" 192).

After considerable discussion in private meetings, Michael Davitt and exiled Fenian John Devoy recognized the need "for a leader who could control and direct the passions that would both energise, and be generated, by the agitation" (Moody, *Davitt* 296-299). The pair believed Charles Stewart Parnell, MP was the natural choice. After some pressuring and established conditions, Parnell accepted this charge in early June 1879 (Moody, *Davitt* 297-298). As such, Parnell agreed to speak at the Westport engagement.

The success of this Irishtown meeting, set the stage for the land meeting in Westport, County Mayo on June 8, 1879 (King 17; Moody, *Davitt* 298). This event was chaired and advertised, once again, by James Daly of Castlebar (Moran, "Daly" 193).

Meeting organizers could not have anticipated resistance from the most nationalist of leaders. In the *Freeman's Journal* of June 7, 1879 was a letter to the editor submitted by the esteemed Archbishop of Tuam, "John" (Moody, *Davitt* 303):

Dear Sir, -- In a telegraphic message exhibited towards the end of last week in a public room of this town, an Irish member of Parliament has unwittingly expressed his readiness to attend a meeting convened in a mysterious and disorderly manner, which is to be held, it seems, in Westport on Sunday next. Of the sympathy of the Catholic clergy for the rack-rented tenantry of Ireland, and of their willingness to co-operate earnestly in redressing their grievances, abundant evidence exists in historic Mayo, as elsewhere. But night patrolling, acts and words of menace, with arms in hand, the profanation of what is most sacred in religion -- all the result of lawless and occult association, eminently merit the solemn condemnation of the ministers of religion, as directly tending to impiety and disorder in Church and in society. Against such combinations in this diocese, organized by a few designing men, who, instead of the well-being of the community, seek only to promote their personal interests, the faithful clergy will not fail to raise their warning voices, and to point out to the people that unhallowed combinations lead invariably to disaster and to the firmer riveting of the chains by

which we are unhappily bound as a subordinate people to a dominant race. I remain, dear sir, "Faithfully yours,

+John, Archbishop of Tuam." ("To the Editor of the Freeman" 2)

This condemnation from the most nationalistic leader of the Irish Catholic Church may appear unpatriotic, but given his upbringing and his disdain for revolution (recall MacHale's uncle's escape during the French Revolution and his childhood priest's anti-revolutionary teachings), perhaps it was a prophetic warning. Or, perhaps his nameless reference to Charles Stewart Parnell indicates concern over secular control over his flock. Refusing to believe this ecclesiastic patriot could pen such a letter, many in Mayo believed the Archbishop's nephew, Dr. Thomas MacHale, Vicar General (Jordan, *Land* 223). Regardless, this clear censure (in theory) precluded "clerical participation [which] had been a prerequisite of success for any agitation in the past" (Moran, "Daly" 192). In *The Fall of Feudalism*, Davitt reflects upon Parnell's response to the letter when asked if he still intended to attend:

"Will I attend? Certainly. Why not? I have promised to be there, and you can count upon my keeping that promise."

This was superb. Here was a leader at last who feared no man who stood against the people, no matter what his reputation or record might be; a leader, too, who, though a Protestant, might, on that account, be more politically subservient to a great Catholic prelate on public issues than the Catholic nationalists of Mayo would consent to be in such a democratic cause. It was

Mr. Parnell's first momentous step in his progress towards the leadership of a race mostly Catholic, and I have always considered it the most courageously wise act of his whole political career.

(153-154)

It was at this venue Charles Stewart Parnell, young, Protestant, County Wicklow landowner and newly elected member of Parliament first spoke to the crowd and encouraged the subjugated Irish to "hold a firm grip of your homesteads and lands" (Moody, "Fenianism" 237). Many Irish, particularly in the west, would come to embrace Parnell's simple directive, regardless of cost, method, or consequence.

Despite Archbishop John MacHale's letter, the Westport meeting's attendance hovered around 8000 (Jordan, *Land* 226). The attendees experienced "The prevailing spirit. . .anti-rent and anti-eviction" (Davitt, *Fall* 154). Judging by the attendance, "The meeting and the ensuing publicity added momentum to the movement and proved to the Catholic Hierarchy of the west and to many local priests that clerical disapproval would not keep the people away from the agitation" (Jordan, *Land* 229). Following the Westport Meeting, it became abundantly clear that "If the clergy wanted to regain their leadership of rural society they would have to do so by forging a role for themselves within the agitation" (Jordan, *Land* 226).

On August 16, 1879 at a hotel in Castlebar, the National Land League of Mayo was formed (Davitt, *Fall* 160-163). In his memoir, *The Fall of Feudalism*, Davitt states, "The plan and purpose of the leaders of the new league were to supplant the tenants' defence associations, which had provided a platform for Mr. Butt and the Home-Rulers

on the land question, and to create an aggressive movement which would try to rally the whole country in a fight against the whole land system" (164). John James Loudon, barrister from Westport, was elected president; James Daly of Castlebar was named vice-president (Moody, *Davitt* 271, 317-318). The National Land League of Mayo diverged from the traditional tenants' defense associations in that it was more organized and more radical (Moran, "Daly" 196). The newly organized National Land League of Mayo gained momentum: "On six Sundays from 31 August to 19 October, the land crisis was ventilated at sixteen mass meetings; four of these were in Mayo, three in County Galway, and two in County Sligo, while the remaining seven were widely scattered-one in each of the counties of Limerick, Cork, Carlow, Queen's County, Meath, and Londonderry" (Moody, *Davitt* 320). The major agenda items at the land meetings, in County Mayo and surrounding areas, (based on resolutions) were rent reductions and peasant proprietorship (Jordan, *Land* 231). At these land meetings, "the farmers were regularly counseled at land meetings to pay the rent last" (Jordan, *Land* 233). Due to its more extreme approach (i.e. threat of violence), the National Land League of Mayo realized some local rent abatements of up to thirty percent (Moran, "Daly" 196).

The National Land League of Mayo was short-lived. Under the presidential leadership of Parnell, the Irish National Land League was established on October 21, 1879 (Moody, *Davitt* 325; Moran, "Daly" 196). This new League superseded its regional precursor (Moran, "Daly" 196). Parnell's acceptance of the presidency hinged upon the adoption of a parliamentary approach and the League's absorption of local Tenants' Defense Associations (Davitt, *Fall* 170). By design, Parnell's stipulations sought to

provide a systemic and unified strategy to answer the land question. The establishment of the Irish National Land League was essentially the manifestation of Devoy's and Davitt's, "New Departure"; however, this updated new departure, despite its similarity, was developed in Ireland with conditions established by the masses, not Fenian leaders; as such, this updated new departure had greater appeal (Moody, *Davitt* 325-326). In forming the Land League, Davitt's "intention was to lead a nationwide campaign for the establishment of the three Fs. Peasant proprietorship was the ultimate aim of the League, together with the eradication of the landlord system" (Kinealy, *New* 177). With the centralization of the Land League, local branches were established to organize "public meetings to further the land agitation in its district and to protest against evictions" (Moody, *Davitt* 345). The local branches also collected membership fees to be used for tenant-land issues; those branches that forwarded a portion of their collections to the central Land League would be assisted by the central organization in dealing with tenant-land issues, if needed and approved (Moody, *Davitt* 344).

In *A New History of Ireland*, Christine Kinealy cites the formation of the Land League in late 1879 as initiating the "Land War" (177). This Land War proved to be a two and one-half year span of time in which wide-spread violence and collective community action quickly established this movement as a departure from the usual generational uprising.

In an attempt to extinguish the expansion of the Irish National Land League, the government charged Michael Davitt, James Daly of Castlebar, and James Bryce Killen (Belfast barrister) with sedition (Davitt, *Fall* 178; King 24; Moran, "Daly" 197). This

November 1879 arrest stemmed from words spoken at the Gurteen Land League Meeting, County Sligo: "I [Davitt] made a very violent attack upon rent, and hinted at a coming combination of farmers and others which would sweep landlords and rent out of the country. Messrs. Daly and Killen followed in a similar strain, the speeches being taken down by a government reporter" (Davitt, *Fall* 178). Due to the defense orchestration of obstructionist Mr. John Biggar, MP County Cavan, the Sligo prosecutions were a heavily publicized farce, a humiliation to the crown (Davitt, *Fall* 181-182). The "Gurteen Three" were released in early December 1879 (Moran, "Daly" 197).

Shortly after the "Gurteen Three" were released, Charles Stewart Parnell arrived in New York on January 2, 1880 to heighten awareness of the land question and actively raise funds for the Land League (Jenkins 67). On February 2, 1880, Charles Stewart Parnell was invited to address the United States House of Representatives on the land question (Jenkins 69; Moody, *Davitt* 357). Parnell was well-received throughout America: "His progress in America was a triumphal procession. He went everywhere, and everywhere he was received with open arms" (O'Brien, *Recollections* 204). The sixty-two city North American tour was financially successful as well yielding two-hundred thousand dollars (O'Brien, *Recollections* 204). Parnell returned to Ireland on March 21, 1880 (O'Brien, *Recollections* 212).

In addition to the immediate objectives of staving off eviction and organizing for the purpose of rent reduction, the Land League found it necessary to provide relief during the winter of 1879-1880 (Davitt, *Fall* 266; Moody, "Fenianism" 238). The Land League

provided "the new potato and other seed. . .for the poorer class of Western tenants" to avert another famine (Davitt, *Fall* 266). Such relief efforts required funding from sources outside of Ireland: "The Land League. . .has been busily engaged in the work of distributing the money entrusted to it for the relief of distress, and the money continues to flow in, in considerable sums, from various places, but chiefly of course, from America" ("Meetings" 1). The American Fenian organization, Clan na Gael "gave the league timely financial help, which quickly broadened out into powerful backing from all sections of Irish nationalist opinion in America" (Moody, "Fenianism" 238).

In "The Origins and Development of Boycotting," Moran indicates, "By 1880, the Land League and the landlords were in open conflict with each other and the tenants resorted to various tactics to advance their cause" (49). Examples of tenants tactics include: a process-server being "seized by the people, severely handled, and as stated hanged from a tree by the feet until every process was shaken out and destroyed" ("Assaulting" 25); agrarian outrages against land grabbers such as "a large quantity of hay-about 50 tons-was maliciously set on fire" ("Mutilation" 7); and the multi-day assembly of up to two-thousand people at an eviction site ("People" 24). In their protests, the peasantry, including women, was resolute despite the escalation of violence:

the people had assembled to the number of a thousand, or under, from all parts of the district. The police numbering about fifty or sixty. . .proceeded to escort Fenton, the process-server, from house to house. . .[at] The first house they visited . . . Women surrounded the door, and as Fenton advanced to effect



service they clutched the process and tore it to shreds. The police then charged all around with their sword bayonets, wounding several severely. . . The police then proceeded to the cabin of a man named Conealy. . .service was effected. . . James Mackle's house was next visited. The women again surrounded the door . . . The police charged a second time indiscriminately. . .sticks and stones were freely used, and a terrible melee ensued. The police fired. . .then the process server attempted to deliver the document. The woman, as before, snatched it out of his hand and destroyed it. Sub-Inspector Gibbons rushed into the house, and as he advanced to the hearth Mrs. Mackle lifted a blazing coal and smashed it about the back of his neck. He beat a hasty retreat to the door and was severely burned ("People" 24).

In May 1880, John O'Connor Power, MP introduced the Compensation for Disturbance Bill which sought to repeal the "clause in the [Land] act of 1870 which denied compensation for disturbance where the tenant was evicted for non-payment of rent" (Davitt, *Fall* 260). The intention of the bill was to curtail the increasing number of evictions for non-payment by making evictions a costly venture for landlords (Jordan, "Power" 60). This bill's introduction angered some members of the radical sect of the Land League, including Davitt, who was on a speaking tour in America during this time (Jordan, "Power" 60; Moody, *Davitt* 392- 395). This was not a unilateral move on the part of Power as "It had been adopted for introduction in the house at a meeting of the

Irish party on a motion by Parnell" (Jordan, "Power" 60). Although a revised form of the this bill was supported by Chief Secretary for Ireland William Forster, Prime Minister William Gladstone, and the House of Commons, the House of Lords refuted it on August 3, 1880 (Chambers 44). The bill was rejected by a vote of 282-51 ("Editor's" Oct. 803).

Despite the Land League's polarized opinions of the bill:

on that 10th August Mr. Egan [Land League treasurer] proposed the following resolution : -- "That the recent action of the English House of Lords in throwing out the Compensation for Disturbance Bill confirms us in the belief that the settlement of the Irish land question rests with the Irish people themselves. We, therefore, reiterate our call to the country to press forward the organisation of the National Land League, to refuse to pay all unjust rents; to take no farm from which a tenant has been evicted, under any circumstances; to buy no cattle, crops, or other property taken for rent, and to form a general industrial union (which the law calls conspiracy) against landlord monopolies." (*Report of the Trial* 49)

Needless to say, The Land War was fueled by this parliamentary defeat (Waldron, *Maamtrasna* 16).

The harvest of 1880 was an improvement, a welcomed break from the three-year agriculture crisis (Davitt, *Fall* 266). As a result, the tenants, once again, had a form of "currency." The tenants believed it "ought not to go in payment of rent" (Davitt, *Fall*

266). In order to express this control over their currency, the tenants assumed the battle cry, "Hold the Harvest!" (Davitt, *Fall* 266). This "Hold the Harvest!" plan of action was encouraged by American nationalists (Moody, *Davitt* 399).

The American investment in the Land League was monitored and funds, in some cases, were linked to the degree of agitation. American journalist and Land League supporter, James Redpath (Hannen 59) in his mid-September 1880 speech to the Mayo peasantry condemned the use of American dollars towards the payment of rent (Davitt, *Fall* 267):

I have lectured in the United States and raised money for the starving people of Ireland, and everywhere I took care to mention that the English government was dastardly enough to attempt to overawe the people, and I added that they did not overawe them. I did not come here today to speak, but to see after our American mortgages. We Americans are practical people, and when we give money we like to see what is done with it. If the Irish people give that money to the landlords a blight upon the Irish crop of children would be the best thing for Ireland. I despise the Irishmen who mention fair rents and long leases. The American people will stand by you if you assert your rights. We don't think a so-called landlord has any right to hunt away men and place cattle in their stead. We were told but did not believe that the money America sent you would be paid to landlords for rent. We did not send it for that purpose.

Don't hope for peace nor want it till every man is his own landlord and tenant. (qtd. in Davitt, *Fall* 267-288)

By essentially threatening to cut-off American financial support if it were used to feed the landlord-tenant cycle, Redpath's words contributed to elevating the depth of the agitation from a fight for the "3 Fs" to one of peasant proprietorship.

On September 19, 1880 in Ennis, Charles Stewart Parnell, MP, President of the Land League, orated a new policy (O'Brien, *Recollections* 236):

When a man takes a farm from which another has been evicted, you must shun him on the roadside, you must shun him on the streets of town, you must shun him in the shop, you must shun him in the fair green and the marketplace, and even in the place of worship. By leaving him severely alone, by putting him in a moral convent, by isolating him from the rest of his countrymen as if he were a leaper [sic] of old. Show him you disgust of the crime he has committed. ("Parliamentary Debates" 3 cclvii 28 Jan. 1881, 1693; *Report of the Trial* 891)

Captain Charles Cunningham Boycott, agent of the absentee, yet progressive Mayo landlord, Lord Erne, was experiencing strained relations with the Lough Mask tenants during the summer of 1880 (Moran "Origins" 52). Captain Boycott's reputation amongst the tenants was not positive: "He controlled the estate with a military style code of discipline, with fines being imposed for even minor offenses" (Moran "Origins" 52).

In addition to managing the estate, Captain Boycott farmed a great deal of the land; as such, he required the use of hired labor to work the fields (Davitt, *Fall* 275). Three days after Parnell's speech at Ennis, Boycott issued eviction notices to eighteen<sup>36</sup> tenants; this was a largely unsuccessful mission due to the tenants' resistance (Moran "Origins" 53-54). The next day, a large group reported to Lough Mask and "intimidated Boycott's laborers into leaving his employment, which required great sacrifices on their part for it was the only income they had" (Moran, "Origins" 54). Additionally, the blacksmith refused to shoe his horses; the baker refused to provide bread for inhabitants of Lough Mask House; letter carriers refused to deliver; and domestics employed by Lough Mask House stopped working<sup>37</sup> (Davitt, *Fall* 276). By "boycotting" every aspect of the Boycotts' existence, the Irish tenants sent a loud and clear message.

The coordination of this targeted, unrelenting ostracism was due to the leadership of the Neale Land League branch president, Father John O'Malley, parish priest of the Neale<sup>38</sup> (Davitt, *Fall* 274-275; Moody, *Davitt* 419). O'Malley summoned the Irish tenants along the shores of Lough Mask and neighboring communities to animate

36. In *Land and Popular Politics in Ireland*, historian Jordan reports eleven eviction notices were issued (287).

37. Despite the wide-spread 'boycott,' "some female staff and two labourers who looked after the stables" remained employed during this time (Moran, "Origins" 55).

38. Fr. John O'Malley, P.P. of the Neale "was a close political ally of John O'Connor Power and James Daly" (Jordan, *Land* 289).

Parnell's words<sup>39</sup> from Ennis and demand rent abatement (Jordan, *Land* 287, 289). The "Boycott Affair" received international notoriety due to Captain Boycott's letter to the *Times* detailing "his position" (Moran, "Origins" 55). Consequently, this Mayo happening garnered the attention of Ulstermen: "The Ulstermen viewed the plight of Erne's agent with horror and meetings were held throughout the province expressing support for Boycott. . . Eventually volunteers from Cavan and Monaghan, many of them tenants from Lord Rossmore's estate, were sent" (Moran, "Origins" 56). The Land League crafted, "A manifesto. . .calling on the people of Mayo to follow the same course adopted towards Captain Boycott-to let the Orangemen and soldiers severely alone" (Davitt, *Fall* 277). Regardless of the League's manifesto, the Orangemen's "arrival in Mayo placed the onus on the government to provide them with protection as the authorities were not prepared to allow a large body of armed Ulstermen into the county, since it was feared that it would lead to open conflict between themselves and the tenants" (Moran, "Origins" 58). This non-violent, concerted effort spoke not only of the political climate, but to the economic impact of collective action: "Some £350 worth of potatoes and other crops were eventually harvested by the 'volunteers' during their stay at Lough Mask. This was the captain's [sic] own estimate of their value, and according to calculations made at the time it cost the sum of £3500 to the state and to the supporters of the expedition to have Boycott's potatoes dug" (Davitt, *Fall* 277).

In mid-November, Father John O'Malley, P.P. president of the Neale Branch of

39. Moran indicates the use of social ostracism was encouraged by James Daly of Castlebar, Michael Davitt, and American, James Redpath prior to Parnell's speech at Ennis (Moran, "Origins" 50).

the Land League and Patrick Monahan, president of the Ballinrobe Branch sent a telegram to the Land League leadership, "asking at least for the neutrality of the Land League" in, what they believed, should be the next step in the "Boycott Affair" ("Invasion of Mayo: Special" 6). The League presidents wished to lead:

Lough Mask tenants to Crom Castle, the home of Lord Erne at Newtownbutler, County Fermanagh. The tenants hoped to present their case against Captain Boycott directly to their landlord, with whom Fr. O'Malley contended the tenants had no grievance. They hoped that Lord Erne would dismiss his agent once he understood 'Captain Boycott's tyranny is intolerable,' thus clearing the way for tenants to pay their rents. (Jordan, *Land* 291)

Central Land League secretary Thomas Brennan, on behalf of the League, responded to their request (Moran, "Origins" 60): "League meeting fully discussed question, and considered the dignified course for the tenants to adopt is to stay at home, and let the landlord come and look for his rent" ("Invasion of Mayo: Special" 6). In his open letter-to-the-editor in the *Freeman's Journal*, Father O'Malley indicates that while he upheld the Central Land League's position, "My [his] own opinion upon the subject remains strong and unchanged" ("Invasion of Mayo: To the Editor" 6). Brennan's directive, coupled with Father O'Malley's response: "the question of rents did not enter into our quarrel from the beginning; and that the issue is not whether rents are fair, but whether Captain Boycott's tyranny is intolerable," provides an example of local grievances being used to serve the Central Land League's purpose ("Invasion of Mayo: To the Editor" 6).

Following the Orangemen's departure at the end of November, Boycott and his family left Ireland (Moran, "Origins" 60).

At the start of the "Boycott Affair," another notable event took place in the Lough Mask vicinity. On the night of September 25, 1880, Lord Mountmorres attended a meeting of magistrates in the village of Clonbur (County Galway along the Mayo border); his body was lying across the road when it was discovered by acting-constable Burke at approximately 11:00 PM. ("Assassination" 7). Lord Mountmorres was a landlord with relatively small holdings. It was reported, "He had fifteen tenants, with whom he had most unfriendly relations, and quite recently obtained ejectment decrees against some of them" ("Assassination" 7). The murder of Lord Mountmorres marked a turning point. Despite the fact, "the League leadership counseled against agrarian outrage," during the fourth quarter of 1880, "the number of agrarian crimes in Mayo was 300 percent higher than the three-month average for the first year and a half of the Land War" (Jordan, *Land* 283-284). To some, Lord Mountmorres' "assassination was the beginning of the atrocious crimes which spread terror through the country and strengthened the organization of the Land League" ("Ireland: The Trial of Michael" 1). To others, the increase in agrarian crime, including Lord Mountmorres' murder, indicated "the League's loss of influence in Mayo" (Jordan, *Land* 283).

Throughout Ireland and especially in the West, the Land War proved to be a very dangerous time for persons having any connection with evictions. Landlords were frightened by the Lord Mountmorres' assassination (Waldron, *Maamtrasna* 16). Landlords and their employees (land agents, bailiffs, process-servers, etc.) were "prime



targets" of the agrarian violence (Jordan, *Land*, 236; Waldron, *Maamtrasna* 19). Table 6 illustrates the escalation of crimes of intimidation. Agrarian murder, specifically those taking place in Lough Mask vicinity will be explored in depth in a later section.

Table 6

Number of Incidences of "Intimidation by Attacking or Firing into Houses, Injury to Property or Threatening Letters" (1880-first four months of 1882)

1880	1881	January-April, 1882
1947	3258	1337

Source: *The Irish Landlord and his Accusers with an Account of Misguided Legislation and Consequent Demoralization and Danger, Social and Political*, 518.

Michael Davitt left Ireland on May 9, 1880 for his second trip to America in order to manage Land League affairs, raise funds, and serve as keynote to many engagements; he returned to Ireland on November 20, 1880 (Moody, *Davitt* 382, 415). As such, he did not have direct, on-site supervision of Land League participation during this very active time, namely: the events surrounding the Compensation for Disturbances Bill; the speeches of James Redpath and Charles Stewart Parnell (at Ennis); and the "Boycott Affair." In May 1880, Davitt met Charles Stewart Parnell's mother and sister (Anna), at Clan na Gael open-air meetings New York and Newark, NJ (Moody, *Davitt* 386). During Davitt's time in New York, he received "administrative help from Anna Parnell who divided her time between the famine Relief Headquarters and the American Land League offices. It was from this collaboration that Davitt became aware of the dedication and the organizational abilities of Anna Parnell" (Jenkins 71). Davitt described Anna "as

a lady of remarkable ability and energy of character" (Davitt, *Fall* 300). The timing of this voyage coincided with the passing of his mother, Catherine on July 18, 1880 (Moody, *Davitt* 396). Shortly after his mother's death, Davitt met another of Parnell's sisters, Fanny (Moody, *Davitt* 398). Davitt's impression of Fanny was positive; he described her as a "practical as well as a poetic reformer" (Davitt, *Fall* 256).

Fanny Parnell's nationalist belief structure and personal history as a Fenian sympathizer, served to naturally transition her into a staunch supporter of the Land League. After moving to "Ironsides," the Stewart family home in Bordentown, New Jersey with her mother and sister in 1873, she remained active in the nationalist cause (Jenkins 21). Both Fanny and Anna, "wrote letters and published articles in Irish-American newspapers to counter criticism and attacks on Charles and the land movement by the British government" (Jenkins 21). The sisters also helped organize their brother's fundraising tour during the winter of 1880 and worked to raise money for the Famine Relief Fund (Jenkins 21). The sisters' fundraising and relief work continued into the summer of 1880. In late summer, Anna Parnell returned to Ireland (Jenkins 71).

In an effort to organize women for the purpose of fundraising for the American Land League, Fanny Parnell formed the Ladies' Land League in October 1880 (O'Neill, "Ladies'" 123). Delia Parnell served as president; Ellen Ford as vice-president and Fanny served as financial secretary<sup>40</sup> (Moody, *Davitt* 414). In late October 1880

40. In *Marginalization of Revolutionary Sisters: The Betrayal of Fanny and Anna Parnell*, Evelyn Jenkins presents Fanny as a co-vice-president and Jane Byrne as secretary (72).

(concurrent to the "boycott" period), the Land League in Dublin became aware of an impending prosecution; fearing Davitt's re-imprisonment, the organization urged him to remain in America to continue his work (Moody, *Davitt* 413). Ignoring their advice, Davitt returned to Ireland on November 10, 1880 (Moody, *Davitt* 413).

Recognizing the arrest of key Land League leaders was just a matter of time, "Michael Davitt was concerned as to what would happen [to] the work of the League in their absence. He favoured the idea of a women's group to carry on activities, especially the relief work necessary to help evicted tenants" (O'Neill, "Ladies" 123). Davitt stated, "This suggestion was laughed at by all except Mr. Egan and myself, and vehemently opposed by Messrs. Parnell, Dillon, and Brennan who feared we would invite public ridicule in appearing to put women forward in places of danger" (Davitt, *Fall* 298). Davitt combated League dissenters by emphasizing the government would have a more difficult time arresting women because of the inevitable public outcry (O'Neill, "Ladies" 123). In an open letter-to-the-editor, dated December 14, 1880 and published in the January 1, 1880 *Nation*, Fanny Parnell bluntly addressed the women of Ireland: "I am glad to see that the ladies in Ireland are coming to the front. It is not a bit too soon. If the Government puts all the men in prison, the women will have to take up the work." On Fanny's suggestion, the Ladies' Land League was established in Dublin on January 31, 1881; Anna Parnell assumed a position of leadership of, "The Central Land League of the Ladies of Ireland" (King 33; O'Neill, "Ladies" 123). The Ladies' Land League in Ireland was formed just in the nick of time. Land League founder, Michael Davitt was arrested, once again, on February 3, 1881 for non-compliance with the conditions set forth by his

ticket of leave (from his previous sentence of felony treason) (Lampson 384). This visionary leader remained at Portland Prison until May 6, 1882 (Davitt, *Fall* 303, 355).

Disapproval of the Ladies' Land League did not end with Fanny's and Anna's brother. In a letter dated March 12, 1881, Dr. Edward McCabe, Archbishop of Dublin denounced the feminine League (O'Neill, "Ladies" 125): "the daughters of our Catholic people are called forth, under the flimsy pretext of charity, to take their stand in the noisy arena of public life. They are asked to forget the modesty of their sex and the high dignity of their womanhood by leaders who seem utterly reckless of consequences" (qtd. O'Neill, "Ladies" 125). Archbishop McCabe's views did not go unanswered. In a letter published in the March 16, 1881 *Freeman's Journal*, A. M. Sullivan, Esq., MP<sup>41</sup> condemns the Archbishop's words: "I feel I should be unworthy of my position if I failed to repel them [words of the Archbishop] with all the force and indignation I may use, dealing with an utterance of his Grace the Most Rev. Dr. MacCabe" (6). A.M. Sullivan's words were heralded in the March 17, 1881 *Freeman's Journal* in an open-letter to him by the nationalist Archbishop of Cashel, Dr. Thomas Croke (5). In it, Archbishop Croke upholds Sullivan's words and thanks him for "vindicate[ing] the character of the good Irish ladies who have become Land Leaguers" ("Archbishop" 5). This very public debate undermined Archbishop McCabe's efforts as "New members and new branches [of the Ladies Land League] were the result" (O'Neill, "Ladies" 127). This vignette serves as another example of the divisions within the Irish Catholic hierarchy.

41. A.M. Sullivan's wife "chaired the London branch" of the Ladies Land League (O'Neill, "Ladies" 126).

As a result of the incessant intimidation of the Land League, Chief Secretary to Ireland, William Forster expressed his belief that habeas corpus must be suspended in November 1880 (Moody, *Davitt* 428). This belief facilitated the House of Commons presentation of the Protection of Person and Property Bill on January 24, 1881 (Lampson 383). Essentially, this bill "allowed the police to hold in custody people suspected of intimidation without having to bring them to trial" (Roberts 50). The Parnellites fought this bill "with unparalleled toughness and tenacity, using obstructionists to the breaking point"; this debate continued for forty-one straight hours until it was deemed closed by the speaker (Moody, *Davitt* 455). On February 2, 1881, the speaker's actions were:

challenged in a motion, but the attack was defeated. The same day Gladstone gave notice of a resolution to the effect that if a motion declaring the business urgent should be supported by forty members rising in their places, the motion should be put forthwith without debate, and if carried by a majority of not less than three to one, the regulation of the business should remain for the time being in the hands of the Speaker. Thirty-two Irish members refused to leave the House during the division on the resolution on Thursday, February 3, and were suspended in a body. The resolution was then carried amended to the effect that there should be at least a House of three hundred as well as a majority of three to one before urgency could be voted. On February 4, the

second reading of the Coercion Bill was moved by Forster, "urgency" having been declared, and it was not till February 25 that it passed its last stage in the Lower House, the Irish fighting it to the end. The Bill finally received the Royal assent on March 2, 1881. (Lampson 384)

The spring and summer of 1881 proved to be fraught with riots, assault, and murder throughout Ireland. An article entitled "The Irish Land Troubles," provides a cross-section of the day-to-day violence in Ireland. In said article, it was reported there were riots in Clonmel, County Tipperary resulting in fatalities; three policemen killed in County Clare, and even a marine attack off the islands of Donegal ("Troubles" 5). Each of the incidents above had the same common denominator -- land eviction. Amidst the "troubles," several members of local chapters of the Land League were arrested under the Coercion Act; the arrested include members from County Donegal, County Mayo, County Meath, County Westmeath, and County Tipperary ("Disorder" 1; "Revolt" 1; "Troubles" 5). In *The Fall of Feudalism*, Davitt describes the climate and the spirit of this time: "Leaders were in jail without trial, landlords were employing soldiers as military bailiffs, and Mr. Forster was only reaping the fruits of his great initial mistake in believing that the sons of the spiritless peasants of 1846-47 could be readily put down by a show of force and imprisonment in 1881" (331).

Concurrent to the development of the Coercion Act of 1881, Prime Minister William Gladstone wished to "develop[ing] the principles of the 1870 land act" (Moody, *Davitt* 454). Essentially, Gladstone hoped to temper the situation in Ireland by revisiting

and amending the existing Land Act. In April 1881: "A month after Forster's Coercion Bill had passed into law, Gladstone brought in his Land Bill of 1881 which he considered had been rendered necessary by the rejection of the Disturbances Bill the year before" (Lampson 385).

With the passing of the Land Act on August 22, 1881, Irish tenant farmers were guaranteed the "three Fs" (Jordan, *Land* 306, 308). The bill included "The amendment, introduced by Tim Healy [Parnellite at the time], prohibited rent raises based upon improvements to the holdings by tenants" (Jordan, *Land* 308). The Land Act of 1881 "introduced a system of dual ownership. A special court was created to which tenants could apply to have a fair rent fixed for their holdings, and this judicial rent was to hold good for fifteen years" (Moody, "Fenianism" 239-240). Tenants taking advantage of the land courts, much to the Central Land League's chagrin, realized an average of twenty percent reduction in rent (Davitt, *Fall* 332; Moody, "Fenianism" 240). Even though Gladstone, "demonstrated that he was willing to weaken Irish landlords in order to pacify Ireland," (Kinealy, *New* 181), it was not enough for militant Land Leaguers and Irish-American supporters (Jordan, *Land* 308): "it was received without gratitude. The struggle over the Coercion Bill had embittered the Irish, and it was not only not greeted with sympathy, but aggravated the whole agrarian difficulty" (Lampson 385-386).

On October 13, 1881, Gladstone exercised the Coercion Act to arrest the president of the Land League, Charles Stewart Parnell on the grounds of conspiracy:

Charles S. Parnell, MP was arrested in Dublin October

13, under the Coercion Act and lodged in Kilmainham Jail.

Two charges were made against him, one of having incited tenants to refuse to pay their rents, and the other of having intimidated them from taking advantage of the Land Act. Arrests of other members of the Land League followed, causing great excitement. On October 20, the Lord-Lieutenant proclaimed the Land League an illegal organization, and ordered the dispersion of its meetings by armed force. ("Editor's" Dec. 156).

Five days after Parnell's arrest (and the subsequent arrest of other leaders), the League's central leadership released a "No-Rent Manifesto." (Davitt, *Fall* 335). This manifesto was communicated through Rev. Father James Cantwell, Archbishop of Croke's<sup>42</sup> administrator: "The executive of the National Land League, forced to abandon the policy of testing the land act, feels bound to advise tenant-farmers of Ireland from this forth to pay no rents under any circumstances to their landlords until the government relinquishes the existing system of terrorism and restores the constitutional rights of the people" (Davitt, *Fall* 335; Moody, *Davitt* 495). The decree was signed by the "Kilmainham Party": Parnell, Kettle, Brennan, Dillon, and Sexton: Davitt's and Egan's names were included as well (Davitt, *Fall* 337). It is worthy of mention that Michael

Davitt was unaware of the issuance of the "No-Rent Manifesto" as he was imprisoned at Portland; he became aware of the manifesto three months after it was

42. The nationalist Archbishop Croke of Cashel, did not support this agreement (Moody, *Davitt* 495-496).



issued (King 40-41; Moody, *Davitt* 495-496). Patrick Egan was in Paris at the time (Davitt, *Fall* 337). In *The Fall of Feudalism*, Davitt describes the "No-Rent Manifesto" as "an act of desperation" (337). It was only two days after the issuance of the manifesto that the government declared the Land League illegal (Davitt, *Fall* 338-339).

Parnell's and other key leaders' arrests, coupled with the proclamation of the illegalization of the Land League, was the kerosene added to the already burning flame. Table 7 illustrates the escalation of agrarian crimes and outrages in the years 1880, 1881, and the first four months of 1882. Aside from the dramatic increase from 1880 to 1881, if extrapolated, 1882 numbers outpaced the number of incidences from the previous year.

Table 7

Incidences of Crime and Outrage (1880-first four months of 1882)

	<b>1880</b>	<b>1881</b>	<b>January-April 1882</b>
Murder or firing at	32	88	39
Assaulting or wounding	145	209	47
Taking forcible possession	82	65	25
Intimidation by attacking or firing into houses, injury to property, or threatening letters	1947	3258	1337
Other cases	68	308	176

Source: *The Irish Landlord and his Accusers with an Account of Misguided Legislation and Consequent Demoralization and Danger, Social and Political*, 518.

As Davitt prophesized, it was necessary to have an auxiliary organization ready to assume League responsibilities upon the arrests of central leaders. Donald Jordan writes: "With its leaders in prison and its activities now legal, the Land League ceased to exist, leaving to the Ladies' League full responsibility for carrying out the spirit and the promises of the manifesto" (*Land* 302). Under the resolute leadership of Anna Parnell, the Ladies' Land League utilized "Boycotting, more systematic[ally] and relentless[ly] than had ever yet been practiced" (Davitt, *Fall* 340). Anna "found that most applications for relief to the Ladies' League came from impoverished tenants evicted because they were unable to pay rents, rather than from those who refused to do so out of principle" (Jordan, *Land* 302). Specifically, in County Mayo, birthplace of the land agitation: "when the 'No-Rent Manifesto' was issued and the Land League suppressed, the attention of most tenants in Mayo was directed towards the workings of the land courts" (Jordan, *Land* 303). Meanwhile, throughout Ireland, "The government continued the harassment of the Ladies' League throughout the spring of 1882" (Jenkins 105). Despite these challenges, Michael Davitt credits the Ladies' Land League with "render[ing] Ireland ungovernable by coercion" (Davitt, *Fall* 340). While on parole to attend his nephew's funeral in Paris (April 10-24, 1882), Parnell established communication with Gladstone through intermediaries (Davitt, *Fall* 349; Moody, *Davitt* 529). The result of this communication was a meeting of the minds in which "the government agreed to make further concessions to the tenants, and Parnell agreed to call off the agitation" (Moody, "Fenianism" 240). The "Kilmainham Treaty" spoke to the release of political prisoners; amendment to the Land Act of 1881 to ensure leaseholders and tenants in arrears benefit;

and the facilitation of lawful behaviors of the Land League and its constituency (Jackson 45). Unwilling to stand by Gladstone regarding the government's concessions, Chief Secretary to Ireland, William Forster resigned (Davitt, *Fall* 351; "Release" 4). Messrs. Parnell, Dillon and O'Kelly were released from Kilmainham Gaol at 10:50 PM on May 2, 1882 ("Release" 4). The Kilmainham Treaty marked the official end of the Land War (Kinealy, *New* 181). However, the event's significance was dwarfed by the murders of the newly appointed Chief Secretary to Ireland, Lord Frederick Cavendish and T.H. Burke in Phoenix Park on May 6, 1882 (Jackson 45).

The Kilmainham Treaty was not acclaimed by either extremes of those involved in the land question. Conservative member of Parliament Mr. Lowther said, "the Kilmainham [T]reaty would descend [sic] to posterity as one of the most disgraceful instruments made in ancient or modern times" ("Summary" 5). Extreme nationalists felt similarly:

To the compact agreed to in the treaty the advanced men in the league movement would be no parties. . . I [Davitt] had been no party to any arrangement with the ministry, and did not see why I [Davitt] should forego my right to put my own position before the public, and to do my best to carry on the Land League fight as near the old lines as possible. (Davitt, *Fall* 363)

A correspondent for the *Freeman's Journal* reported the climate of Irish-Americans:

"The feeling with reference to the Kilmainham Treaty, so far as they were able to judge from the telegraphed accounts, is one of indignation that Mr. Parnell should have allowed

himself to be betrayed into such a contract" ("Irish America" 5). It appears, the only group satisfied with Parnell's unilateral decision was the conservative nationalists (Davitt, *Fall* 363).

The Kilmainham Treaty was certainly not the first example of dissention amongst the Land League. As early as the spring of 1880, rifts among the founding leaders were apparent. The adversarial relationship between Charles Stewart Parnell and John O'Connor Power is well documented in scholarly annals. Historian Donald Jordan writes, "Although they worked closely together at Westminster from 1875-1880, their disdain for each other was never far below the surface" ("Power" 46). The two men possessed very strong personalities. Editor of the Irish National League's journal, *The United Irishmen*, William O'Brien described Power as:

a man of great resolution, with a merciless jaw, a furious temper governed by a carefully studied urbanity of manner, and a calm, strong voice, that made the most common place observation impressive; resolute enough in the ways of revolution to have himself headed raids for arms, and walked for years under the shadow of the gallows, but gifted also with a common-sense keen enough and fearless enough to guide him in the evolution from the impracticable to a wise and patriotic possibilism. (*Recollections* 140)

William O'Brien also illustrates the essence of Parnell by pointing out his "indomitable genius for being disagreeable" (*Recollections* 215). With these members of Parliament, equally obstinate, harmony was unlikely. Despite their shared vision of an independent

Irish nation, Parnell's centralized approach conflicted with Power's allegiance to local grievances (Jordan, "Power" 47). Having been returned to Parliament by Cork City and anticipating return from County Meath, Parnell entered the April 1880 election for County Mayo against George Browne and John O'Connor Power (Jordan, *Land* 257-258). Although the public intention was to ensure the defeat against long-time member Browne, former Parnell secretary Tim Healy (and later MP) indicated Parnell ran "nominally against George Browne, but in reality against O'Connor Power, on whom he wished revenge" (qtd. in Jordan, *Land* 260). Drawing from the support of the small tenant farmer, Power won the election with 1,645 votes (Jordan, "Power" 58-59). In May 1880, the strain of the Parnell-Power relationship became public. It was on Parnell's motion that Power's Compensation for Disturbance Bill was introduced (Jordan, "Power" 60). Jordan believes "It is. . . possible that Parnell, knowing that the measure would be unpopular with advanced men, set up Power to bear the brunt of their anger" (Jordan, "Power" 60). Power "accused Parnell of allowing 'himself to be made a tories' cat's paw" (qtd. Jordan, "Power" 61).

Long-time John O'Connor Power supporter, editor of the *Connaught Telegraph*, and Irishtown and Westport organizer James Daly of Castlebar also "turned against the league" (Waldron, *Maamtrasna* 17). In an historical retrospective of James Daly and the *Connaught Telegraph*, written by John Garavan, Daly is credited with being "the most forceful advoc[acy] for peaceful and lawful procedures. . . constantly moderated[ing] the radical and sometimes treasonable utterances of the Fenian speakers" (4). As a man dedicated to achieving peasant proprietorship while upholding civil obedience, "The

decision to issue the 'no rent manifesto' on 18 October 1881 only compounded Daly's misgivings, as it inaugurated a further period of violence and outrage" (Moran, "Daly" 202). In "The Forgotten Man of Irish History," Daly's separation from the Land League is attributed to [The Land League] "desert[ing] the group it was originally set up to serve . . . critical of the organization's finances, and the drift towards physical force and the centralization of the political movement" (2). Another bone of contention was "Daly's unrelenting opposition to the Ladies' Land League" (Jordan, *Land* 298). Additionally, Daly's "locally oriented views [were] in direct conflict with Parnell" ("Forgotten" 2).

John O'Connor Power and James Daly of Castlebar abandoned the Central Land League's ideology. Were Power and Daly simply malcontents, envious of Parnell's and Davitt's power? Or, was the evolution of the League a result of differing political agendas of its primary leaders? To begin to explore these questions, Davitt and Parnell must be examined. Although the initial objective of the Irish National Land League was to secure the "3Fs" for the tenant farmers (Kinealy, *New* 177), Davitt's personal vision of the land question evolved considerably. In December 1878, the night before his return to Ireland from his first American tour, Davitt met California radical, Henry George (Moody, *Davitt* 268). During his second American tour (1880), Davitt reconnected with George who had recently published *Progress and Poverty*; in it, George "argued that the root cause of poverty everywhere was private ownership of land" (Moody, *Davitt* 413). George became a personal friend of Davitt and shaped his thinking (Moody, *Davitt* 413). Ultimately, George's influence would yield Davitt's quest for the nationalization of the

land (Moody, *Davitt* 523). Davitt's line of thinking was in sharp contrast to the mission of peasant proprietorship adopted by the Land League.

Another aspect worthy of consideration is the absence and lack of interaction between the League's front men. Although Michael Davitt founded the Irish National Land League and Charles Stewart Parnell served as president, the two found little time to spend together. Figure 4 is a schematic that illustrates Davitt's and Parnell's whereabouts from the October 1879 establishment of the Irish National Land League to the signing of Kilmainham Treaty. As the table indicates, both Davitt and Parnell were at-large and on the same continent for only six non-adjacent months throughout the entire Land War. On closer examination, the date in Table 1 indicates, Davitt was either imprisoned or in America for over 75% of the Land War. From a practical standpoint, for the significant majority of the Land War, Davitt was unable to manage the day-to-day operations of the Irish Land League.

Aside from the logistical challenges faced by imprisonment and fundraising overseas, the question of commitment to the operation of the League must be raised. In *Davitt and Irish Revolution, 1846-1882*, Moody states, "There were 68 meetings [of the Central Land League] from 30 December 1879 to 2 February 1881, the last of which Davitt was present. . . Of the officers Parnell and Biggar each attended only 5 meetings out of 68. . . Davitt (when he was in Ireland), Brennan, Egan, and Kettle were nearly always present" (342). Granted, Parnell was a member of Parliament and he did campaign for the April 1880 election (Haslip 119-122). After excluding his time spent in America, electioneering, and in Parliamentary sessions, his availability was as follows:

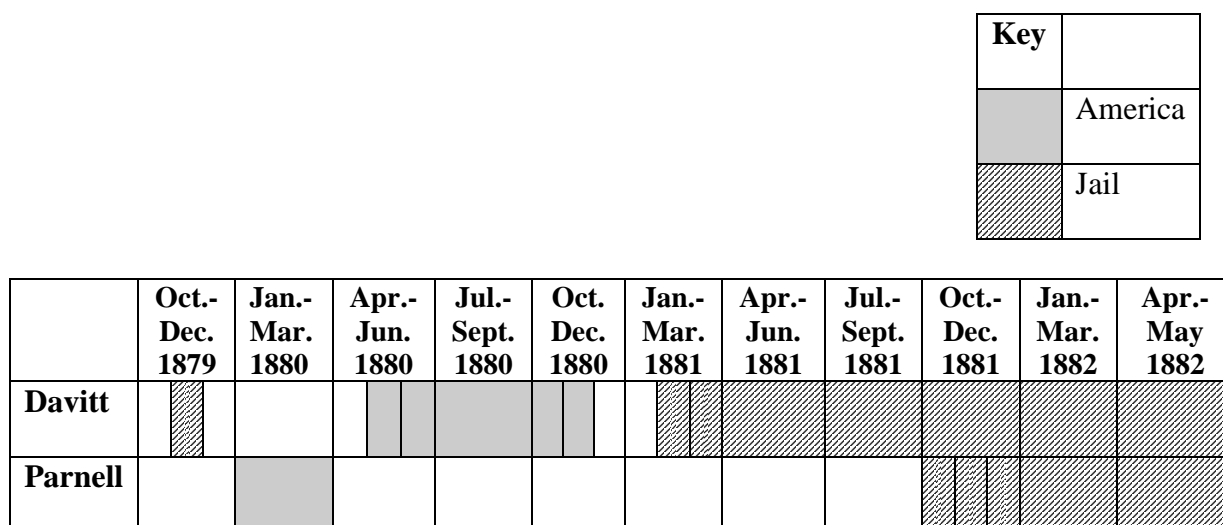


Figure 4. Davitt and Parnell: Whereabouts During the Land War; data gathered from Davitt, Michael. *The Fall of Feudalism*. London and New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1904; Haslip, Joan. *Parnell*. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1937; Moody, T.W. *Davitt and Irish Revolution: 1846-82*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981.

July 9-August 24, 1880; and September 8, 1880-January 31, 1881 ("Parliamentary Debates" *Hansard's Archives*). Yet, Parnell only attended five Land League meetings. Irish historian Carla King states, "he [Davitt] grew irritated at Parnell's frequent absences" (18). Given Parnell's Land League meeting attendance and presumed potential to have attended more, there is room for speculation regarding his commitment to League operations. Clearly, as president, he should not have been bogged down with details; however, did he adequately lead the movement (especially during Davitt's travels and imprisonments)? Or was the Land League strictly a vehicle to accomplish his constitutional agenda? These questions certainly remain unanswered. However, what is



clear from this presented data, out of necessity due to Davitt's and Parnell's absences, the day-to-day operations were assumed by other key members of the Central Land League. Such day-to-day operations included long distance management of overseas efforts, collection and disbursement of funds, and communication with local branches ("The Moore" 2). These responsibilities were largely left in the hands of staunch Fenian Secretary, Thomas Brennan, Fenian Treasurer, Patrick Egan, and veteran land reformer Andrew Kettle (Davitt, *Fall* 158; Moody, *Davitt* 122, 131, 342).

One of the most public examples of the day-to-day management of the "other" League leaders (Davitt was in America and Parnell, though not in session, remained publically silent on this issue) includes the handling of a local president's request (Father O'Malley, P.P. of the Neale). This example concurrently illustrates the Central Land League's national priority over local wishes (Daly's primary grievance). As discussed earlier, towards the end of the "Boycott Affair," the Central League directed Father O'Malley and the Lough Mask residents to abandon their plans to journey to Lord Erne's estate in County Fermanagh during the Boycott protest. O'Malley responded to the Central Land League's directive in hopes of convincing their reversal of opinion:

We are deeply disappointed by Mr. Brennan's telegram. People here would be dangerously discouraged if something effective were not done to counteract the effect of Orange expedition. . . This is not a question of rents. It is a question whether Captain Boycott or the people shall win. If we succeed in displacing him victory is complete . . . Abandonment of the project, now that we are pledged, would

involve imputations which there would be no answering.

("The Moore" 2)

Despite Central Land League, T.P. O'Connor recognizing "no clergyman had done more for the tenant cause than Father O'Malley," the League was critical of Father O'Malley's leadership ("The Moore" 2). Central Land League Treasurer Patrick Egan gently criticized O'Malley giving "credit for the very best intention, but he [Egan] held that he was very much mistaken in the course he had taken" ("The Moore" 2). The publicized challenge of O'Malley's leadership ability did not sit well with the Mayo peasantry for "Father John [O'Malley]. . .deservedly enjoyed great popularity for his kindly nature, his devotion to the poor, and jovial disposition. . .he was one with the people in all their trials and hopes, a loyal counsellor [sic] and a faithful friend (Davitt, *Fall* 275). For the Land League to not support the beloved Father O'Malley meant the League did not support the people of Mayo. Editor of the Irish National League's journal, the *United Irishmen*, William O'Brien recalled, "I don't believe the Land League ever had great power here [in Mayo] after the Lough Mask expedition" (qtd. in Jordan, *Land* 293).

Perhaps the final strike that splintered County Mayo from the Land League fray was the positive endorsement of the Land Act of 1881 by John O'Connor Power, MP, James Daly of Castlebar, and local Fenians. The men encouraged "Mayo's tenant farmers to take full advantage of the terms of the new land bill, despite the League's instructions to the contrary" (Jordan, *Land* 280). Many took the advice of Power, Daly, and Mayo-Fenian leadership: "During the first three weeks of operation of the land courts, over

7000 Mayo farmers applied to have their rents judicially fixed" (qtd. in Jordan, *Land* 309).

The needs of the Mayo peasant were simple and immediate. Their priority was food and occupancy of the land in which to cultivate said food. The significance of Parnell's unrelenting constitutional nationalism and the radical idealism of Davitt were dwarfed by these needs; these abstract concepts did not provide the peasantry with their next meal. By subscribing to the benefits of Gladstone's Land Act, the peasantry realized some immediate relief. County Mayo was unique in that "In contrast to the national pattern, League branches in Mayo had collapsed long before the suppression of the League" (Jordan, *Land* 310). Was Mayo, the cradle of Land League agitation, the first county to feel the effects of internal polarization of League leadership? Even prior to the "boycott" and the passing of the Land Act of 1881 some factions of Mayo fell out of favor with the direction of the League: "by June of 1880, both Charles Stewart Parnell and Michael Davitt 'admit[ted] that they had 'lost Mayo'-- Secret Societies had taken over" (Waldron, *Maamtrasna* 17). Yet, as League influence lessened in Mayo, "the county's clergy was becoming more pronounced" (Jordan, *Land* 307). In his 1893 article, "The Priests in Politics," Michael Davitt states: "the political bond which unites the Irish priest to the Irish peasant will never be broken" (12). If that assertion is true, what happened along shores and the cliffs of Lough Mask as the Land War progressed? The peculiar symbiosis of rising secret society activity and the re-emergence of clerical influence set the stage for some of the most, if not the most, heinous agrarian crimes of Land War.

## Chapter Seven

### CLERICAL INFLUENCE: ELECTION AND INTIMIDATION

The region along the southern Mayo-northern Galway border is graced with three trout-filled lakes. The smallest, Lough Carra is the most northerly; the largest of the three is the most southerly, Lough Corrib. Lough Mask is situated between the two. The Keel River connects Carra and Mask and an underground stream beneath the village of Cong connects Mask to Corrib. To the west of Lough Mask lie the Partry Mountains. To the east of Lough Mask is the market town and district of Ballinrobe. The town of Ballinrobe is a quintessential Post-Famine boomtown. In 1862, Ballinrobe's



Figure 5. Map of Lough Mask Region. [lakedistrictheritage.ie](http://lakedistrictheritage.ie)

transformation was described as: "Some twenty years ago, Ballinrobe did not contain a decent shop; now it has a good many large establishments, evincing by their thriving and prosperous appearance that there is an active and profitable trade carried on here" (Coulter 165). In 1862, Ballinrobe's population was 2,500 (Coulter 165). Due to the fertile surrounding lands, it was known for its "abundance and quality of its cereal crops" and for the excellent quality of sheep (Coulter 165).

The repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 left "Ireland's agricultural sector vulnerable, especially to competition from pasture farming" (Kinealy, *Death* 58). The repeal expedited the transfer from grain production to pasture, which benefitted some parts of the country. This agricultural shift strengthened Ballinrobe's economy. Following the period of land consolidation, in Ballinrobe "The large farmers have profited so well of late years, in consequence of the high prices of stock and agricultural produce" (Coulter 170). Despite the picture of Ballinrobe's Post-Famine prosperity:

The suburbs are large and poor, consisting of small, dirty, miserable-looking hovels, of the same description as are to be found everywhere throughout the county [Mayo], inhabited by the labouring and artizan [sic]classes. Amongst these people, who are very improvident and live from hand to mouth, rarely making any provision for the future, even when they are able to do so, there is always more or less distress to be found (Coulter 166).

Ballinrobe served as the major market town for large grazier farmer, small tenant farmer, and peasantry found along the entire geologically diverse shore of Lough Mask. The face of Ballinrobe included yet another demographic -- the wealthy and culturally refined.

The region's natural beauty served as the backdrop for Post-Famine vacation homes for the period's gentry. In 1852, Benjamin Lee Guinness of brewing fame, purchased Ashford Castle on Lough Corrib through the Encumbered Estates Court

("Benjamin"). Reverend William Jameson (brother-in-law to Benjamin Lee Guinness), member of the Jameson distilling family, owned three townlands in the parish of Cong (southerly end of Lough Mask) in the barony of Kilmaine ("Rev. Jameson"). Dublin eye and ear surgeon Sir William Wilde, father of Oscar Wilde, summered in the village of Cong as a child and continued to do so with his own family (McGreal 1). In 1867, Wilde published a travel guide for Lough Corrib and the surrounding area (*Lough Corrib, It's Shores and Islands: With Notices of Lough Mask*). Lady Jane, mother of Oscar Wilde, was a notable nationalist poet of her time and regularly contributed to the *Nation* (Casey 1). The immediate region was also home to a significant Post-Famine political figure -- George Henry Moore.

Catholic landlord and notable horseman, George Henry Moore first sought Parliamentary membership in a by-election in 1846 (Jordan, *Land* 171-172). He ran as an independent and his political agenda was not yet clearly established; though supported by landlord contemporaries, he did not receive backing of the clergy as a non-repealer candidate (Jordan, *Land* 172). He lost his bid for the seat by 60 votes (Jordan, *Land* 172).

Despite his loss, Moore channeled his desire to support the public good by serving as the Chairman of two Famine Relief Committees, Ballintubber and Partry (Moore 115). At the start of the Great Famine, Catholic landlord Moore allocated considerable sums to relief and labor and reduced his tenant rents accordingly: "All tenants paying less than £5 a year[,] total remission. All paying under £10[,] seventy-five per cent reduction. Those paying under £20[,] fifty per cent reduction. Moore

ordered that no rent should be asked from any tenant of his to whom, as Chairman of Relief Committee, he issued Government meal" (Moore 124).

In addition, he, along with two other area landlords, the Marquis of Sligo (his cousin) and Sir Robert Blosse, chartered the *Martha Washington* to transport 1000 pounds of flour from New Orleans to the three estates (Moore 124). Tenant welfare was a priority for Moore and he "had the satisfaction of knowing that not a single one of his tenants, over five thousand men, women, and children, died of want during those dreadful years" (Moore 125). His charity in 1847 was extended with a land donation in Tourmakeady to the Franciscan order to establish a monastery; Archbishop MacHale and local Curate of Partry, Rev. Peter Conway assisted in this endeavor (Moore 129).

During the Clearances, while other landlords evicted and consolidated their land, George Henry Moore responded to the contrary: "Moore had never evicted a tenant in his life, but had generously, if unwisely, taken in a number of those who had been turned out by his neighbours and divided among them grass farms, on which no people had ever been settled before" (Moore 371). During the general election of 1847, independent candidate, George Henry Moore was made a Member of Parliament, this time with the clergy's backing (Jordan, *Land* 172). His early actions in Parliament included famine relief, tenants' rights, and "leadership in the fight against the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill" (Jordan, *Land* 172-173; Moore 157). As such, his popularity with his Mayo landlord supporters (including his cousin, Marquis of Sligo) began to wane (Jordan, *Land* 173). There is no doubt, given his track record

of tenant treatment and parliamentary actions, Moore was the darling candidate of the local Irish clergy. Additionally, Moore's uncle, John Moore, had participated in the insurrection of 1798 and subsequently held the brief appointment of President of the Republic of Connacht; John Moore died before his trial began<sup>43</sup> (Moore 2, 3). To the nationalist Archbishop of Tuam, John MacHale, Moore's nationalist pedigree must have been a bonus.

In referencing the immediate Post-Famine years, Maurice Moore writes, "In Ireland the priests were the unquestioned leaders of the people, and no social movement was possible without their active assistance" (231). George Henry Moore's political momentum was no exception. Local clerical influence is very well-illustrated during the general election of 1852. On the ballot, Moore was joined by the other incumbent; George Gore Ouseley Higgins was a Catholic, liberal brigadier whose family elevated themselves to considerable local influence because of their diplomatic skill (Moore 161, 205-206). The other contender was the candidate of the local landlords, Lieutenant Colonel James McAlpine (Jordan, *Land* 173). McAlpine was supported by Moore's cousin, Lord Sligo (Moore 207).

The general election of 1852 illustrates the strength of the clergy's electoral

43. It is worthy of mention George Henry Moore's mother is of the Browne family and a relation to Denis Browne. Denis Browne vindictively prosecuted John Moore following the fall of the Republic in 1798. In *An Irish Gentleman: George Henry Moore* a family feud is referenced (Moore 3). Recall Denis Browne also ordered the execution of Father Conry, Archbishop John MacHale's childhood teacher (Bourke 37).



influence as it superseded the influence of the landlords. To accomplish this, Mayo clergy were deemed to have used "great abuse of spiritual influence" (*Mayo Minutes, 1853* 3). Mayo priests led their flock to gather in mobs at the polling sites. When voters wielded their support for Moore and Higgins, they easily maneuvered the crowds in order to cast their votes and were cheered on by the mob at the priests' requests (*Mayo Minutes, 1853* 21).

However, these mobs created a dangerous situation for McAlpine voters. When asked "Was the violence such as to deter persons from going up without a military escort?" Captain H.M. Archall of the Fifty-Second Regiment testified: "It was not safe to go without it" (*Mayo Minutes, 1853* 6). Mobs, led by local clergy at Mayo polling sites, threw stones at the military and at McAlpine supporters, some were as big as fists (*Mayo Minutes, 1853* 16,22, 26, 37). Soldiers were "knocked about; one was bleeding very badly and a great number of them were hurt with stones" (*Mayo Minutes, 1853* 22). Some McAlpine voters were intimidated to change their vote or not vote at all (*Mayo Minutes, 1853*, 14-16). Transcripts reflect a McAlpine supporter was held prisoner overnight; this act was credited as the "motive that induced him" to change his vote (*Mayo Minutes, 1853* 15). When Captain J. Floyd of the Third Regiment was asked, "did it appear that there were any persons who had control over the mob?" he responded, "From what I saw, the Roman-Catholic clergymen had the mob completely in their power" (*Mayo Minutes, 1853* 22). When asked, "Did anybody appear to have control over the mob?" Lieutenant

John Inglis of the Eleventh Hussars replied, "The priests did" (*Mayo Minutes, 1853 37*).

Ensuring tenant voter attendance was paramount to the priests' electoral plan. Priests arranged transportation for the tenant farmers (*Mayo Minutes, 1853 57, 59, 80*). This was essential for the tenants coming from remote distances; some traveled as far as twenty miles (*Mayo Minutes, 1853 57, 59, 78, 80*). But the Mayo priests' hospitality did not end there. Lodging, food (including "meat dinners"), beer, or porter ale were provided to the tenants as well (*Mayo Minutes, 1853 65, 69, 70, 72-75, 82*). In some instances, whiskey, punch, and lemonade were served (*Mayo Minutes, 1853 82, 84*). For the tenant farmer (especially the remote tenant), this voting experience was a departure from their humble existence; arguably, it could be considered a very special event.

Perhaps the most impressive aspect of the Mayo priests' election strategy was in its organization. Priests and some laymen retooled the Famine-era organization, the Independent Club of Mayo as a means to collect and distribute funds for electioneering costs, including hospitality (*Mayo Minutes, 1853 55*). Priests took leadership and membership roles in this repurposed organization (*Mayo Minutes, 1853 56-57*). An example of such leadership is Archdeacon McHale, parish priest of Castlebar serving as chair of the Independent Club of Mayo (*Mayo Minutes, 1853 56-57*).

In a highly unusual maneuver for the times, the bailiff for Lord Dillon defied his Lord's wishes: "Lord Dillon, who had given 'strict orders' to his Mayo tenants to

vote for the Conservative McAlpine and on no account for the now-distrusted Moore, found that his agent had allowed them to split Moore with the Liberal, Ouseley Higgins"<sup>44</sup> (Hoppen 90). Moore and Higgins prevailed, "both topping McAlpine by almost two-to-one" (Jordan, *Land* 174). The highly organized clerical electioneering machine was successful.

Following McAlpine's defeat, Mayo landlord Sir Roger Palmer evicted fifteen tenants for disobeying his voting directive (Whyte, "Landlord" 749). Upon notice, the soon-to-be evictees appealed to Sir Palmer; Palmer's response illustrates his fury:

. . . When tenants want favors or indulgences of any sort it is always to their landlord they apply and therefore I do think that tenants on their part [are] right to make a point of following any other person whatever. You and your fellow petitioners however did not do this; you *not only* refused to vote for the candidate *I supported* but you went *dead against me* and gave all your votes to the opposite party, in defiance of my known wishes and requests. *Now* you want me to overlook all this and to forgive the way in which you set me at defiance, but I consider such conduct deserves punishment. (qtd. in Whyte, "Landlord" 749)

44. Voters each received two votes to cast publically. Options were to split the votes between two candidates or cast both towards one candidate. The latter option is referred to as "plumping." (Moore 206).

At the conclusion of the election of Mayo 1852, the McAlpine camp challenged the outcome alleging it was an "undue Election and Return" (*Mayo Minutes, 1853* iii). Following an inquiry in April 1853,<sup>45</sup> it was determined "[T]hat George Henry Moore, Esq., and George Gore Ouseley Higgins, Esq., are duly elected Knights of the Shire to serve in this present Parliament for the County of Mayo" (*Mayo Minutes, 1853* 3). With the election results unchanged, the clergy were tangentially vindicated. Instead of using caution in the next round, the Mayo clergy merely used the general election of 1852 as a dress rehearsal for an even bigger production.

The general election of 1857 was fraught with twists from the start. George Gore Ouseley Higgins, MP, had aligned himself with the "Pope's Brass Band" (John Sadleir, William Keogh et al). During the tenants' rights movement, Higgins, "committed [a] national sin in the eyes of the independents [by] accepting office from the Liberals in reward for breaking his pledge to remain 'independent of and in opposition to' any government unwilling to introduce legislation furthering tenant rights in Ireland" (Jordan, *Land* 175). As explained earlier, political alignment with such a traitor was unfathomable to George Henry Moore. Consequently, Moore embraced Tory candidate, Captain R.W.H. Palmer, son of the evicting landlord, as his

45. The Mayo Election of 1852 Petition (1853) with the Minutes of Proceedings used to illustrate the clerical influence during said election impresses a balanced picture. Testimony used herein was gathered from relatively "hostile" witnesses (i.e. laymen officers of the *Independent Club of Mayo*) and the lack of rebuttal contained within.

running mate (Jordan, *Land* 175; Moore 263).

The context of the general election of 1852 was one of a united clerical front. Given the Irish Catholic hierarchy's political climate in 1857,<sup>46</sup> clerical unity was not a reality (Whyte, "Clergy" 252). Higgins was now a member of the "Pope's Brass Band." As such, his agenda became that of Archbishop Paul Cullen. However, Mayo was Archbishop of Tuam MacHale country: "the battle in Mayo between Moore and Higgins was part of the larger struggle between the rival archbishops" (Jordan, *Land* 176). Mayo's clergy were divided; however, the majority supported MacHale's candidate, Moore (Jordan, *Land* 176).

Moore and Palmer both won seats in the general election of 1857 (Jordan, *Land* 176). However, the results were soon contested by Higgins on the grounds of "undue election and return, case of riot, intimidation, undue influence, treating, and want of qualification of Mr. Moore" (*Mayo Minutes, 1857* iii). Prior to the election, several witnesses indicated the active campaigning of priests during and after Mass (*Mayo Minutes, 1857* 28, 44). Father Luke Ryan from Kilmena threatened withholding last rites if the individual voted for Higgins (*Mayo Minutes, 1857* 153,

46. The catalyst for this clerical division is rooted in the "formation of the Aberdeen government in 1852, for one group argued that this administration was the most sympathetic that Ireland was likely to get, while another considered all English governments should be treated with suspicion" (Whyte, "Clergy" 252). This rift widened and continued throughout the 1870s as the camps embodied the philosophies of their respective leaders, Archbishop Paul Cullen (made Cardinal in 1866) and Archbishop John MacHale (Whyte, "Clergy" 252).

199). In Ballinrobe, during the election period, 300-400 people immediately exited Mass and swarmed around the polling site in the hopes of intimidating voters to renege on their promise to Higgins (*Mayo Minutes, 1857 5*). Those that held steadfast to Higgins were verbally abused and in some cases faced a priest's fist being shaken in their face (*Mayo Minutes, 1857 8, 33*). Throughout the trial witnesses testified to stones, mud, and sticks being thrown at the Higgins' supporters as they attempted to place their votes (*Mayo Minutes, 1857 5, 8, 14, 26, 29, 31, 66, 70*). Higgins' supporters were physically accosted: "I remember when Mr. Ward [Higgins' supporter] came in, early on the Monday morning; I saw him taken off his car by force by the mob; I saw him taken into Mr. Moore's and Captain Palmer's committee-room. . .he was dragged in by force and dragged up stairs" (*Mayo Minutes, 1857 72*). Some Higgins' supporters were simply beaten (*Mayo Minutes, 1857 72*). Some shareholders were too frightened to vote without military escort; some electors were scared off from participating in the election altogether (*Mayo Minutes, 1857, 17, 46, 48, 56*). As a result of the mob violence, some Higgins' supporters succumbed to the crowd and flipped their votes (*Mayo Minutes, 1857 73, 77, 109*).

During the trial, magistrates and deputies described the Ballinrobe election scene as the "worst in Mayo" and the "worst in five counties" (*Mayo Minutes, 1857 17*). Former high sheriff and current magistrate Dave Rutledge testified he had "never seen such violence" (*Mayo Minutes, 1857 10*). According to one witness, the contested Galway election (of 1857) did not require the use of military (*Mayo Minutes, 1857 13*). In the Barony of Claremorris, voters did not need any protection

at all (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 25). Testimony left no doubt that this highly organized Ballinrobe mob (Barony of Kilmaine) was led and controlled by Father Peter Conway, Curate of Ballinrobe (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 18-19, 56).

Father Peter Conway was a staunch supporter of George Henry Moore. This allegiance dates at least back to his work with Moore and Archbishop of Tuam McHale on the Franciscan Monastery in Tourmakeady. At that time (1847), Father Peter Conway was a Curate in Partry (Moore 129). Conway canvassed alongside Moore (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 66). He also accompanied Moore to the nomination in Castlebar (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 2).

Leading up to the election, Conway used the steps of his church's altar to deliver not religious sermons, but political sermons (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 44). So incensed during Mass on Palm Sunday, a Catholic Higgins supporter actually jotted down notes immediately following mass because "I [he] knew it would give rise to something" (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 41). The witness described Father Conway's post-communion diatribe:

After eulogising the Messrs. Moore and Palmer, to the highest degree, he said, 'but as to Higgins he is the most consummate scoundrel! He has deceived you in every point. Every promise he made to you at the last election, he has broken! He has sold his country, his body, and his soul, yet he has now presumption to come and ask for your support. But believe me, the curse of

God will follow every man who gives it to him.'

(*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 41)

Two witnesses that testified Father Conway specifically ordered his flock not to "molest or maltreat police or soldiers" (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 9, 37, 41). As a follow up to the aforementioned comment, one witness acutely stated: "Feeling this to be a permission to maltreat the freeholders" (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 41).

The pre-election hype brought hundreds to the streets surrounding the polling site in Ballinrobe (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 5, 54). Witnesses testified Father Conway riled the crowd by speaking Irish perched upon a wall and from hotel windows (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 8, 9, 15, 23, 24, 31, 32, 47, 67). During one of his crowd addresses, it was reported Father Conway told his flock: "Don't violate the law, but that son of Isidore Bourke [Joseph Bourke] deserves to be hung" (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 48). Witnesses testified he repeated his directive of: "Boys, boys! [d]o not kill a policeman or a soldier" (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 9, 37). Father Conway rode horseback through the streets and along the mobbed road from Ballinrobe to the Neale shepherding and directing his flock (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 21, 54). Father Conway was reported to have spoken to escorted voters in Ballinrobe-bound phaetons informing them voters had been killed, suggesting this non-truth was used as an intimidation tactic (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 57). When this warning was not heeded Father Conway was accused of stating to the mob: "I wash my hands out of you" (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 54). Then, as if on cue, men were pulled off cars, dragged, and beaten (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 55, 56, 72). However, some of the most damning



testimony against Father Conway came from Higgins supporters that were kidnapped and held captive.

James Moran, Michael Langan, and Mark McTighe traveled to Ballinrobe with the intention of "plumping" for Higgins (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 85-87, 96). They traveled by caravan in Higgins cars with a cavalry escort with eleven or twelve military men (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 85-86, 96). According to James Moran and Michael Langan's testimony, Father Conway approached the cars and informed them that three or four men had been killed in Ballinrobe (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 85-86, 96). Langan estimated Father Conway was surrounded by a mob of 300 or 400 men (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 96-97). Moran, Langan, and McTighe got down from their cars with the intention of running away and heading home (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 87, 97, 101). Instead of reaching their destinations, they were seized by the mob (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 87, 97). Langan indicated Conway asked his name and cross-referenced it with a list; he directed the mob to: "Keep that fellow [Langan] in custody" (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 97). The mob also captured Mark McTighe and then "nabbed Tom O'Brien" (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 87). The group was taken to Peter V[a]lkenburg's Inn in Cong where they were locked up over night (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 97). McTighe successfully escaped from V[a]lkenburg Inn in the night (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 102). Throughout their incarceration at V[a]lkenburg's members of the mob and Father Conway tried to convince Moran to change his votes. This is illustrated in the following testimony:

Q: What did the mob say to you when you said you would

vote for your master [landlord]? -- They said they would do this and that. Q: Tell the Committee what they said they would do to you ? -- They said that I should vote for Moore and Palmer; unless I would vote for Moore and Palmer, I should pay for it.

*(Mayo Minutes, 1857 88)*

Michael Langan corroborated Moran's story with his testimony:

Q: When Father Conway came to you during that night, or in the morning, what did he say to you ? -- He asked that we should vote for Moore and Palmer, and we made him an answer that we would not. The whole of us made an answer that we would not.

*(Mayo Minutes, 1857 98)*

At daybreak (Monday), the group was released from their room at V[a]lkenburg's Inn and found there were other detainees: Joe Huddy,<sup>47</sup> Martin Mallett, Walter Liner, and Billy Ryan (*Mayo Minutes, 1857 89*). The Higgins-supporters were forced into one car and then taken to Gillett's Hotel in Ballinrobe where they were, once again, held captive (*Mayo Minutes, 1857 89*). In order to regain their "liberty," Moran and Langan told Father Conway they would vote for Moore and Palmer (*Mayo Minutes, 1857 98*). At four o'clock in the afternoon, Conway took Moran and Langan to the court house to vote; but "the books were shut" (*Mayo Minutes, 1857 90, 98*). Conway directed members of the mob to remand Moran and Langan to his house for the evening (*Mayo Minutes, 1857 90*). Moran and Langan spent the evening in Father

47. Joe Huddy of Creevagh will be explored in depth as this discussion ensues.

Conway's kitchen (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 90, 98). On Tuesday morning, after Conway left his home, Moran and Langan escaped (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 91, 98). Following their escape they elicited the assistance of a guard to take them to the court house to vote (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 91, 98). Although they both intended to plump for Higgins, the pair split their votes between Higgins and Moore out of fear (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 90-91, 99). The transcript indicates Joe Huddy and Mark McTighe did follow through on their plump for Higgins (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 100). Langan and McTighe, both small farmers, testified they were unable to return to Ballinrobe to sell their produce because they feared for their lives (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 99, 103). Moran, a small farmer who sold stock in Ballinrobe, had his fear realized when he was beaten after being served to give testimony for this inquiry (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 91).

As their testimony indicates, Moran and Langan were held captive by Father Peter Conway and his mob Sunday night through Tuesday (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 85-100). Friends of the men had been inquiring about thereabouts; Moran and Langan reconnected with their friends on Tuesday at Mane's Public House (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 95, 99). It is reasonable to assume the pair shared their tale of captivity with the friends that were looking for them.

On Tuesday evening, Father Conway authored a placard (printed for Wednesday morning). The placard read:

To the People of Ballinrobe and Barony of Kilmaine  
St. Mary's, Ballinrobe, Tuesday Evening.

My ever dear Friends,

I never asked a favour of you that you did not grant at once.

I now ask one favour more of you on this day, and I ask it in the name of the glorious Queen of Heaven, The Immaculate Mother of God; it is this-that no man, woman, or child shall appear on the streets of Ballinrobe, except a freeholder, on to-morrow, Wednesday, or any other day, until I appear amongst you. Any[] one who does not take this advice, he is my enemy; the enemy of Moore and Palmer; and the enemy of our country. Victory is yours.

P. Conway. (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 49, 52, 59)

The Ballinrobe printer received an order to print 1,000 placards for Wednesday morning (last day of polling) conveying the above message (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 53). Multiple witness accounts indicate the people heeded the wishes of Father Conway: "All was quiet on Wednesday" (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 64, 66). Whether the timing of the placard was a defensive maneuver following public knowledge of the freeholders abductions, or whether it was coincidental is inconsequential. What the placard and the subsequent obedience clearly illustrate is the control Father Conway maintained over his flock.

Unlike the outcome of the challenged election of 1852, in 1857 "George Henry Moore, esq. was, by his agents, found guilty of undue influence" and as a result he lost his seat in Parliament (*Mayo Minutes*, 1857 ix). The Special Committee also concluded:

[4.] "That undue influence and spiritual intimidation prevailed to a considerable extent at the last election for the County of Mayo." [5.] "That in the exercise of such undue influence and spiritual intimidation the Rev. Peter Conway and the Rev. Luke Ryan were so prominently active, that the Committee deem it their duty specially to report their conduct to The House, in order that such steps may be taken as may seem to The House to be proper and necessary." (*Mayo Minutes, 1857 ix*)

J. H. Whyte contends clerical influence, "was naturally not of equal strength in all [P]arts of Ireland. . . It was an axiom of Irish politics that clerical influence was much greater in rural areas" (Whyte, "Clergy" 251). However, the influence of rural Catholic priests was not limited to the electorate process.

Following the Mayo Election Trial of 1857, another politically active priest was assigned to the Lough Mask region. Like Father Conway, Mayo native Father Patrick Lavelle was educated at St. Jarlath's College and Maynooth College (Blanck; O' Flaich 129). This radical, nationalist priest spent four tumultuous years at the Irish College in Paris as a philosophy professor and instructor of Irish (Moran, *Radical* 4-11; O'Fiaich 132). During his time at the Irish College (1854-1858), Lavelle was involved in an ongoing battle with the rector, John Miley (Moran, *Radical* 4-11). This battle began before Lavelle's arrival due to the fact Lavelle was appointed professor over Miley's candidate (Moran, *Radical* 5-6). Miley allegedly withheld salary and reimbursement for teaching materials (e.g. scientific equipment); Lavelle

manipulated students in his charge to question and challenge Miley's administration (Moran, *Radical* 7; O'Fiaich 133). Essentially, the Lavelle-Miley feud was yet another manifestation of the MacHale-Cullen rivalry (O'Fiaich 135). Ultimately, Lavelle and his colleague were refused re-entry into Irish College in March 1858:

Confrontation followed. Lavelle tried to force his way into the college and was physically restrained by the servants. He was then handed a letter from Miley which stated his employment had been ended. . .he would not be allowed to re-enter it [College] to collect his belongings, but could get them through a third party . . . Lavelle refused to give in. . . Borrowing a ladder. . .they climbed over the back-wall and into the college grounds. Once inside, a core group of 15 to 20 of the students expressed their support for the two professors, demanding the dismissal of those servants who had barred them. . .they [students] refused to eat the meal prepared for them and forced other students to be involved, and to sign a petition to the board that was critical of Miley. . . Eventually the representative from the ministry of public instruction, Mr. Jourdain, persuaded Lavelle and Rice to depart by threatening that the police would use force to remove them. (Moran, *Radical* 12)

Following this event, Lavelle returned to the Diocese of Tuam and served as curate to the Mayo Abbey (O'Fiaich 135). But the serenity of abbey life was to be short-lived for this feisty cleric; Archbishop MacHale needed to capitalize upon Lavelle's

tenacity (Moran, *Radical* 15; O'Fiaich 135). In October 1858, Archbishop MacHale appointed Lavelle to be administrator of Partry (Moran, *Radical* 15).

Situated along the shores of Lough Mask and within a few miles from Ballinrobe, the parish of Ballovey (commonly referred to as Partry) is found (Moran, *Radical* 15). This parish was arguably the epicenter for proselytism in western Ireland (Moran, *Radical* 15-16). Evangelicals (also known as Biblicals) "were as well endowed with money as they were with fervor" (Larkin, "Church and State" 303). Their quest was "to convert non-Protestants to 'Christianity' and to promote a more 'evangelical' faith amongst Protestants through the more extensive use of the bible. Their over-zealous approach even brought them in conflict with the more high church bishops in the Church of Ireland" (Moran, *Radical* 15). In an effort to appeal to the rural communities (especially the poverty stricken), these evangelicals even printed their bible in Irish (Larkin, "Church and State" 303). The most radical of these Biblical societies set up camp in the surrounding areas of Lough Mask (Moran, *Radical* 15). In 1856, the *Irish Church Missions Society to Roman Catholics* were "employ[ing] 697 people and expend[ing] over £30,000" (Moran, *Radical* 15). By 1858, Father Peter Ward of Partry was overwhelmed by this evangelical campaign (O'Fiaich 135). Given the context, it is of no surprise that Archbishop of Tuam John MacHale transferred his dogged soldier to this parish.

Because of his philanthropic efforts during the Famine, George H. Moore accrued considerable debt. In order to settle his debt, Moore sold his lands in Partry. Six-thousand of Moore's acres were sold in the Encumbered Estates Court (Moore

131). The Tourmakeady portion of Moore's Ballintubber estate was purchased by Lord Thomas Plunket, the Protestant Bishop of Tuam, Killala, and Achonry (Moore 131; O'Fiaich 136). Plunket then purchased some land from Sir Robert Blosse totaling his Partry estate to 10,239 acres (Moran, *Radical* 16). Bishop Plunket during the Famine worked to convert his tenants by offering free food "as a condition of conversion" (Moore 131). It is Plunket who was responsible for bringing the Irish Church Missions Society to the area (Moran, *Radical* 16). In an effort to expedite conversion:

when he acquired the new property he evicted a number of his unfortunate tenants, replacing them by Protestants imported from other districts. Nice slated houses were offered to those who would adopt the new faith, and threats were not omitted if they refused. He forced the children to attend a Protestant school, and his Sisters used to search the houses, often pulling the children from under the beds where their parents hid them. (Moore 131-132)

When Lavelle arrived in Partry he found "a half a dozen of those schools, planted on the borders of Lough Mask, were filled with the children torn from the very hearts of their parents" ("Bishop" 9). Lavelle immediately forbade his parishioners from sending their children to Plunket schools (O'Fiaich 136). Lavelle used the pulpit:

Sunday after Sunday, beginning on 20 October 1858, he attacked



those people that continued to send their children to the schools, declaring that they could not still receive sacraments. If they persisted he would not allow them to come to his chapel. . .

Where families refused to comply with Lavelle's demands, he visited them and used every form of persuasion and threat to secure their agreement. (Moran, *Radical* 18-19)

When his attempts to convince Plunket from taking action against the parents that were no longer sending the children to his schools failed, Lavelle forged a more drastic course of action (O'Fiaich 136). In a letter to the editor of the *Nation*, Lavelle justified his more aggressive actions: "You know how earnestly I implored in several private communications (reserved for publication) of Lord Plunket to leave his tenants at liberty. You know that I prayed the more obstinate he and his daughters (spurred on by the arch-disturber, Rev. Mr. Townsend) became" ("Provinces" 6).

As nephew and namesake to the former owner<sup>48</sup> of the *Freeman's Journal*, the power and influence of the press was well-known to Lavelle (Furlong 1). Lavelle used the nationalist press, namely the *Mayo Telegraph*, *Tuam Herald*, the *Nation*, and the *Catholic Telegraph* to wage a war of sorts with the Plunket family (Moran, *Radical* 20). He barraged the bishop's nephew and chaplain W. C. Plunket with

48. Patrick Lavelle was the first Catholic editor of the *Freeman's Journal* (Furlong, 1). He purchased this newspaper in 1831; it was sold in 1841 following his death in 1837 (Furlong, 1). Father Lavelle's education was financed by this uncle (Moran, *Radical* 1).

public letters to inform the public of tenant evictions on the basis of tenants' withdrawal of their children from the Plunket schools (Moran, *Radical* 21). He publically dared (unsuccessfully) Plunket to reveal the identity of those who continue to use the schools and those who had converted (Moran, *Radical* 21). W. C. Plunket responded through the conservative *Mayo Constitution*, but his efforts made little difference and he ceased his public responses by March 1859 (Moran, *Radical* 21).

Lavelle's writings depict a great deal of savvy. He purposely sought to present himself as a moderate, hoping not to dissuade the support of the less zealous Protestants (Moran, *Radical* 20). Upon analysis of his subtle language, he appeared to be quite skilled in the veiled threat. These notions are well-illustrated in the following excerpt from the April 9, 1859 edition of the *Nation*:

But as a lover of Christian harmony among all denominations of religionists -- as a lover of "peace and good will" among men, I would advise him [Plunket] to pause. Let him say, as it best for him even now to say "In peace in the self-same shall I sleep and shall I rest;" or else let him remember that "all that take the sword shall perish with the sword." ("Provinces" 6)

Lavelle's counter-crusade extended beyond the press. He organized demonstrations using his parishioners:

He convened a crowd of 100 people who succeeded in preventing the scripture readers from taking the children to the schools. He was charged with unlawful assembly

before the Ballinrobe petty sessions for this act, found guilty and fined. (Moran, *Radical* 23)

It was alleged Lavelle "assailed a protestant clergyman, the Rev. Hamilton Townsend, by spitting at him" ("County Galway" 4; "Father" 6). Lavelle ordered members of his flock to dismantle a stone house and carry away the materials from Catherine Plunket's estate:

Father Lavelle was sitting on a stone in the yard when I arrived, and the men were pulling down the house; I asked them who ordered them to do so? Father Lavelle said he did; I said he had no authority to do so -- that, as Mr. Plunket's representative there, I objected to their taking away the stones. . . . Father Lavelle said he would show me he would throw down the wall himself, and he put his two hands against some stones at the doorway and pushed them in. ("County Galway" 4)

Lavelle led his mobs to commit acts of violence: "A certain Bartholomew Donnelly was attacked and assaulted by a crowd led by Lavelle, and Michael McDonagh, a scripture reader, had his house burned down while he and his family were asleep. Their neighbors failed to come to their aid" (Moran, *Radical* 23). The aforementioned vignettes represent just a few of Lavelle's actions.

By February 1860, sixty families were to be evicted; these families happened to represent the "most vocal centres of opposition to Plunket's schools and were most active in supporting Lavelle" (Moran, *Radical* 33). Lavelle fought to halt these

evictions, writing to anyone who might have influence over Plunket, including the Secretary of State for Ireland (Moran, *Radical* 33). By deliberately "widen[ing] the debate from its narrow religious angle and at the same time broadening the popular base to which he could appeal. He brought to the fore hitherto neglected area of landlord-tenant relations which became more prominent in the 1860s in Ireland" (Moran, *Radical* 33).

Ironically, Lavelle's suit and its counter-claim were mediated out of court by the very controversial former curate of Partry and Ballinrobe, Father Peter Conway, P. P. of Headford (O'Fiaich 136). It was perceived by Conway and Lavelle that complete tenant amnesty was part of this "Castlebar Settlement" (Moran, *Radical* 33). Plunket had a different interpretation of this settlement (Moran, *Radical* 34). Plunket's interpretation was that he had justification to evict fifteen tenants for violating estate rules (Moran, *Radical* 34). Consequently, Lavelle's attacks on Plunket intensified. Constabulary was assigned to proactively take notes during Lavelle's Sunday sermon as he incited parishioners to combat Plunket and his evangelicals (Moran, *Radical* 34).

Lavelle sought to paint a picture of tyranny on the part of evangelicals. He brought suit against the Rev. Richard Goodison, a clergyman connected with the Irish Church Missions ("Court" 4). Lavelle claimed before the Ballinrobe petty sessions that Goodison used "insulting and contemptuous language towards him. . . threatening to blow out his brains and presenting a loaded pistol at him" ("Court" 4). As a result of this allegation, Goodison alleged:

he [Goodison] had been pelted with stones on three occasions in the streets of Ballinrobe, notwithstanding a large force of constabulary being then present, that he had also been pelted in going along the roads in the neighborhood of said town, and such was the feeling existing amongst the Roman Catholic population that person in the employment of the Irish Church Missions Society could not, with safety, go any distance from their homes unless protected by a constabulary force. ("Court" 4)

In early February 1860, Alexander Harrison, a ploughman for Lord Plunket was shot and killed near his home. Shortly before his murder, Harrison had been successful with a conviction in his claim against a poacher on Plunket's estate ("Dreadful" 2).

Despite Lavelle's intimidation tactics, in November 1860, with considerable military and police presence, Plunket evicted fourteen tenants, totaling sixty-eight people (Moran, *Radical* 35). According to Moran, "Plunket's actions in Partry opened up the debate over the power enjoyed by Irish landlords" (*Radical* 36).

Lavelle countered the eviction by dissuading tenants from occupying the confiscated land; he also forbade his flock from working for the Christian zealots (Moran, *Radical* 38).

These events in Partry were relatively unique because this post-Clearance time period was one of relative harmony in Ireland; this contributed to its vast exposure (Moran, *Radical* 22). As a result of the media attention, Lavelle's battle extended far

beyond Ireland. Lavelle's public relations genius portrayed himself and his flock as victims while vilifying Plunket (Moran, *Radical* 37):

The publication by him of facts relating to the poverty of the people in and around the Mount Partry district of Mayo aroused the sympathies of the then Bishop of Orleans, Monsignor Dupanloup, who on one occasion preached a sermon in one of the Paris churches upon the subject of Partry tenants and their sufferings. A princess of the Bonaparte family and other titled ladies took up a collection for the relief of the sufferers.

(Davitt, *Fall* 145-146)

In an attempt to mitigate the growing attention on Partry, Plunket wrote to the British ambassador in Paris, Lord Cowley, asking him to speak with the Bishop of Orleans in the hopes of quelling any mentions of Partry (Moran, *Radical* 37). As the aforementioned passage indicates, the ambassador was unsuccessful. Dupanloup's sermon netted over £100 (Moran, *Radical* 37).

Lavelle worked tirelessly to elicit funding to provide for his parishioners and to educate their children (Moran, *Radical* 38-39). He successfully secured funding from Catholic bishops citing that his battle was religious, as opposed to political (Moran, *Radical* 39). He also cleverly published the pamphlet "War in Partry" in 1861 and distributed it widely (O'Fiaich 137). Inclusions in this pamphlet include the history of Plunket's acquisition of said lands, Lavelle's own letters to Plunket, and excerpts of transcripts of Plunket's tenants speaking to their treatments and the

aggressive actions of the evangelicals (Lavelle 504-541). The publicity of the plight of Plunket's tenants provided much needed financial support (Moran, *Radical* 41). Additional benefactors included: Irish in Britain, British Catholics and exiled Irish nationalist John Mitchel (Moran, *Radical* 41-42). The Fenian Brotherhood also sent contributions from America (O'Fiaich 137). The timing of this money helped assuage the near famine conditions in Partry due to the poor potato crops between 1860-1863 (Moran, *Radical* 42).

Moran writes, "Throughout his time in Partry Lavelle was regarded as a god among his people" (*Radical* 24). However, he was feared by most (Moran, *Radical* 110). As such he exercised considerable control over his flock. Perhaps this control is best illustrated by Lavelle's physical assault of Ellen Walsh, Plunket tenant in August 1861 (Moran, *Radical* 40). Walsh pressed charges against Lavelle but withdrew said charges following a discussion with Lavelle (Moran, *Radical* 40-41).

Throughout his time in Partry, Lavelle used the courts to his advantage. Whether he was a defendant or a plaintiff, he was sure to garner much attention in the press; sometimes the press was the target. Lavelle filed a multiple count claim against John Bole, the proprietor of the conservative *Mayo Constitution* for "gross libels reflecting on his character and conduct" ("Law" 4). His court room escapades riled the peasantry; in fact, court procedures were altered in the interest of public safety:

The petty sessions court heretofore [has] been always held  
on Monday, which is market day in Ballinrobe; but owing to

the danger to the public peace, arising from the indignation of the people congregated in town, provoked by a succession of Jumper Prosecutions from the Partry district, the magistrates have directed that in the future the petty sessions court shall be held upon Tuesday, instead of Monday. ("Threatening" 4)

It is worthy of mention that Father Peter Conway was known to lend his support to Lavelle at legal proceedings ("Threatening" 4).

Much to the chagrin of the evangelicals, "the courts discharged most of the summons against Lavelle and his supporters" (Moran, *Radical* 24). Perhaps his legal success could be attributed to securing top legal aid on occasion such as Isaac Butt, MP ("County Galway" 5). Or, it could be attributed to another reason. As discussed in a preceding chapter, George H. Moore was not a member of Parliament during this time. However, he did serve as magistrate and remained active in the Ballinrobe petty sessions ("County Galway" 5; "James" 4; "Threatening" 4). Moore and Lavelle were politically aligned and a deep bond developed between them (Moran, *Radical* 85, 94, 97; Lavelle 3-4). This bond is evidenced by Lavelle dedicating his book *The Irish Landlord Since the Revolution* to the former statesman (Lavelle 3-4). Arguably, this relationship may have benefitted Lavelle in the courts. In *James Knox Gildea vs. Patrick Henehan* this bias may have been apparent. Patrick Henehan, a servant of Lavelle, was charged with "cutting turf without leave on the property of James Knox Gildea" ("James" 4). Moore indicated to his fellow magistrates that this case had been forwarded to a legal adviser and it was determined a "mild case" and a fine of 1s



should be imposed ("James" 4). This finding was challenged by other magistrates: "Mr. Lynch and Mr. Griffin were pressing their views of the law, when Mr. Moore insisted that they should desist, as the case was decided" ("James" 4).

Despite the evangelicals' financial advantage over local parishes in mission to convert the peasantry in the West, their impact was insignificant. As indicated by the census in 1861, "there were fewer Protestants in the diocese of Tuam than in 1834 when the previous survey had been undertaken" (Moran, *Radical* 44). This is particularly significant when this fact is considered alongside Famine-related deaths and mass emigration amongst the Catholic peasantry. By 1862, Lavelle was victorious, Bishop Plunket left the area (O'Fiaich 137). The lands were purchased by less controversial Yorkshire mohair manufacturers (Bunbury 1).

Given Lavelle's nationalist slant and rebellious actions, it should be of no surprise he was drawn to the Irish Republican Brotherhood. In 1861, he was elected to serve as vice-president of the non-oath bound society Brotherhood of St. Patrick (Moran, *Radical* 53; O'Fiaich 137). This newly created organization served as a public façade for the I.R.B. (O'Fiaich 137; Bunbury 1). His participation in the famed McManus Funeral brought him in direct conflict with Archbishop Cullen (O'Fiaich 138). In May 1862, the Irish hierarchy issued a warning against secret societies; demanded Lavelle resign from his post in the Brothers of St. Patrick; and indicated Lavelle publically apologize for his Fenian actions (O'Fiaich 140). Cullen spoke directly with Pope Pius IX regarding the matter (O'Fiaich 140). A letter to MacHale sent from Rome required some disciplinary action toward Lavelle (O'Fiaich 141). As

such, MacHale prodded Lavelle to resign from the Brothers of St. Patrick during the summer of 1862 (Moran, *Radical* 55; O'Fiaich 141). Although no longer a member, Lavelle did not divorce himself of the organization's principles (Moran, *Radical* 55).

In 1864, Lavelle experienced the fragile existence of the Irish tenant through the eviction of his mother and sister from Sir Roger Palmer's estate (O'Fiaich 146). Lavelle, fueled in part by the very personal eviction, published his book *The Irish Landlord Since the Revolution* in 1870 (Lavelle 5). Irish historian Tomas O'Fiaich writes:

Despite his shattering personal experiences of landlordism, however, and despite reference to the landlords as 'territorial monsters' and 'murderers', the book is not very radical in the solutions which it proposes. He demanded fixity of tenure for the tenants and the abolition of tenure at will; he demanded also compensation for improvements and the fixing of a fair rent periodically by the Government. But while he felt that peasant proprietorship was very desirable as a long-term solution, he did not think that Ireland was ripe for it yet nor for land nationalisation. (146)

Lavelle would remain in Partry until 1869. During his final years in Partry he raised funds to feed his parishioners and attempted to advance national issues (Moran, *Radical* 114). He was heavily involved in elections throughout Ireland; he was instrumental in the return of his friend George Henry Moore to Parliament in 1868

(O'Fiaich 144). He also was dedicated to the cause of Fenian political prisoners (O'Fiaich 144). In October 1869, Archbishop MacHale transferred Father Lavelle to Cong, the second wealthiest parish in Tuam (Bunbury 1).

The aforementioned anecdotes illustrate the singular power over the peasantry in the Lough Mask region enjoyed by Father Conway, Father Patrick Lavelle and to some degree, George Henry Moore. However, it was the priests' religious fervor coupled with Moore's political savvy that yielded a powerful synergistic influence over the peasantry. This religious-political force was amplified by their relationship. This relationship remained strong until Moore's death. In April 1870, it was Lavelle that was beside Moore's deathbed; in fact, he notified via telegram Moore's wife and wrote to A. M. Sullivan (editor and proprietor of the *Nation*) of his passing by stroke (Moore 376). Conway wrote to Irish politician and Mayo native Sir John Gray informing him of the circumstances surrounding Moore's passing (Moore 376-377). It is interesting to note on Father Conway's passing in June 1872, he left his gold cross, watch, and gun to Moore's sons, yet: "To all my brothers and sisters, and other relatives, I leave my blessing and pray they may work out their salvation and an honest industrious livelihood by the seat of their brows with perseverance, energy, and industry, never forgetting their duties to God, and their oppressed country, namely Ireland" (Blanck). Due to the financial position of the family, Moore's sons were not left wanting. By overlooking his own family, Conway's gesture appears to be quite symbolic.

J. H. Whyte states "Before the end of the sixties, however, there were signs that the hitherto unquestioned leadership of the electors by the clergy was beginning to breakdown" ("Clergy" 253). Similarly, historian Michael Hurst contends "When Bishop Moriarty of Kerry wrote to William Monsell, in March 1868, claiming that 'The minds of the Irish people are in the hands of the Irish priests', he was badly out of date" (332). Yet, during this time clerical influence was still thriving in the area surrounding Lough Mask, especially in the County Galway portion of the region. This continued local clerical influence is best illustrated by the Galway by-election of 1872.

When Captain John Nolan, an evicting landlord, sought to forge a political career he recognized he needed to redeem his reputation with the tenantry (Moran, *Radical* 126). To do so, Nolan secured the arbitration skills of Father Patrick Lavelle, A. M. Sullivan of the *Nation*, and Irish nationalist politician Sir John Gray (Moran, *Radical* 126). Nationalist Bishop Duggan of Clonfert lent his support to this effort as well (Bradley 132). Nolan's strategy was heavily publicized as this settlement welcomed back tenants to their original farms or provided compensation (Moran, *Radical* 127). The "Portacarron Decision" angered Nolan's fellow landlords as Nolan had established a new precedent (Moran, *Radical* 137). On the heels of the Portacarron agreement, Nolan was declared the clergy's candidate for the election of 1872 in County Galway (McCaffrey, "Federalism" 13). Nolan was a Home Rule candidate, supported tenant rights, and was in favor of denominational education (McCaffrey, "Federalism" 13). The "picked candidate of the local gentry" was tory-

minded Captain William Le Poer Trench (Comerford 9; McCaffrey, "Federalism" 13). County Galway, home of Archbishop MacHale, was an unlikely locale to elect a tory candidate, especially with the momentum of the Home Rule movement in the early 1870s; the deck was stacked against Trench. The Galway election boiled down to which body had the greater influence over the tenants, landlords or clergy (Moran, *Radical* 139). Nolan voters outnumbered Trench voters by more than four-to-one; Nolan earned 2823 votes, Trench 658 ("Galway Election" 3; Moran, *Radical* 140). However, Trench challenged Nolan's victory citing undue influence and intimidation (*Minutes Galway Election* x). In his petition, Trench stressed Captain Nolan "was guilty of such intimidation and undue influence by and through certain Roman Catholic clergymen acting for and on behalf of the said Captain John Philip Nolan, who both by addresses from the altar during Divine service and by other means, threatened loss and damage, and in other manner practised intimidation upon several of the electors, members of the Roman Catholic persuasion, in order to induce them to vote, or to refrain from voting, at the said election" (*Minutes Galway Election* x).

Galway priests' tactics were similar to those used during the Mayo Elections of 1852 and 1857. Incessant stone throwing, threats damning the offspring of Trench supporters by "being branded hereafter wherever they went," and alter coercion such as, "those who would vote for Captain Trench ought to be shunned, as if they had typhus fever or small pox" were standard operating procedures (*Minutes Galway Election* 14, 68, 71, 85, 86, 99). Amongst the Galway clerics, there were two veteran

characters, Father Peter Conway and Father Patrick Lavelle. The following anecdotes speak to the influential "specialties" of the two priests.

Despite the judgment in the *Mayo Election Petition of 1857*, Conway (now parish priest in nearby Headford, County Galway) did not hesitate to resort to his usual upfront and personal threats and intimidation. Lavelle, though parish priest in Cong, County Mayo, involved himself by channeling his gifts of media manipulation and oratory grandstanding.

Magistrate Mr. William Joseph Burke (whose father had testified against Conway in the *Mayo Election Trial of 1857*) provided testimony of his experience during one of Father Conway's masses: "at last he [Conway] ended with words which I never could forget; that he trusted that the day would arrive when a landlord who would interfere with his tenants would be hung up by the neck, which would be too good for him, but by his heels" (*Minutes Galway Election* 153-155). When asked about the state of the country [Galway] during the election period, Burke responded, "I never saw it in so excited a condition; on those Sundays in the chapel, the people seemed to be boiling over with excitement, they were literally mad" (*Minutes Galway Election* 153). Burke's response was followed up by, "Did the Reverend Father Conway himself speak in an excited and warm way?" (*Minutes Galway Election* 153). He testified "In a most excited way; it was simply impossible to be more excited on several occasions" (*Minutes Galway Election* 153).

Mr. Pierce Joyce testified that during the election period, "The celebrated Rev. Father Conway, and the mob shouted at me, and hooted, and called me a 'jumper,' in

the open square of Galway. . .they [mob] shouted at me when they saw him [Conway] waiving [sic] his hand in most measured terms" (*Minutes Galway Election* 141).

Joyce further testified Conway told him he was a "renegade Catholic" and that "I [he] had sold my [his] religion" (*Minutes Galway Election* 141). According to Joyce, Conway's words "I sold my religion" and "renegade Catholic" were hooted to him from the crowds as far as 15-20 miles from Galway (*Minutes Galway Election* 141).

Father Conway's activities did not cease following the election. Roman Catholic gentleman Charles Blake indicated that Trench supporter and large landed proprietor Denis Kirwen had suddenly taken ill and passed away a week after the election (*Minutes Galway Election* 42). On the day Kirwen died, the mourning witness' car was stopped by Father Conway and two men. The testimony indicated Conway stated, "He [Kirwen] is down, he is down; I will put you and more of you [landlords] down" (*Minutes Galway Election* 18-20). On Palm Sunday following the February election, Conway sent a silent message to some of his parishioners. Mrs. Barbara Burke, wife of Trench supporter William Joseph Burke, testified the Burke family pew in Father Conway's church was significantly broken. Worshippers were forced to walk around the wooden debris as they participated in Mass (*Minutes Galway Election* 158).

In 1872, Lavelle was still publically relevant due to his work in Partry, his ties to Fenianism, the publication of his book on landlordism in 1870, and his involvement with the home rule movement (Moran, *Radical* 133; O'Fiaich 147). Lavelle wrote prolifically on behalf of Nolan (Moran, *Radical* 137). The Nolan camp

"spent close on £100 to ensure his letters and speeches on the election were published in the newspapers, especially the *Tuam News*" (Moran, *Radical* 137). Lavelle was busy "behind the scenes to win over other clerics" for the Nolan camp (Moran, *Radical* 137). Lavelle "left no stone unturned" as he directed the wives of his flock to refuse "to cook, sew or tend to their husbands' needs if they voted for Trench" (Moran, *Radical* 139).

Catholic Baronet Sir Thomas Burke distributed a circular at a Trench rally in Loughrea (County Galway) on December 13, 1871; the circular highlighted the differences between Trench and Nolan (Moran, *Radical* 138). The flier indicated the belief that a landlord has the right to influence tenants' votes (Moran, *Radical* 138). Needless to say, this claim did not go unanswered.

On New Year's Day 1872, there was a meeting at Gort of which Father Lavelle spoke (*Minutes Galway Election* 47). In his speech, which was published in the January 5, 1872 edition of the *Tuam News*, Lavelle stated:

Then Sir Thomas Burke, to be a little unparliamentary,  
is a liar (a voice, 'He is, and a d[amne]d liar,') for Sir  
Thomas Burke has declared that he would make them  
[his tenants] and all his friends vote for the man whom he  
likes, and in his own words, that he would make them  
slaves; and with a truculency worth of himself, and with  
an impudence unworthy of the great baronet (groans), that  
he would make them vote just as he would wish, and he had



had the effrontery to say that if they did not so vote he would evict now, as he had evicted before. (*Minutes Galway Election* 47)

At the trial Burke denies ever coercing his tenants to vote for his candidate and similarly refuted the accusation that he threatened to evict if they did not vote his way (*Minutes Galway Election* 47-48). In his speech, Lavelle accused Burke of "unfold[ed] the blood-stained banner of extermination" (*Minutes Galway Election* 48). But the above excerpts were mere rhetoric when compared with the Lavelle's assertion that Burke had sounded his own "deathknell" (*Minutes Galway Election* 48). Following the "deathknell" reference, Burke moved his family abroad (*Minutes Galway Election* 48). Fearing for his life, Burke appealed to Archbishop MacHale for interference (*Minutes Galway Election* 49). Burke articulated his interpretation of Lavelle's "deathknell" reference in his correspondence with the Archbishop (dated January 8, 1872): "But there are many who would look upon Father Lavelle's speech as a clear order to shoot me, and if that is not an attempt at intimidation, I know not what is" (*Minutes Galway Election* 49). In a January 11, 1872 response, Archbishop MacHale responded:

As I was reading in that report the passage referred to in your letter, "that Sir Thomas Burke sounded his own deathknell," a most respectable gentle man who was present at the Gort meeting, and heard the speech referred to, happened to call and on his attention being turned to the above passage, he declared that immediately after the words just quoted the reverend speaker

added, "I mean his political deathknell," which adjunct you will admit strips the ominous phrase of its alarming significance.

*(Minutes Galway Election 49)*

MacHale further excuses the term "liar" by informing Burke that it was meant in the parliamentary sense: "Whilst this explanation shields you against a foul imputation, at worst it could only expose himself [Lavelle] to the possible reproach of indulging a harmless vanity, by comparing himself and his auditory to one of their representatives addressing the House of Commons" (*Minutes Galway Election 49*). After addressing the semantics, MacHale turns the table on Burke:

In your letter, you ask whether the language of the reverend speaker at Gort does not manifestly encourage intimidation, and yet you appear to be utterly insensible to the more terrible and sweeping intimidation fulminated against a whole people by a few landlords, without a particle of right to justify the threatened vengeance. (*Minutes Galway Election 50*)

Captain Nolan's brother Sebastian allegedly "boasted and he insisted that Father Lavelle was invincible" (*Minutes Galway Election 79*). Perhaps with the support of Archbishop MacHale maybe Lavelle was invincible indeed.

Michael Hurst identifies the activities associated with the Galway Election of 1872 as "the startling contributions to Irish electoral history in the years before the secret ballot" (342). The Ballot Act of 1872, first implemented during the general

election of 1874, instituted the secret ballot (Moody, "Fenianism" 235). Intuitively, voting privacy can be construed as a major step towards liberty. However, Hurst argues the "Secret ballot had been needed for the maintenance of law and order, not for the sake of Irish freedom" (335). A clause in the Ballot Act of 1872 increased the number of polling stations from four to twenty (Whyte, "Clergy" 255). The secret ballot coupled with a polling site "divide and conquer" approach rendered much of the priests' election period activities obsolete.

As one attempts to rationalize the masses' steadfast allegiance to the priests' demands, the following passage may be of assistance. During William Joseph Burke's testimony during the Galway Election Trial of 1872, he shared an interaction with some of his tenants as they discussed the electoral candidates, "They [a group of William Joseph Burke's tenants] declared they would vote for Nolan; one of them said to me, 'how could I prosper if I opposed the priests?'" (*Minutes Galway Election* 153). This tenant's honest response indicates some priests, especially Conway and Lavelle, ruled by fear. The preceding pages provide illustrations of priest-induced fear. In "Rule By Fear," political philosopher Gregory Kavka analyzes the social condition and the idealized state of the "perfect tyranny" (602-603). Kavka defines "perfect tyranny" as "a polity in which fear is the sole motive of obedience to political authorities" (603). While his discussion is in the political context it certainly applies to the political role of some priests in rural Connacht. Regarding social condition, Kavka contends, "given reasonable assumptions about rational fear, it does turn out that citizen ignorance of a sort is a prerequisite of perfect tyranny" (606). Kavka

further asserts, "obeying out of fear does not require one to believe that one surely, or very likely, will be punished for disobedience. It only requires that one's awareness of the risk of apprehension and punishment suffices to induce one to obey" (603).

Due to their isolation and meager existence, the rural peasants of the Lough Mask region provided an ideal context for leadership by tyranny. Arguably, the leadership style of Conway and Lavelle are consistent with the perfect tyrant.

The preceding pages illustrate that from at least 1852 through the early 1870s, the clerical influence in the Lough Mask vicinity was significant. Often this influence descended into violence. In essence, if you crossed a priest, in the Lough Mask area, it was prudent to anticipate bodily harm either by his followers or in some cases the priest himself.

The Mayo elections of 1852 and 1857 and the Galway election of 1872 provide the backdrop for examples of collective violence and intimidation, especially in the form of a mob. Sociologist Roberta Senechal de la Roche states "Given an 'excuse' [election] a 'mob' vents its anger not at the real source of its misery, but at the most vulnerable targets in the immediate environment [opposing voters]" (99). De la Roche further points out "collective violence is often an extreme form of self-help, a species of social control that entails the handling of a grievance by unilateral aggression" (101). This unilateral aggression provides collective liability placing distance between the individual and the act of violence (de la Roche 102). Through the leadership of Conway and Lavelle and the dogmatic structure of the Roman Catholic Church this desire for "self-help" was easily harnessed and highly organized.

Senechal de la Roche categorizes collective violence into four forms: lynching, rioting, vigilantism, and terrorism (105). To classify the form of collective violence "breadth of liability and degree of organization" is considered (de la Roche 105). Figure 6 illustrates the four forms of collective violence and their respective degree of liability and organization. Using the classification system indicated in Figure 6, the mob's collective liability coupled with the sustained organization provided by the church via Conway and Lavelle indicate a terroristic form of collective violence.

		<b>Liability</b>	
		Individual	Collective
<b>Organization</b>	Low	<i>lynching</i>	<i>rioting</i>
	High	<i>vigilantism</i>	<i>terrorism</i>

Figure 6. Four Forms of Collective Violence; de la Roche, Roberta Senechal.

"Collective Violence as Social Control." *Social Forum*; 105.

Sociologist Jeff Goodwin indicates a gold standard definition for terrorism is difficult to come by; however he contends all definitions contain this element: "The deliberate use of violence in order to influence some audience (or audiences)" (2028). To the uneducated peasant along the shores of Lough Mask, violence at a priest's encouragement was probably perceived as the work of God, religion being a common justification for terrorist activity (Tessler and Robbins 307-308). Considering this example of collective violence as a form of terrorism may prove difficult given contemporary perceptions of terrorist acts. However, after one sheds his twenty-first century bias, the aforementioned vignettes certainly apply.

Despite the passing of the Ballot Act, in the Lough Mask vicinity, the ethos honed by Conway and Lavelle endured. Over twenty years of violent behavior left a legacy. Human aggression psychologist Jeff Victoroff stresses, "Bandura's social theory of aggression suggests that violence follows observation and imitation of an aggressive model" (18). Without question, the anecdotes discussed herein indicate aggression. In applying Bandura's theory, violence begets violence. Furthermore, political scientist Leonard Weinberg asserts:

terrorist groups do not emerge from thin air, nor do they necessarily disappear into the air at the conclusion of their adventures; rather their appearances and disappearances often are associated with developments internal to individual political parties and to changes in the system within which they pursue their various objectives. (436)

As the upcoming chapter will indicate, the actions of Conway and Lavelle during the immediate Post-Famine era essentially "primed the pump" for the next generation of violence in the Lough Mask region.

## Chapter Eight

### CLERICAL INFLUENCE: TRADITION, OPPOSITION, AND MURDER

The Province of Connacht did not initially embrace Fenianism: "The [Fenian] movement had little appeal to the nation's farmers, especially to the small farmers of the west, since it was unwilling to support a campaign for agrarian reform, fearing that a campaign for social reform would dilute the national struggle for Irish independence" (Jordan, *Land* 184). Ironically, it was not until the mid-1860s (circa the time of the non-insurrection of 1865 and the debacle of 1867) that Fenianism took hold in County Mayo (Jordan, *Land* 183). This time also coincided with a shift in Fenian leadership structure. The summer of 1867 saw the reorganization of American Fenians into the unified Clan na Gael (Devoy 239; Moody, *Davitt* 135). In Ireland, following the failed uprising in March 1867, the autocratic structure established by Stephens was eradicated in favor of a "representative governing body" -- the Supreme Council (Moody and O'Broin 287). The late 1860s essentially witnessed a Fenian renaissance. In *Recollections of an Irish Rebel*, John Devoy indicates "In the reorganized movement Mayo was the best in Ireland" (33). How does a region initially indifferent towards the Fenian movement quickly transform into its most zealous?

In 1869, Father John O'Malley (of the Boycott affair) served as curate of both Cong and the Neale (*Catholic Directory 1869* 192). In the autumn of 1869,

O'Malley welcomed a new parish priest to Cong -- Father Patrick Lavelle (Moran, *Rise* 174). The pair shared more in common than love for the Lord. As presented earlier, Lavelle was more than a Fenian sympathizer. O'Malley too, was "well-known for his Fenian sympathies" and was connected by marriage to a very high ranking Fenian leader (Moran, *Rise* 175). On December 20, 1870, O'Malley's sister Maria married J. F. X. O'Brien<sup>49</sup> (Moran, *Rise* 175). O'Brien had been convicted for his leadership role in the ill-fated March 1867 rising (Devoy 207, 312). He was sentenced to be "hanged, drawn and quartered; but this sentence (the last of its kind ever passed) was commuted to solitary confinement, in which he spent fourteen months" ("In Memoriam" 60). O'Brien was released in 1869 along with other Fenian prisoners due to amnesty efforts ("In Memoriam" 60; McConnel 48). George Henry Moore, MP for Mayo led the charge for the release of these political prisoners (Moore 335-348). Following his release, O'Brien visited the Lough Mask region frequently, especially between 1869-1870 as Father O'Malley prepared the couple for marriage (Moran, *Rise* 175). According to Devoy, "Before Kickham<sup>50</sup> became Chairman of the Supreme Council of the reorganized I.R.B., James F. X. O'Brien, who was afterwards a Member of Parliament, filled that office for some time" (Devoy 312).

49. John Devoy recalls in *Recollections of an Irish Rebel* that James F. X. O'Brien as "The principal letter writer to the *Irish People*, who was convicted for his part in the Rising and later became a Member of Parliament. His letters were always long and well written and were signed 'De l'Abbe'[,] He had lived in New Orleans for some years and knew French very well" (44).

50. Charles Kickham served as I.R.B. Chair from 1872 until his death in 1882 (Biletz 227).



O'Brien's service as chair coincided with his courtship and early years of marriage (Biletz 227; Devoy 312). Irish nationalist, journalist, and politician William O'Brien recalls James F. X. O'Brien's sentiments upon his release:

Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien was risking his popularity with the more violent spirits in his own ranks by forcing them to give fair-play to a constitutional public movement for a friendly compromise with England, he was at the same time so convinced of the impossibility of arresting England's attention by conciliatory appeals alone, that he all the time persisted calmly in his preparations for the *ultima ratio* of armed rebellion. Fresh from the Malebolge of penal servitude, he risked liberty and home and a station of honour and comfort again to import arms and reform the shattered "Circles" (*Recollections* 98).

As such, it is of no surprise "Police reports indicate a rise in Fenian activity and the importation of arms into the Cong-Neale district in this period [1869-1870]" (Moran, *Rise* 175).

As the preceding passage indicates, upon his release, J. F. X. O'Brien prioritized arms acquisition, yet he championed a constitutional approach. On the surface O'Brien's philosophy may appear contradictory; however, his philosophy was shared by other high profile figures in the Lough Mask region. As indicated, both George Henry Moore, MP and Father Patrick Lavelle were, at minimum, Fenian sympathizers and "They did not oppose armed rebellion, providing it had a reasonable prospect of success" (Moran, *Radical* 97). Lavelle wholeheartedly believed in

Moore's ability to manipulate Parliament for the nationalist cause (Moran, *Radical* 97). Given the close relationship between Lavelle and Moore and between Lavelle and O'Brien (Moran, *Radical* 156-157), it is highly likely there was a transitive acquaintance between Moore and O'Brien. It is tempting to speculate the potential symbiotic influence of the leading Irish constitutionalist, one of the most notorious clerics, and the chairman of the Supreme Council of I.R.B. upon the Lough Mask region prior to Moore's death in April 1870.

Despite the magnitude of the aforementioned events in the Lough Mask vicinity discussed in the previous chapter, the years immediately following the Famine were relatively calm in the West of Ireland (Jordan, *Land* 182). Donald Jordan asserts, "[D]uring the first two decades following the Famine, County Mayo experienced little if any agrarian agitation" (Jordan, *Land* 182). However, this placid time in County Mayo did not last as the end of the 1860s brought a "sharp increase in agrarian disorder" (Jordan, *Land* 183). Post-Famine transplant farmers were targeted during this time of outrage: "In January 1870 eighteen Scottish and English farmers holding land near Ballinrobe and Newport petitioned the Lord Lieutenant requesting protection in the wake of threatening notices" (Jordan, *Land* 187). Even philanthropic, nationalist landlord George Henry Moore was not spared. In April 1870, the following notice was sent to Moore's tenants:

IMPORTANT. CAUTION.

Notice is hereby given that any person who pays  
rents to landlords, agents, or bailiffs above the

ordnance valuation will at his peril mark the  
consequences.

By order,

(Signed) RORY.

TO THE TENANTS OF MR MOORE'S PROPERTY

AND WHOM IT MAY CONCERN. (Moore 374)

This was the personal business Moore needed to attend to when he abruptly left his Parliamentary obligations in England to return to his estate in County Mayo (Moore 375). Moore arrived home on Friday, April 15 (Good Friday) and suddenly took ill on Monday, April 18; he was pronounced dead on Tuesday, April 19, 1870 (Moore 376).

This was not Moore's first encounter with "Rory," a pseudonym for the local ribbon society; this type of rent threat began in 1868 (Moore 370-374). Moore left the previous negotiation to a team of arbitrators which included Father Lavelle, Father Shea, A. M. Sullivan (editor of the *Nation*), and John Martin (Moore 372). "Rory's" threats are well documented in the news articles of 1869 and 1870.

Examples are not limited to rent abatement:

This day several flocks and herds belonging to graziers near Tuam, who held farms in Mayo, were driven home to the owners by the several herds in charge, on the grounds, it is alleged, that they have got warnings from Rory of the Hills or some of his party not to tend stock for mere grazing farmers any longer. Fires are

kindled simultaneously, and without any apparent concert, over extensive districts in South Mayo and the northern part of Galway.

("Outrages" 4)

In an open letter to Richard J. M. St. George, Esq. of Headford and his tenants, Rory launched a second and final demand stating "ye [sic] to give back to the old tenants their holdings. . .and that before long, as there are no Orange laws will to death prevent or stop us till we get rid of landlords, tyrants, and murderers" (Rory's signature was accompanied by a "mark of a coffin.") ("Richard St. Georges" 1). Rory of the Hills' name was even used by Miss Eliza Dargan to revenge her sister's former employer for discharging her: "[to] remove a notorious lot of girls out of the mill, and if he did not that same morning he would get his concerns in a blaze as 'Rory' often visited people who did not deserve it as much" ("County Mayo" 6). It appears "Rory of the Hills" was used to rectify collective and personal grievances. In *An Irish Gentleman: George Henry Moore*, Moore's son sheds his perspective on the make-up and resurgence of local ribbon societies:

After the downfall of Fenianism the local ribbon societies, whose object has always been agrarian, took fresh roots in many parts of Ireland. These societies are not bound together by any common bond, and seem to spring up spontaneously according as circumstances favour their growth. Sometimes, but not always, they are caused by the acts of some ill-advised or tyrannical landlord, whose estate becomes the centre of disaffection. . . They are rarely

men in the lowest ranks, but generally the sons of men of intelligence . . . Very often they are the sons of bailiffs or stewards, who have been employed for a long time by a landlord, and, being in a comparatively good position, have escaped the toil of the spade and the plough, and cannot readily adapt themselves to altered circumstances. The sons of bailiffs have generally received a fair education, and being raised somewhat above the mass of the peasants, expect and receive a sort of deference from their neighbours.

(Moore 370)

In *The Fall of Feudalism*, Michael Davitt contends Ribbonism's "original object was more protective than aggressive" (41). However, "On the seeming collapse of Fenianism, the trials and punishments of 1867-70, the agrarian spirit asserted itself again" (Davitt, *Fall* 42). But the Fenian-charged ribbon societies of the early 1870s were not satiated by cattle stealing. They craved bigger game -- landlords, agents, and bailiffs.

In February 1869, in response to the escalating violence, the Most Reverend Dr. Paul Cullen, Archbishop of Dublin "renews his warnings against" secret societies, Ribbonism, and Fenianism in a Lenten pastoral ("Lenten" 5). In his companion Lenten pastoral, Most Reverend Dr. John MacHale, Archbishop of Tuam focused on politics and denominational education ("Lenten" 5). In May of 1869, the Most Reverend Dr. Patrick Leahy, Archbishop of Cashel, led an "earnest appeal to the laity of his diocese on the murders which had been recently committed in the County

[Tipperary]. . . The archbishop implores his parishioners to abstain from blood" ("Archbishop Cashel" 3). Even staunch tenant rights advocate, Most Reverend Dr. Thomas Nulty, Bishop of Meath, presented his position on the new brand of ribbon societies very clearly to his parishioners in a published pastoral:

But to process-servers, cattle dealers, and honest men who refuse to part with their properties, or surrender their farms -- because somebody else occupied it twenty or thirty years ago -- are the classes from which Ribbonism selects its victims. . .to take away the life of a man who has not unjustly assailed you, either in your person or property, to take away the life of an unjust aggressor, when you have other means by which you can successfully defend your property, and preserve your life, is to commit the awful crime of murder. . . The circumstances, therefore, that called Ribbonism into existence, and that ever lent to it even an appearance of justice, have now passed away forever. Hence the principle of aggregation in the Ribbonism of the present day is not a purpose of necessary self-defence but a purpose of *positive and unjust aggression*. . . Now, a secret society that blasphemously arrogates to itself the awful power of life and death, and under the pretext of redressing public wrong, actually enrols [sic] its members with the horrible object of taking away the life of every man that differs with, disobeys, or displeases them -- is in reality, a society organised for the diabolical purpose of

committing murder. By the very fact, therefore, of becoming a member of such a society, a man constitutes himself a murderer in intention, and contracts at once in the eyes of God, the accumulated guilt of the murders which he may be subsequently called to commit. Hence, to sanction such a society or to lend any encouragement to its propagation -- or even not to oppose its progress, when you can do so -- is to cooperate positively or negatively with the murderous designs of its members, to participate in their guilt and to share the judgment that awaits the assassin. ("Landlordism and Ribbonism" 7)

It is conspicuous that in the annals of the *Nation* and the *Freeman's Journal* a published condemnation of Ribbonism from the Most Reverend Dr. John MacHale, Archbishop of Tuam cannot be found. It is incomprehensible that someone as learned as Dr. MacHale was unaware of the agrarian crisis. Across Ireland agrarian offenses totaled 160 in 1860 and increased to 767 in 1869 ("Alleged Crime" 4). By 1870, the number of agrarian offenses rose sharply to 1,329 ("Alleged Crime" 4). Figure 7 and Table 8 illustrate Connacht, Tuam's province, was not immune from Ribbonism.

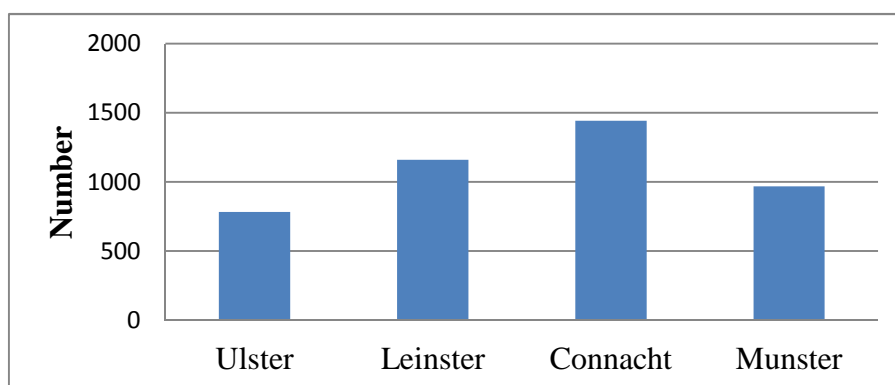


Figure 7. Total Offenses Against Person or Property, 1870; data gathered from

"Alleged Crime in Ireland." *Freeman's Journal* 8 May, 1871; 4.

Table 8

Increase in Select Crimes in the Province of Connacht

	1867	1869	% Change
<b>Attempted Murder (includes shooting and stabbing)</b>	5	25	400%
<b>Assault Inflicting Bodily Harm</b>	26	54	107.7%
<b>Sending Threatening Letter (e.g. burn house)</b>	3	21	600%
<b>Threat By Letter to Extort Money</b>	0	11	Cannot be calculated

Source: *Return of Judicial Statistics, 1867*, 62; *Return of Judicial Statistics, 1869*, 95.

Arguably, MacHale chose not to publically condemn the agrarian outrages.

Instead, during this period, MacHale channeled his efforts towards segregated Irish Catholic Education, the fledgling Home Rule Association, and the Galway by-election of 1871 ("Galway Election" 3; "Home Rule" 6; "Irish Education" 14-15; "Lenten" 5; "On Monday night" 1 ). To not censure the agrarian outrages against a backdrop of such public clerical condemnations can be viewed as an action in itself.



It is reasonable to believe some Connacht Ribbonmen may have felt they were given permission through omission. Any degree of perceived permission from the man the *Nation* deemed "the foremost man of our race" could easily justify and validate the most heinous of agrarian actions ("True" 9). This is especially true of the Ribbonmen in the Lough Mask vicinity who personally witnessed Father Lavelle (and Father Peter Conway) execute terroristic acts and espouse agrarian outrage.

During this time, agrarian outrages included murder in the Ballinrobe region. In January 1870, Galway landlord John Walsh was murdered ("Murder Walsh" 4). His niece testified he had previously received a threatening letter and subsequently was "obliged to accept the escort of police on his way home from Ballinrobe markets" ("Murder Walsh" 4). In August 1872, process-server and court messenger Martin Tunbridge was shot in the back of the head (Delaney 1). It was reported Tunbridge had served a Notice to Quit to Mr. John Nally<sup>51</sup> of Balla on the behalf of Sir Robert Lynch Blosse (Delaney 1). Both cases remain unsolved (Delaney 1; "Murder Walsh" 4).

By 1873 the number of agrarian outrages had decreased significantly throughout Ireland. In 1870, there were 1,329 agrarian disturbances ("Alleged Crime" 4) and "the yearly number of agrarian outrages on an average of 1873 and 1874 was 233" (*Return of Judicial Statistics, 1874*, 91). This downturn in agrarian offenses coincided with the apex of livestock prices and the electoral success of

51. It is worthy of mention John Nally was the uncle to Fenian leader and Land Leaguer P.W. Nally and his brother "Scrab" Nally (Delaney 1; Jordan, *Land* 219).

the Home Rule League (Pim 457; Lee 65).

The general election of 1874 was the first Irish election which implemented the secret ballot (Moody, "Fenianism" 235). It was also the election that saw the candidacy of the Connacht Representative to the Supreme Council of the I.R.B.-- John O'Connor Power (Moran, "Daly" 190). This election provided the backdrop for an interesting and conditional alliance between the Home Rule League and the I.R.B.

Galway-born and resident of England John O'Connor Power traveled to Mayo in 1868 to establish Fenian centres (Jordan, *Land* 188). During this time O'Connor Power contended "he approached George Henry Moore, home-rule M.P. for Mayo with a proposal for co-operation between the insurrectional and constitutional wings of Irish nationalism" (qtd. in Jordan "Power" 48; MacDonagh, *Home* 114-115). During the early 1870s, O'Connor Power continued his studies at St. Jarlath's College in Tuam while managing Connacht Fenian activities (Jordan, *Land* 188). St. Jarlath's was a "major centre of Fenian activity in the west of Ireland" (Jordan, "Power" 50). During his tenure at St. Jarlath's, O'Connor Power "became one of the principal smugglers of arms into Ireland for the fenians" (Moran, *Radical* 146). By 1873, O'Connor Power formally declared Fenian provisional support to the Home Rule League (Jordan, "Power" 48). However, not all Home Rulers welcomed the Fenian partnership, namely some clerics, especially Father Patrick Lavelle (Moran, *Radical* 144-145). Ironically, one of the most vocal Fenian sympathizers of the Irish Catholic Church was wary of this union (Moran, *Radical* 144). At the November 1873 Home Government Association conference O'Connor Power proposed "MPs should

regularly account for their parliamentary conduct" (Moran, *Radical* 147). He also publically "Alleged there were groups within the movement who were opposed to this new departure. This was a reference to Lavelle although he was not specifically named. It was being suggested that Lavelle feared the growing influence of these fenians within the Home Rule League" (Moran, *Radical* 144). Shortly after, in January 1874, O'Connor Power announced his desire to represent County Mayo in Parliament (Jordan, "Power" 49). Refusing to accept O'Connor Power, Lavelle and other like-minded priests approached Thomas Tighe, an "improving landlord who held advanced views on the national question" (Moran, *Radical* 145). In February 1874, Archbishop MacHale and the president of St. Jarlath's College Canon Ulick Bourke traveled to the clerical election assembly in Castlebar with the intention of endorsing their pupil O'Connor Power and sitting member George Browne (Moran, *Radical* 146). Prior to the arrival of MacHale and Bourke, Lavelle and Bishop Conway of Killala endorsed and received the assembly's support for Tighe and Browne (Moran, *Radical* 146). An angry MacHale was essentially forced to accept to the endorsement and O'Connor Power subsequently withdrew his name (Moran, *Radical* 147). However, "The election was invalidated on procedural grounds and a by-election was called for May 1874" (Jordan, "Power" 51). In an effort to avoid another mass Tighe endorsement, MacHale chose not to hold another clerical assembly prior to the new election (Jordan, "Power" 52). Lavelle intensely campaigned against O'Connor Power. In a letter to Isaac Butt, Lavelle contends O'Connor Power "is the bastard son of a policeman named Fleming from Co. Cavan,

and a house painter by trade who has managed to live on his wits and the gullibility of others and myself for years!!!" (qtd. in Jordan, "Power" 52 and Moran, *Radical* 147). Lavelle and other anti-O'Connor Power priests campaigned throughout Mayo for the Tighe and Browne ticket (Moran, *Radical* 147). While campaigning in Ballinrobe, O'Connor Power was "given a very poor reception" and "Lavelle's treatment of O'Connor Power greatly enraged the advanced section within the home rule movement" (Moran, *Radical* 147, 149). In the end Browne was returned and O'Connor Power defeated Tighe to win the second seat (Jordan, "Power" 53). The elections of 1874 brought about Lavelle's "political-deathknell." His actions were not only shunned by the Fenians, but his manipulation of the clerics' electoral candidates fractured his relationship with his biggest supporter -- Archbishop MacHale (Moran, *Radical* 151).

The election of 1874 sent a high-ranking Fenian to Westminster and it marginalized a notorious, nationalist cleric. However, it also illustrates the enduring influence of the clergy upon the Catholic masses in the Lough Mask region: "The south of the county, where Lavelle was situated, was the heartland of Browne and Tighe's support. . . O'Connor Power's supporters were mainly situated in the north and east of the county" (Moran, *Radical* 147). Yet during this time, County Mayo Fenians were deemed the strongest and "best in Ireland" (Devoy 33). Regardless of Fenian influence, Lavelle managed to once again influence his locale.

The parish of Cong was one of the wealthiest parishes in the diocese of Tuam (O'Fiaich 145). One of the primary landlords in and around Loughs Mask and Corrib

was Sir Arthur Guinness, Lord Ardilaun, of the famed Guinness brewing family.<sup>52</sup> Sir Arthur Guinness of Ashford Castle owned 33,298 acres straddling Counties Mayo and Galway which produced "rental income of 12,000£ divided among 670 tenants of whom 316 are rented at less than 5£ per annum" (Dun 246). Though absentee, Guinness was an improving landlord and served as a major employer in the area. He frequently employed 400-500 local artisans and laborers to improve and maintain Ashford Castle and its grounds (Dun 247). Guinness was actually criticized for too much improvement. Some of his tenants complained when their simple dwellings were replaced with "new substantial stone and slated houses, often two storey, to which some are removed, are complained of as too big. At Garracloon the people say that they have too much light [windows] and cannot keep the places warm" (Dun 248; qtd. in Jordan *Land* 164). Protestant Sir Arthur even provided a rent-free home for the newly transferred parish priest of Cong -- Father Lavelle (Moran, *Radical* 160). Lord and Lady Ardilaun treated Lavelle with great respect: "He was also one of those constantly with the landlord while he resided in Cong, occupying one of the principal positions at the top table at the many banquets which Guinness held for his tenants" (Moran, *Radical* 160). Since his arrival in Cong, Guinness essentially gave Lavelle a taste of the good life. He did not treat Lavelle's predecessor Father Michael Waldron nearly as well: "His predecessor had to take out lodgings with some of his parishioners" (Moran, *Radical* 60). Arguably this differentiated treatment of Lavelle

52. Sir Arthur Guinness received the title Baron Ardilaun (Lord Ardilaun) in April 1880 ("London Gazette" 5).

may have been strategic on Guinness' part in an effort to avoid the headaches Plunkett faced during the early 1860s. Regardless of intent, the Guinness-Lavelle relationship was mutually beneficial. Lavelle lived more comfortably and he elicited money from the Guinness coffers to further Catholic initiatives within the parish of Cong (Moran, *Radical* 160). Lavelle in turn, publically heralded the local philanthropist. An example of such a defense is a letter, written by Lavelle, to the editor of the *Freeman's Journal*:

Your correspondent may sneer at the "golden presence" of Sir Arthur in Cong; but would God the presence of all the other landlords (10 in number) of this parish were equally "golden." Would that the presence of all the landlords of Ireland among their tenants were of like character, then the Irish begging-box would not be held out to the universe.

("The Rev. P. Lavelle, PP" 7)

Another illustration is in a published letter, signed by Lavelle and other local leaders, proclaiming best wishes on Guinness' recent nuptials:

Your generous expenditure of capital in the constant employment not alone of your own tenants, but even of strangers to your extensive property, has been of incalculable service to hundreds of families who would have otherwise experienced serious want. . . Your affability to the humblest who wants to approach you has earned for you an amount of

personal esteem which few command; but even more than this, your confidence in the future of our dear common country, as expressed in your princely investments of your capital in her industries, both territorial and commercial, proves you to be a true son of Irish soil. ("Yesterday" 6)

Father Lavelle even remained silent on tenants educating their children in Guinness' schools with a Protestant teacher (Moran, *Radical* 160). It is of no wonder why Lavelle's ardent nationalist reputation diminished during the 1870s (Moran, *Radical* 160).

Lord Ardilaun's financial favoritism towards Lavelle enraged the radical Father Walter Conway, Catholic administrator from Clonbur (Moran, *Radical* 166). Lord Ardilaun's holdings straddled the parishes of Cong and Ross (Clonbur), the latter representing a larger portion ("Guinness Family"). Irish historian Gerard Moran specifically attributes the animosity between Lavelle and Conway to Conway's "failure to get a contribution from the Guinness family for repairs to his church in Clonbur. Instead, Lavelle used the money for a new chapel at Cornamona, between Cong and Clonbur" (*Radical* 166).

As Lavelle faded from the nationalist limelight, another local priest emerged to take his place as the nationalist, clerical organ of the people of the Lough Mask region. In 1875, Father John O'Malley left his curate position under Lavelle to serve as parish priest of the new St. John the Baptist Church and Cavalry of the Neale (the village situated between Ballinrobe and Cong) ("The Neale" Mayo Walks 1).

O'Malley was a popular figure in the area due to his "kind nature, his devotion to the poor, and jovial disposition" (Davitt, *Fall* 275). O'Malley was committed to the people of the Lough Mask region. Examples of this commitment include O'Malley's supporting presence during criminal investigations and in the courtroom as members of his parishioners defended themselves ("Alleged Assault" 3; "The Lough Mask Tragedy" 11; "Remand of the Prisoners" 3). The people appreciated O'Malley's commitment to them: "The parishioners and many friends of the Rev. John O'Malley, The Neale, have presented presented [sic] him with a flattering address and a purse of sovereigns on the occasion of his return home in good health after a lengthened absence" ("The Rev. O'Malley" 5). However, his popularity was rewarded with more than complimentary words and monetary gestures. At a time when clerical influence during elections was declining rapidly (Whyte, "Clergy" 255), O'Malley remained an integral political player in the Lough Mask region in the general election in April 1880: "Power's reelection in 1880 can be attributed to [James] Daly and Father O'Malley, parish priest of the Neale" (Moran, "Daly" 199). O'Malley was a political powerbroker in the Lough Mask region.

At the June 1, 1879 Land League assembly at Knock, County Mayo a "respectable tenant farmer" made it quite clear his position with respect to the clergy: "He said he would be very sorry to say anything disrespectful to a Roman Catholic clergyman, but this he would say -- Don't stand between the people and their rights: If you do, you must be prepared to accept the consequences" ("Monster Indignation" 3). As illustrated by Table 9, clergy participation at land meetings in and around



Ballinrobe was not immediate. It was not until Father O'Malley chaired the Ballinrobe demonstration (October 5, 1879) that clergy in the immediate Ballinrobe vicinity were credited with meeting attendance.<sup>53</sup> With a crowd of approximately

Table 9

Detail of Land League Demonstrations within 12 Miles of Ballinrobe

(Since Irishtown-Boycott Affair)

Date	Location	Documented Key Land League Speakers	Clergy Documented on Platform	Fr. O'Malley's Documented Attendance
June 22, 1879	Mayo	James Daly	None	No
June 29, 1879	Carnacon, Ballintubber	James Daly	None	No
July 6, 1879	Hollymount	James Daly	None	No
July 27, 1879	Shrule	Michael Davitt J.J. Louden James Daly J. Nally (W not noted)	None	No
August 15, 1879	Balla	Michael Davitt J.J. Louden Mr. Harris (Matt?)	None	No
October 6, 1879	Ballinrobe	Michael Davitt J. O'Connor Power, MP*	Fr. Lavelle PP of Cong Fr. Ganley, CC	Yes (chair) (spoke)
November 9, 1879	Kilmaine	J.J. Louden, James Daly, J.W. Walsh[e]	None	No (letter of apology)

53. Just beyond the designated region of study, the Very Rev. Canon Bourke Ulick Bourke, P.P. of Claremorris chaired a land meeting at Claremorris on July 13, 1879 ("Meeting at Claremorris" 2).

Table 9 continued

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Documented Key Land League Speakers</b>	<b>Clergy Documented on Platform</b>	<b>Fr. O'Malley's Documented Attendance</b>
December 28, 1879	Mayo Abbey	James Daly J.W. Nally	None	No
January 25, 1880	Port Royal, Mount Partry	Michael Davitt, J.J. Louden, J.W. Walsh[e], James Daly, P. J. Nally, P. W. Nally ("Scrab")	Fr. Mylott, PP of Partry (chair) Fr. Moran, CC	No
February 22, 1880	Ballinrobe	J.W. Nally	None	No
July 11, 1880	Cong	Matt Harris James Daly J. Walsh J. W. Nally	Fr. Lavelle, PP of Cong (chair) * Fr. W. Conway sent letter of apology citing "professional etiquette" indicates feud with Lavelle	Yes (spoke)
September 26, 1880 (held within one- half mile of the assassination location of Lord Mountmorres the day before)	Clonbur	J.W Nally James Daly James Redpath	Fr. Hosty, PP of Clonbur (chair) Fr. W. Conway, CA Fr. McHugh, CC	Yes (during Boycott Affair)
October 3, 1880	Tourmakeady	J.W. Nally	Fr. Mylott, PP Partry (chair) Fr. Fahy, CC Fr. Connolly, Aughanower	No (during Boycott Affair)
November 1, 1880	Shrule	J.W. Nally	None	No (sent letter of apology/explanation)  (during Boycott Affair)

## Sources:

"The Agricultural Depression: Another Demonstration in Mayo [Mayo]." *Nation* 28 Jun. 1879; 2.

"The Agricultural Depression: Another Meeting in Mayo [Carnacon]." *Nation* 5 Jul. 1879; 2.

"Ballinrobe." *Freeman's Journal* 24 Feb. 1880; 6.

"The Ballinrobe Demonstration." *Freeman's Journal* 6 Oct. 1879; 7.

"The Clonbur Demonstration." *Freeman's Journal* 28 Sept. 1880; 3.

"Demonstration at Tourmake[a]dy." *Nation* 9 Oct. 1880; 3.

"The Kilmaine Demonstration." *Freeman's Journal* 10 Nov. 1879; 6.

"The Land Question: The Cong Demonstration." *Freeman's Journal* 12 Jul. 1880; 7.

"The Land Question: The Mayo Abbey Demonstration." *Freeman's Journal* 29 Dec. 1879; 2.

"The Land Question: The Port Royal, Mount Partry Demonstration." *Freeman's Journal* 26 Jan. 1880; 6.

"Meeting at Balla." *Nation* 23 Aug. 1879; 2.

Moran, Gerard. *A Radical Priest from Mayo*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, Ltd. 1994: 164.

"The Movement for the Reduction of Rents: Great Tenant-Right Meeting in Shrúle." *Nation* 2 Aug. 1879; 3.

"The Rent Question in Mayo: Meeting at Hollymount." *Nation* 12 Jul. 1879; 13.

"The Shrúle Demonstration." *Nation* 6 Nov. 1880; 7.

20,000 people, the Ballinrobe demonstration was the largest demonstration since Irishtown and it was one of the first meetings where the spiritual and secular leadership combined forces (Moran, *Radical* 164). In his chairman address on October 5, 1879, O'Malley stated:

There can be no doubt that meetings of this character are absolutely necessary to expose the grievances of the struggling tenant-farmers of Ireland, and to demand the immediate redress of the wrongs under which they are labouring. The agitation of the land question has been objected to on the ground that everything should be left to the landlord's sense of justice, but I regret that, with a few honourable exceptions, well known to you all, the landlords of this country have been greatly wanting in practical sympathy with their suffering tenantry. ("Ballinrobe Demonstration" 7)

He also exclaimed his pleasure upon seeing the members of the masses carrying banners with "the glorious motto, 'The priests and people forever'" ("Ballinrobe Demonstration" 7).

On July 11, 1880 an Anti-Eviction meeting within reach of Lord Ardilaun's demesne at Cong assembled. One of the principal speakers, Father O'Malley of the Neale, exhibited his passion for the Land League:

He stood before them as an Irishman and an Irish priest, and, viewed from either side, he wanted to know where was the man

who would tell him he had no right to be there (applause). He thought he would be able to show them to-day that the only temporal salvation of the Irish nation was at this moment centered in success of the Irish Land League. Since he was a child he had watched political movements, and he did not remember any that was worthy the name or held out and substantial hope for the regeneration of the Irish peasant except the Land League (applause). ("The Cong Demonstration" 7)

Not only did O'Malley espouse his personal passion for the League at the Cong meeting, he proclaimed it was the duty of the Irish priests to lead the charge:

Talk was cheap, but what was wanted was action. Let every parish in Ireland have a branch of the League, and they would have a barrier against the tyranny of landlords. Wherever the Irish people were fighting or contending their just rights the proper place for the priest was to be not alone with the, but at their heads (applause). He maintained that the people in every parish had a right to ask why their priest was not at the head of their branch of the Land League, and they had a right to be answered. As long as the principles of the Irish Land League were open and fair, he repeated it was the duty of Irish priests to aid them (applause). ("Anti-Eviction" 2)

Compared to his landlord-centered address at the Ballinrobe demonstration on October 5, 1879, O'Malley's speech at the Cong Demonstration (July 11, 1880) demonstrates

increased enthusiasm for the movement. It is this passion for the Land League that fueled O'Malley to take the helm in managing the internationally reported Lough Mask 'Boycott.' As discussed in a previous chapter, O'Malley engineered the ostracization of Captain Boycott and his family. O'Malley's goal was to have Boycott removed from Lord Erne's estate (Lough Mask House). Given the magnitude and the potential for mass violence, it is a credit to O'Malley that only two, non-fatal, agrarian outrages are attributed to the Lough Mask Boycott following Lord Mountmorres' murder (see Table 10).

It was mid-November 1880 when the Central Land League challenged Father O'Malley's leadership with respect to the Lough Mask Boycott Affair ("The Moore" 2). The Central League forbade O'Malley from moving forward with his plan for the tenantry to travel to County Fermanagh to convince Lord Erne to discharge Captain Boycott and in return the tenants would settle their rents (Jordan, *Land* 291). The Central Land League capitalized upon the publicity of the Boycott Affair and their overarching objective would be undermined if Lord Erne's tenants paid their rents under those circumstances. However, according to O'Malley, the ostracization was never about rents; it was about Captain Boycott's "tyranny" ("The Invasion of Mayo: To the Editor" 6). While he abided by the League's wishes, he publically disagreed with Central Land League's decision ("The Invasion: To the Editor" 6). However, O'Malley continued to utilize his influence with the people of the Lough Mask region to curtail any violence as the Orangemen and soldiers withdrew from the area. In a distributed placard addressed to the "Men of Mayo": "In the name of the Lough

Mask tenants, and for the sake of the cause which they are so manfully upholding, you are earnestly entreated to permit the Orangeman and the English Army to take themselves out of your outraged county unmolested and unnoticed" ("The Invasion: 'Men of Mayo'" 5). The people heeded O'Malley's wishes ("End of the Boycott" 3).

Table 9 provides details of the land meetings held within twelve customary miles of Ballinrobe. From the first meeting at Irishtown (April 20, 1879) through the conclusion of the Boycott Affair (December 1880) there were fourteen land meetings in this designated vicinity (Table 9). While there were nine meetings held in Mayo in 1881, none were held within twelve miles of Ballinrobe (Jordan, *Land* 331). It appears as Father O'Malley became disenchanted with the centralized leadership of the Land League (mid-November 1880); the people of the Lough Mask region mirrored his sentiment. Similarly, the Land League invested their efforts elsewhere as they "shifted away from the small tenants in the west to the larger 'graziers' of the midlands and the east" (Waldron, *Maamtrasna* 312).

At the Riverstown Demonstration near Boyle in County Roscommon near the Sligo border, a principal speaker indicated "This movement [Land League] has kept those who were driven to the most desperate extremity from resorting to those wild deeds known as the 'wild justices of revenge'" ("Riverstown" 6). Unfortunately, these words did not ring true for the Lough Mask region. While the Land League may have temporarily curbed the number of agrarian offenses, it did not stop them. Table 10 illustrates the reported agrarian offenses (including murder) in the Lough Mask vicinity. The shaded portion indicates the period of time Father O'Malley questioned

the centralized mission of the Land League. This line of demarcation indicates significant outrages in the region under both a zealous Land League program as well as a disheartened one.

Father O'Malley knew the challenges of the region well. As a well-known Fenian sympathizer, O'Malley was very familiar with the area's thriving ribbon societies. He tried in earnest to use the Land League as a weapon to combat the violence of the secret societies that plagued the region (Waldron, *Maamtrasna* 312). On April 5, 1880 O'Malley was reminded of the tenuous agrarian situation as Ballinrobe land agent David Feerick was fired upon. Feerick survived the attack, but on June 29, 1880, his assailants were successful; he succumbed to his injuries on August 14, 1880 (*Special Commission Act, 1888*, 635). The Feerick shooting on June 29 predates the Cong Demonstration (July 11) by less than two weeks. Perhaps O'Malley recognized the magnitude of the secret society activity after the shooting and his concern translated into publicized passion for the land movement. Similarly, his call for other priests to become leaders in the movement may indeed be motivated by a need for assistance from his neighboring colleagues (this notion will be revisited in upcoming pages). Regardless of his elevated enthusiasm for the cause, his knowledge of secret societies is well illustrated in his appeal to the Central Land League's decision not to endorse the journey to Lord Erne: "People here would be dangerously discouraged if something effective were not done to counteract the effect of Orange expedition" ("The Moore" 2).



Table 10

Reported Agrarian Crimes (including murder) in the Vicinity of Lough Mask for the  
Duration of the Land War (Irishtown Meeting-Kilmainham Treaty)

Date	District	Offense	Victim(s)	Specifics of Crime	Presumed Motive
Oct. 31, 1879	Ballinrobe	Maiming Cattle (sheep)	Small Farmers: James Garry, (45 yrs) Patrick Bird, (50 yrs) Michael Henaghan, (56 yrs)	An ear was cut off 17 sheep belonging to victims.	The victims paid their rents prior to court proceedings.
April 5, 1880	Claremorris (included because victim was returning home to Ballinrobe)	Firing at a Person	David Feerick (28 yrs) Farmer and Land Agent	He was fired upon while returning home.	The victim was agent to Mr. Browne who evicted a tenant. The victim was blamed and disliked.
June 29, 1880	Ballinrobe	Murder  Died: Aug. 14, 1880	David Feerick (28 yrs) Farmer and Land Agent	Three men fired ten shots into victim as he was walking home.	This was the second attempt on the life of the victim.
July 20 or 21, 1880	Clonbur	Cutting Cattle	Thomas Walsh (70 yrs) Farmer John Joyce (45 yrs) Pound-Keepers	Walsh's cow and Joyce's bullock were stabbed in the side while grazing on Lord Mountmorres' land.	To deter the victims from grazing on Lord Mountmorres' land.
Sept. 25, 1880	Clonbur	Murder	Lord Mountmorres (55 yrs)	While returning home to Ebor Hall, he was murdered on a commonly travelled road.	He was having land disputes with tenants and obtained ejectment notices against two tenants.
Nov. 14, 1880	Ballinrobe	Firing into a Dwelling	Patrick Harte (55 yrs) herder	Two shots were fired through his house.	This was an attempt to force the victim to stop herding for Capt. Boycott.

Table 10 continued

<b>Date</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Offense</b>	<b>Victim(s)</b>	<b>Specifics of Crime</b>	<b>Presumed Motive</b>
Dec. 24, 1880	Ballinrobe	Firing at Persons	Thomas Hartigan (20 yrs) Medical Student Robert Wilderspin (25 yrs) Groom	While checking rabbit traps in the evening, the victims were fired upon. Wounds were not fatal.	Hartigan stayed at Lough Mask House as the guest of Boycott's nephew.
Feb. 28, 1881	Ballinrobe	Firing at a Person	John Hearne (65 yrs) Clerk of Petty Sessions and Land Agent	While looking at his fields he was shot at 6 times; 4 bullets hit him; 2 were in the head. He recovered.	The victim evicted tenants in May 1880.
Mar. 13, 1881	Ballinrobe	Firing into a Dwelling	Patrick Farragher (60 yrs) Laborer	A shot was fired through the victim's door.	The victim's son worked for Capt. Boycott.
May 18, 1881	Ballinrobe	Firing at a Person	Robert Pringle (26 yrs) "gentleman farmer"	Three shots fired at the victim while he was driving with his wife and mother.	The victim replaced his land steward, who was arrested under the Protection to Person and Property Act, with a Scotchman.
July 19, 1881	Ballinrobe	Firing into a Dwelling	Thomas Fahy (45 yrs) Farmer	A shot was fired through the victim's door and a threatening letter was posted on said door.	The victim was caretaking an evicted farm.
Aug. 26, 1881	Clonbur	Firing at a Person	G. Robinson (60 yrs) Land Agent	The victim was fired upon while driving along a mountain road by two men waiting for him.	The victim was perceived as a target due to his profession -- land agent.

Table 10 continued

Date	District	Offense	Victim(s)	Specifics of Crime	Presumed Motive
Sept. 27, 1881	Ballinrobe	Maiming a Person	James Dolan (45 yrs) Farmer	The victim was dragged from his house by 5 men who cut off his left ear.	The victim was in a dispute with his cousin over possession of a parcel of land.
Jan. 3, 1882	Clonbur	Murder	Joseph Huddy (70+ yrs) Bailiff; John Huddy (17 yrs) Grandson	Victims were murdered and thrown into Lough Mask. Their bodies were weighted down with stones.	Victims were in the process of serving writs on Lord Ardilaun's tenants.
March 17, 1882	Clonbur	Murder  Died: Nov. 19, 1882	Thomas Gibbons (24 yrs) Farmer	The victim and his mother were returning home from a pattern when they were attacked and beaten by 3 men. The victim died from sustained injuries.	The victim's father was a caretaker for Lord Ardilaun. It is also reported that the victim was a gamekeeper for Lord Ardilaun.

Sources: "The Clonbur Outrage." *Freeman's Journal* 30 Jul. 1883; 6.

"The Lough Mask Tragedy." *Freeman's Journal* 8 Feb. 1882; 11.

*The Special Commission Act, 1888: Reprint of Shorthand Notes* 1890; 623, 624, 628, 629, 635-640, 642

Waldron, Jarlath. *Maumtrasna: The Murders and the Mystery*. Dublin: Edmund Burke Publisher, 1992; 18, 20.

As Table 10 indicates, the final two entries indicate the murder of Thomas Gibbons and the double-homicide of Joseph and John Huddy. The table also provides a common element between the two crimes -- Lord Ardilaun. Gibbons was identified as Ardilaun's gamekeeper ("Clonbur Outrage" 6). Joseph Huddy was an experienced bailiff employed by Ardilaun; John Huddy accompanied his grandfather on that fateful day (Waldron, *Maamtrasna* 18). None of the other agrarian offenses during this time period were directly associated with the notoriously philanthropic Lord Ardilaun (Table 10). These crimes stand out; they suggest something was awry with Ardilaun's relationship with his tenants. The genesis for this hostility may be a result of a fairly public feud between the Ardilaun-Lavelle camp and the radical Father Walter Conway of Clonbur. As previously discussed, Conway resented the financial favoritism bestowed upon Lavelle by Guinness (Moran, *Radical* 166). Conway also resented the conditions placed upon Guinness' tenants. Conway asserted the increase in rats amongst the tenants' parcels was due to the Guinness' ban of dogs; this ban is attributed to the preservation of game at Ashford Castle (Moran, *Radical* 165). In *Twilight of the Ascendancy*, author Mark Bence-Jones contends, "In those days of large estates and no shortage of keepers, the shooting in Ireland was as good as the hunting" (5). Sir Arthur and Lady Olive Guinness were known for their shooting parties; Ashford Castle was famous for its woodcock (Bence-Jones 5). His recreational shooting and fishing prompted Guinness to maintain a rigid "no trespassing policy" on his demesne (Moran, *Rise* 277).

Prior to his assuming a position at Clonbur (Ross) under Father Hosty, P.P. in 1879, Conway served as curate to Father McManus of Omev and Balindoon (Clifden) (*Sadlier's 1876, 1878, 1879, 1881*). As illustrated from this 1881 passage written by Father Patrick Frealy, P.P. of Clifden, County Galway, the poverty and land quality were extreme: "The potatoes are very bad in some land, at least two thirds are rotten. If the small tenants of Connemara had the land for nothing they could not live. The holdings are so small & the land so sterile that the people will be always steeped in poverty" ("Letter from Patrick Frealy"). Given Conway's experience prior to his arrival in the outskirts of the wealthy parish of Cong, it is not surprising he negatively judged the lifestyle of the rich and famous.

Father Conway chaired the Land League meeting at Maam on October 3, 1880 ("Demonstration Maam" 3). However, Moran contends "For people like Conway, the Land League was a pretext to vent personal grievances against neighbours and others they disliked" (*Radical* 166). Lord Ardilaun was at the top of his list. Under the auspices of the Land League, Conway encouraged Guinness' tenantry to demand rent abatements during the summer of 1879 (Moran, *Radical* 165). In March of 1880, Guinness indicated he lowered the rent by thirty percent ("Sir A." 3). As the Land War progressed, Ardilaun experienced hostility; he felt, given his generosity, this was unwarranted. Despite donating £3000 for the purchase of meal and seed potatoes due to the near famine conditions during the winter of 1879-1880 (Dun, 249), Guinness was publically criticized regarding the Mansion

Relief Committee's method of distribution of relief ("Rev. Mr. Coyne" 8). Guinness flatly refuted this claim ("Sir A." 3).

During the summer of 1880, the feud became increasingly public. In July 1880, at the Cong Demonstration, Conway declined his invitation to attend citing "professional etiquette" as the reason (Lavelle served as chair of this meeting). His letter of apology reads as follows:

I regret extraordinarily that I am prevented by what I may term professional etiquette from attending your meeting. I regret it the more as I am determined to avail myself of this opportunity of making public certain disgraceful conduct of tyrants who have been who have been held up in the locality as types of model landlords. I must for the present be content with saying that I have never witnessed such callous and heartless indifference to the moral and religious as well as the social and physical well-being of the people as I have since I came to this parish. If landlordism here is to be taken as a specimen of the institution I would say unhesitatingly, "Away with it -- cut it down." Give them what they would not grant their unfortunate serfs -- compensation and let them no longer cumber and curse the sacred soil of Ireland. Nor can you want to borrow arguments for the suppression of the fell system. You have only to look around, and from the very platform on which you stand you can see the waving forests which here superseded the fields of waving corn

which was prepared for food by those mills which have shared the fate of other sources of employment and which are now razed to the earth, or standing idle and silent as the tomb. ("Cong Demonstration" 7)

Conway chose this venue to voice his grievances towards Ardilaun's conspicuous consumption. Conway judged Ardilaun's wasteful use of prime farmland for lush landscaping. His words are especially critical of Ardilaun's redirecting a stream to provide water to Ashford Castle and its fountains (Moran, *Rise* 277). Conway blamed Ardilaun's stream-stealing for the failure of the milling industry in Cong. Conway's bold move enraged Lavelle and a battle of words ensued (Moran, *Radical* 166). Lavelle coaxed a Cong mill owner by the name of Thomas Walsh to sign a letter for submission to the newspapers; the letter was penned by Lavelle ("Lord Ardilaun" 7; Moran, *Radical* 166). In the ghost-written Walsh letter, the mill situation is justified: "There were three mills working in Cong some twenty years ago; one of these was then completely burned down; another was worked by a respectable gentleman who, through no fault of his, failed, paying every man 20s in the pound. I took up his business, and after expending large sums I, too, had to give up milling, having lost in one year alone £700" ("Lord Ardilaun" 7). The letter also speaks to Conway's claim of Lord Ardilaun's "callous and heartless indifference" by reminding the readers of his generous donation of meal to Father Conway's parishioners ("Lord Ardilaun" 7). Incidentally, in the letter "Walsh" raises this question: "Father Conway says he was prevented by professional etiquette from attending our Cong meeting I ask, I take this liberty of asking him why did not his

sense of "etiquette" keep him at home; and why after hurling his brand on priests and landlords in Cong in the clear hope of having an explosion, did he, accompanied by another priest, present themselves at the meeting, at which however, they were never noticed?" ("Lord Ardilaun" 7).

Arguably, Father Conway was not a man of peace. In a published letter dated July 25, 1880, Conway lashes out against the *Freeman's Journal* for censoring portions of his letter criticizing Lord Ardilaun: "In my opinion 'tis scarcely consistent with your professions of fair play to have suppressed some very material facts contained in my letter, and to have delayed publication from the 20th to the 24th. I did not want to provoke this controversy. I merely stated a few well-known general facts, which none but a blind admirer of Lord Ardilaun would attempt to controvert, and if I have used strong language I believe the occasion provoked it" ("Rev. Mr. Conway" 6). The *Freeman's Journal* responded accordingly: "The portions of the letter we suppressed were, in our opinion, grossly libellous [sic]" ("Rev. Mr. Conway" 6). In addition to his accusations towards Lord Ardilaun, he was known to have physical altercations as well. He was brought up on charges of assaulting a sheriff's bailiff named James McGrath on a Lough [Corrib] steamer ("Case of the Rev. Mr. Conway, Clonbur" 5; "Chancery Division" 2). During Conway's inquiry "Major Traill, the chairman, announced that the court had come to the decision of sentencing Father Conway to two months' imprisonment with hard labour" ("Case of the Rev. Mr. Conway, Clonbur" 5). Conway filed an appeal and in the interim "McGrath the process-server, and the police who gave evidence against the Rev. Mr.



Conway, have been boycotted, and are compelled to get all supplies from Galway ("Case of the Rev. Mr. Conway, Clonbur " 5). When called to the witness stand at Conway's appeal, McGrath "said he did not wish to prosecute" ("Case of Father Conway: Reversal" 15). Following the announcement of the reversed sentence, Conway was carried through the streets by a pleased crowd ("Case of Father Conway: Reversal" 15).

The alleged McGrath assault was not an incident in isolation. It was simply a component of a much bigger issue. Shortly after the sentence was overturned in October 1881, Conway penned a letter to the *Freeman's Journal* (reprinted in the *Nation*) detailing the specifics of his remaining legal matter:

the only litigation I am involved in consists in my being served, at his lordship's suit, with a writ from the Queen's Bench, ordering or compelling me to remove a certain causeway which "obstructed his right of way, flooded his mountain lands," &c.; and that I owe Lord Ardilaun nothing accept thanks for his kind invitations to dinner, &c., which I declined, and for the promise of a site, together with assistance to build a church, which promise he has not yet fulfilled. ("Case of Father Conway" 3)

As illustrated by Conway's passive aggression (i.e. declined dinner invitation and promised church site), he would not submit to Ardilaun's charms like Lavelle. In the same published letter, Conway capitalizes upon this opportunity to vilify Ardilaun:

The causeway, I may remark, consists of a pile of loose stones,

heaped up according to the plans of the eminent engineer, Mr. Nimmo, and intended as the foundation of a passage or bridge across a deep, dangerous ferry in a certain part of Lough Mask. This construction has been raised at the expense of over £100, and supplied by my venerated Archbishop and the Land League Relief Committee. It gave employment without demoralising with charity during three or four weeks of last year to over one hundred families. . . . The necessity and the utility of the work may be judged from the facts that scarcely a year passes without one or more deaths being caused directly or indirectly by the want which was attempted to be supplied; that the 250 families who reside inside this ferry had, previous to its construction, no other means of crossing except by small boat; and when bringing stock to fair or market, even in the depth of Winter, they had been obliged to swim them at very considerable risk, and not infrequent loss. . . . The very first call I attended inside the ferry was to the mother of a large family whose sickness and death were caused by being obliged to stay out all night. In February last year's poor widow, who was detained here waiting for her dole of relief meal till late at night, proceeded as far as the ferry on her way home. She tried in vain to awake the ferryman, and was obliged to remain on the shore all night. Next morning she endeavored to reach her little cabin, situated high up on the steep mountain side, but was unable to proceed further

than a neighbor's house at the foot, where she took ill and died in a few days, her death having been caused by fever brought on by hunger and exposure. ("Case of Father Conway" 3)

The image painted (perhaps intentionally) by Conway, echoing the crossing of River Styx as the ferryman delivers their poor souls to their wretched "underworld," certainly adds dramatic flair.

Conway ignored the court order. In January 1882, the matter returned to court as Conway (and Patrick Kearny of Clonbur) was found in:

contempt of his lordship's court in not desisting from allowing a certain causeway or building or embankment which they had erected to continue over as inlet of Lough Mask, the same embankment being an obstruction to the navigation of the lake and the plaintiff's right of way. Judgment ordering the removal of this embankment was made by his lordship on the 2[-]th June 1881, and the writ of injunction was issued on 19th July following. The case, it may be remembered, excited a good deal of interest, one branch of it being the prosecution of Father Conway at the local petty sessions for an alleged assault upon a bailiff, James McGrath, who went to serve a summons upon him on board the steamer Eglinton, on Lough Mask, at which petty sessions Major Traill, R.M. imposed a sentence of imprisonment on the reverend gentleman, which was afterward quashed. ("Chancery Division" 2)

At the proceeding in January 1882, Mr. Campion, Queen's Counsel:

read an affidavit sworn by Lord Ardilaun's agent Mr. Wm. Burke, and filed on the 7th December, in which he showed that up to the present moment his lordship's decree had been set at defiance by the defendants. In the sixth paragraph Mr. Burke says -- "Notwithstanding said decree and writ of injunction the defendants have not removed the said obstruction or say part thereof, and they have allowed the causeway, buildings, and works to remain on the lake and to obstruct its navigation, and they have wholly disregarded the injunction of this court." The affidavit further stated that the defendant believed it would be impossible to effect personal service of any notice of motion on either of the defendants, and that James McGrath should be in fear of assault if he attempted to do so. ("Chancery Division" 2)

Mr. Campion, Q.C. asked the Vice-Chancellor of the proceeding to "call in the terms of the notice of motion" ("Chancery Division" 2). The Vice-Chancellor asked "if there were any appearance for the defendants. Mr. Campion replied that on the 2nd of January a notice of this motion was served on their solicitor, who did not appear to be in attendance now" ("Chancery Division" 2). The Vice-Chancellor indicates he "could do nothing because it is not endorsed. There is no statement in the affidavits that the copy of the judgment bears the endorsement required by the general orders. So that I can only make an order as regards the writ of injunction" ("Chancery Division" 2). Surprised by the Vice-Chancellors use of such a technicality, Campion

points out "Before these orders were served I came in here, and called your lordship's attention to the fact that endorsement was not there. Your lordship thought the endorsement unnecessary on account of the negative character of the orders. However, we will be content with your lordship's order as regards the writ of injunction" ("Chancery Division" 2). The Vice-Chancellor replied:

That it will be for breach of the injunction that you seek the attachment? Mr. Campion-Yes. The Vice-Chancellor-We have to contend against absurd rules in this court for enforcing mandatory orders. This court shutting its eyes to the 'real substance of things' merely hints. Instead of saying, 'I command you to remove' such a thing, we say, 'I command you to desist from continuing to allow so-and-so to remain' (laughter). It is a great defect in our administration. I think the safest thing would be to give you an order for the attachment against the defendant for breach of the injunction, and to say that that shall not issue provided that within one month from this date the obstruction be removed, and let copies of this order be served on the parties through the post by registered letter.

("Chancery Division" 2)

Why is it the Vice-Chancellor utilized a loophole to avoid enacting the consequences of Conway being in contempt of the court? What did the Vice-Chancellor mean when he stated, "shutting its eyes to the 'real substance of things'?" The "real substance" is clearly a veiled reference to the violence found in Conway's wake.

Specifically, it was a reference to "Lord Ardilaun's bailiff [Huddy], who served the writ of injunction, [who] was one of the person's recently murdered within a very short distance of this locus in quo" ("Chancery Division" 2). The Vice-Chancellor made the connection that if you crossed Conway, you were either beaten or dead.

At approximately nine o'clock in the morning on January 3, 1882, Joseph Huddy,<sup>54</sup> aged 74 years and his grandson John, aged approximately 17 years, left their farm in Creevagh, County Mayo and set out to serve rent processes on some of Lord Ardilaun's tenants in the village of Cloughbrack, County Galway ("Lough" 10). Joseph (approximately aged 41 years), the elder Huddy's son, indicated he wished to accompany his father on this trip; Joseph contended "he asked to be allowed to go with him, but the old man refused, saying that it would look as if he wanted protection" ("Lough" 10). The two men were driven by Michael Coyne ("Lough" 10). According to the driver, the pair dismounted the car about ten o'clock just prior to reaching the village, approximately five English miles from their home in Creevagh ("Lough" 10). Joseph asked the driver to meet them about one-half an English mile up the road ("Lough" 10). The driver testified he waited for hours, until four o'clock, despite the fact the estimated time to serve all of the notices was "perhaps half-an-hour" ("Lough" 10). At four o'clock Coyne drove about and inquired about the pair with the police ("Lough" 10). Witnesses, other than Coyne, testified

54. It is highly likely this is the same Joseph Huddy of Creevagh that was kidnapped by Father Peter Conway that still "plumped" for Higgins during the election of 1857 (Griffith's Valuation).

they heard gunshots between noon and one o'clock (Lough" 10). The police searched for the bodies, but to no avail; they concluded they must have dumped into Lough Mask ("Lough" 10). The Queen's gunboat named *Banterer* was brought to Lough Mask to conduct the search for the bodies ("Lough" 10). After "The search was continued for more than a fortnight without success, but at last, about eleven o'clock on the forenoon of Friday last [January 27]" the bodies were found at a depth of twenty-four feet ("Lough" 10). Huddy's grandson, John was found first. He was placed in a bag, head first and was weighted down with a stone ("Lough" 10). Bailiff Huddy was not placed in a sack; "They merely wrapped his own overcoat around him, and having firmly fastened a large stone round his legs and threw him into the water" ("Lough" 10). In the news account it was noted that the bodies were remarkably preserved ("Lough" 10). This fact was also noted in Sir Alfred Turner's *Sixty Years of a Soldier's Life*: "they were not in the least decomposed, owing to the action of the peat which formed the bottom of the lake" (61). Cause of death for both was gunshot; John received two bullets to the head and Joseph received five bullet wounds, one being in the middle of his forehead ("Lough" 10).

In *Maamtrasna: The Murders and the Mystery*, Jarlath Waldron references:

The great boon of a makeshift bridge by the indomitable Fr Watt Conway of Clonbur, although honoured in song and in story had, unfortunately, been swept away by a flood in the winter of 1881, thus returning two hundred and fifty homes to their former isolation. In effect, this area of Joyce country was totally landlocked.

Maamtrasna was remote and inaccessible; abandoned by Church and State, the people were left to their own devices to make their own laws and to meet their own crises and feuds. They were left to fashion their own codes, their ethics and morals. (10)

Waldron makes reference to Father Watt Conway of Clonbur. Upon examination of many Catholic Directories for Ireland, Father Watt Conway of Clonbur (or Ross) does not exist (*Catholic Directory 1838; Batterby's 1852, 1853, 1858; Sadlier's 1855, 1864, 1871, 1879, 1881; Irish Catholic Directory 1865, 1866, 1869, 1872, 1873, 1874, 1876, 1878*). As such, it is reasonable to infer the passage speaks to Father Walter (Walt?) Conway of Clonbur. In comparing Waldron's passage to Conway's October 29, 1881 letter in the *Freeman's Journal*, they are similar in that they both reference exactly 250 families being isolated without this causeway/bridge and that the location is consistent with the location of the Huddy murders ("Chancery Division" 2) and the "Béal a tSnamha (Ferry)" location as indicated on Waldron's map of "Maamtrasna Country" (inside front cover). Waldron indicates Conway's bridge provided the isolated people of Joyce Country with access to villages and a market place. The people were indebted to Conway. As illustrated, Conway loathed Lord Ardilaun. This hatred no doubt was amplified by Lord Ardilaun taking measures to remove the causeway, thus returning the 250 families to relative isolation. As Waldron stated, "the people [of Joyce Country] were left to their own devices to make their own laws and to meet their own crises and feuds" (10). During his testimony to the Parnell Commission, Land Leaguer J.J. Louden credited the



murders of Feerick, Lord Mountmorres, Lyden, and the Huddys to a Joyce Country secret society: "the murders were the work of a secret society which was at enmity with the Land League, and which was known as the 'Herds' League,' a society which was especially strong in the wild region known as the Joyce country" (Macdonald 285).

Following the Huddy murders, the Honorable D. Plunket, MP (a contemporary of Lord Ardilaun) indicated the deceased Joseph Huddy was "popular, despite the calling which he pursued" ("The Lough Plunket" 3). Plunket also stated "there was no hardship in this case" and that "the tenants had not been asked for three years to pay any rent" ("The Lough Plunket" 3). Two local curates took exception to these statements and were unable to let these words lie. Below is an excerpt of their letter that was published in the *Freeman's Journal*:

As a matter of fact, the great majority of those whom Huddy was serving with ejectment processes, or "death warrants," owed no more than one year's rent last November, excluding the running half gale, as appears from the processes themselves. Nearly every day we meet some of the tenants, and we believe that in the west of Ireland there are not such wretched objects to be found. Nor can this be a matter of astonishment, seeing that in most cases their rent is considerably over the valuation, in some cases nearly twice, and in others up to nearly four times the valuation. In reference to Huddy's popularity, we are sorry to state he has been always the most unpopular of an unpopular

class, and his unpopularity is on no recent growth. He has been unpopular ever since the great famine of '47. We, of course, deprecate the murder, but it is not right that hon. M.P.'s should make erroneous statements, and we trust that the hon. member for Dublin University will in future speak from more correct information.

-Mark Eagleton, C.C. Michael MacHugh, C.C.

("The Lough Plunket" 3)

While the degree of sensitivity shown to the grieving family roughly six weeks after the murder is certainly questionable, it is the signatures that are worthy of mention. What is absent from the excerpt is the home parish for the two reverend gentlemen -- Clonbur. Fathers Mark Eagleton and Michael McHugh were colleagues of Father Conway ("Lough Mask Our Reporter" 5; "Lough Mask Tragedy" 11; *Sadlier's 1883*; "We have received a communication..." 5). This letter to the Editor of the *Freeman's Journal* bears a marked resemblance to Conway's newspaper campaign to discredit Lord Ardilaun.

Not only did Bailiff Huddy serve Conway with the writ of injunction on behalf of Lord Ardilaun, but the date of the murders, January 3, immediately followed Conway's solicitor being served on January 2. The gruesome method and the trials that followed earned the Huddy murders international attention. But there is another reason the murders received so much attention. The Huddy murders took place near the vicinity of Lord Mountmorres' murder in September 1880, which falls within

Father Conway's parish. Conway is connected to this murder as well, in a most interesting way.

Lord Mountmorres' murder took place on September 25, 1880. On September 26, 1880, the very next day after the murder, the village of Clonbur hosted its first Land League demonstration of which Conway was a chief organizer ("Clonbur Demonstration" 3). In his demonstration speech, Conway stated:

As he [Conway] was coming to Clonbur to say Mass upon that day He [Conway] observed a pool of human blood and beside it a corpse of that unfortunate nobleman, through whose veins the blood coursed as freely on the previous day as in those of any of them. As a minister of peace he [Conway] could not too strongly deprecate assassination, but he should also say that the charge brought against the Land League in connection with the matter must have emanated from hell. The Land League was a peaceful and constitutional body, which would not countenance murder as part of its programme. It was true that the deceased was a bad landlord, but he was also bad in very many other respects, as they all know. ("Clonbur Demonstration" 3)

The Clonbur Demonstration was a relatively high profile meeting due to the fact American journalist, James Redpath<sup>55</sup> was a principal speaker (see Table 9 for

55. American journalist James Redpath was an active participant in the early Land League movement (Hannen 59). He was present at the Clonbur Demonstration ("Clonbur Demonstration" 3).

other principal attendees) ("Clonbur Demonstration" 3). As such, it was most likely to warrant journalistic presence. However, the murder of Lord Mountmorres the previous day ensured press coverage at the Clonbur Demonstration. Was the timing of Mountmorres' murder and the Clonbur Land League Demonstration merely a coincidence? Or is it possible, the murder was timed to heighten the dramatic flair of Conway's Land League demonstration.

Lord Mountmorres' murder, it appears, did not have negative effect upon the villagers of Clonbur. In fact, despite a roadside blood stain, it was reported to be a jovial atmosphere: "Mr. [James] Redpath was serenaded at the residence of Father [Walter] Conway in the evening by two bands and a great concourse of people" ("Mr. James Redpath" 7).

While investigating the murder of Lord Mountmorres, a reporter wrote the following:

At nine o'clock I proceeded in my car, in which I had jaunted from Tuam to Ebor Hall [Mountmorres' estate], for the purpose of making more inquiries respecting the deceased and his relations with his tenantry. That road -- a particularly lonely one -- was lined at certain points with men evidently of the labouring class, whose attention to one as he passed was particularly striking. Just before reaching the scene of the murder I was overtaken by the Rev. Father Conway, Curate of Clonbur, the parish in which the deceased lived. The priest who has made himself very conspicuous among those who are

agitating for a reform of the land laws, very willingly dismounted at the spot where the deceased fell, and gave his opinions freely as the cause of the crime. He utterly repudiated any idea of the man Sweeney, who is in custody on suspicion of the murder, being in the least degree associated with the crime. He told me that Sweeney had rented some land from Lord Mountmorres, and had paid his rent by his labour as herd. Recently, however, there had been a difference between his lordship and the man, which resulted in Lord Mountmorres desiring the person to quit his service. . . . Father Conway assures me that he thinks Sweeney's innocence in the perpetration of the crime to be well established, and he attributes the outrage to a well-organised scheme on the part of professional agitators. Said he "I could have believed that Sweeney might have been capable of molesting him with a stick, but poor man, I know he is in no way versed in the use of a rifle and without a doubt a rifle was used in this case. Then, again, he is a simple minded man, while that spot selected for the commission of his crime indicates a well-learned lesson. You will see from the pool of blood that the deceased fell at the foot of a steep hill. His horse, whatever its powers, must necessarily have walked this hill. Thus the murder must have been planned to be perpetrated while the horse was going at a walking pace,

and without doubt, while the deceased was off his guard." ("The Murder of Lord" 6)

The degree of crime specificity Conway conveys is startling. One cannot help but wonder if Conway's pontification is nothing more than a narcissistic exhibition of his own genius or is he trying to defend a man he knows is innocent. Arguably, it is reminiscent of the Lavelle/Walsh insinuation of Conway attending the Cong demonstration in secret in order to watch the "explosion" after his letter of apology was read.

After reading his interview regarding Lord Mountmorres' murder, Conway:

complains that his statements have been misrepresented, and that words have been put into his mouth which are admittedly only an inference from something he did say, and an inference which he says could not reasonably have been drawn from his words. All that he did say in reference to the probable actors in that murder was that it did not appear to be done locally. On this was reported that he "attributed the outrage to a well-organised scheme on the part of professional agitators." Father Conway states not only that he used no words, but no words that could possibly be construed into such meaning. Father Conway adds that there are no persons in Ireland at present to who the term of "professional agitators" could apply except to the Land League, and he himself is a member of that body, so it would be most unlikely he would have said anything like what he

is reported to have said. ("The Murder of Lord" 6)

Assuming the journalist used some poetic license, it is unlikely (but possible) he would have completely fabricated the explicit detail written in the article. Secondly, the emphasis of Conway's recant is focused upon the phrase "professional agitators." He contends only one organization can be considered "professional agitators" -- the Land League. However, a "secret society" fits the bill nicely. Recall, J.J. Louden attributes Lord Mountmorres' murder to the Joyce Country Herds' League (Macdonald 285). Perhaps Conway used the ruse of the Land League to cast suspicions away from the local secret society.

As previously mentioned, Father O'Malley of the Neale knew the potential violence of the local secret societies. In his impassioned Cong Demonstration speech in July 1880, O'Malley emphasized it is the duty of parish priests to become leaders in their local branch of the Land League. As evidenced by his efforts to eliminate violence associated with the Boycott Affair, O'Malley fought to undermine the violence of the secret societies. Arguably, his call for priests to become Land League leaders was an attempt to find allies in his fight against the agrarian violence plaguing the area. Father Conway answered his call and organized Clonbur's demonstration on September 26, 1880.

The Clonbur Land League Demonstration was an atypical Land League meeting due to the fact it immediately followed a high profile murder. Its chief organizer, Father Walter Conway maligned the victim at the demonstration by calling Lord Mountmorres a "bad landlord" and indicating he was "also bad in very many

other respects" ("Clonbur Demonstration" 3). Conway's disdain for local landlords did not end with Mountmorres. Following his arrival to the Lough Mask area in 1879 (*Sadlier's 1878, 1879*), Conway wasted no time in villifying the philanthropic Lord Ardilaun. Their battle became increasingly public throughout 1880 and 1881 ("Case of Father Conway" 3; "Chancery Division" 2; "Cong Demonstration" 7; "Lord Ardilaun 7; Moran, *Radical* 166; "The Rev. Mr. Conway" 6). The battle over Joyce Country's causeway illustrated Conway's penchant for violence (assault upon McGrath) and defiance (court order) ("The Case of Father Conway: Reversal" 15; "The Case of the Rev. Mr. Conway, Clonbur" 5; "Chancery Division" 2). The causeway controversy also illustrates the unconditional support of some of the peasantry whose use of ostracization led to the reversal of Conway's sentence ("The Case of Father Conway: Reversal" 15; "The Case of the Rev. Mr. Conway, Clonbur" 5). As the litigation surrounding the causeway intensified, Lord Ardilaun's veteran bailiff Joseph Huddy and his grandson were murdered and disposed of in Lough Mask near the causeway in question ("Chancery Division" 2; "Lough" 10). As illustrated by the actions (ignored Conway's contempt of court) of the intimidated Vice-Chancellor in the January 1882 *Ardilaun vs. Conway* proceeding, Father Walter Conway enjoyed considerable influence in the Lough Mask region and this influence may have manifested itself in the form of violence.



## Chapter 9

### CONCLUSION

Archbishop John MacHale's reign in Tuam lasted over forty-seven years (Waldron, "Making" 88, 96). Irish historian T.W. Moody asserts the archbishop was "the most beloved and respected public figure in Connacht" (*Davitt* 303).

Accordingly, this nationalist prelate wielded tremendous influence. As indicated, the dissention between MacHale and his nemesis the Archbishop of Dublin Paul Cullen (made Cardinal in 1867) extended to the secular political arena (Bane 46-47; Larkin, *Historical* 73, 81). The Mayo Election of 1857 illustrates this conflict as MacHale fought vehemently against Cullen's candidate -- George Gore Ouseley Higgins (supporter of the "Pope's Brass Band") (Jordan, *Land* 176). As discussed in *Clerical Influence: Election and Intimidation*, Father Peter Conway led MacHale's charge against Higgins (Cullen) utilizing violence and even guerrilla tactics to accomplish his mission (*Mayo Minutes, 1857* 18-19, 56). As evidenced by the Conway-induced, collective violence of the electoral mob, members of the mob were Conway's pawns (de la Roche 99, 102, 105). Perhaps, Father Peter Conway was MacHale's pawn.

Since the days of Hierophilus (c. 1820), MacHale fought the battle of the "Biblicals" (O'Reilly 76). As previously presented, Partry was the epicenter of proselytism (Moran, *Radical* 15-16). In 1858, MacHale sent the dogged,

controversial Father Patrick Lavelle to Partry to attack these recruitment efforts (Moran, *Radical* 15). Lavelle led a very public campaign where he skillfully harnessed the media and regularly employed intimidation tactics ("Court" 4; Moran, *Radical* 20-23; "Provinces" 6). Lavelle, himself was allegedly assaulting at times ("County Galway" 4; "Father" 6; Moran, *Radical* 23). The Partry parishioners heeded Lavelle as they, too utilized violence to support Lavelle's agenda ("Dreadful" 2; Moran, *Radical* 23). By the time he was reassigned to the parish of Cong, the Biblicals had not gained any ground (Moran, *Radical* 44). Prior to his transfer to Cong, Lavelle was one of, if not the most ardent of, MacHale's soldiers.

Archbishop MacHale was an early supporter of the Home Rule Movement and fought tirelessly for denominational education ("Home Rule" 6; "Irish Education" 14-15; "Lenten" 5; "On Monday night" 1). During the Galway Election of 1872, Captain John Nolan was MacHale's candidate as he supported both initiatives (McCaffrey, "Federalism" 13). This election benefited from the union of Father Peter Conway and Father Patrick Lavelle. Intimidation tactics similar to those used in the Mayo Elections of 1852 and 1857 were employed in concert with Lavelle's savvy use of media (*Minutes Galway Election* 14, 68, 71, 85, 86, 99, 141, 153-155; Moran, *Radical* 137). When Thomas Burke sought the assistance of Archbishop MacHale with respect to Lavelle's "deathknell" and "liar" references, MacHale "clarified" Lavelle's true intention (*Minutes Galway Election* 49). Essentially, MacHale defended Lavelle (*Minutes Galway Election* 49). What is clear is that in the Diocese of Tuam, intimidation tactics, threats, and violence were tolerated, provided they

benefitted MacHale's political agenda (Larkin, *Historical* 107, 128). Two of MacHale's most radical "perfect tyrants" -- Conway and Lavelle -- domiciled in the Lough Mask region (Kavka 602-603). Conway and Lavelle led their parishioners through fear and their tyranny forged a culture of priest-sanctioned violence (de la Roche 99-105; Kavka 602-603; Tessler and Robbins 307-308). This mindset shifted the onus of responsibility away from the individual (de la Roche 102). As discussed, the followers conceivably did not believe they were culpable if their actions were in the name of their priest (Tessler and Robbins 307-308).

St. Jarlath's College in Tuam was arguably one of the most active Fenian centres in Connacht (Jordan, "Power" 50). Consequently, its students were active in the smuggling of arms (Moran, *Radical* 146). St. Jarlath's College is under the Archbishop of Tuam's jurisdiction (Jordan, *Land* 188). It is inconceivable MacHale was unaware of this high volume Fenian activity that took place under his nose, literally. As such, MacHale has been deemed a "Fenian sympathizer" (Larkin, *Historical* 107; Moody, *Davitt* 45). Concurrent to the period of arms smuggling, the Province of Connacht experienced a sharp increase in agrarian violence between the late 1860s and the early 1870s ("Alleged Crime" 4; Jordan, *Land* 183). Fenian-steeped Ribbon Societies sought to avenge their grievances, often under the guise of "Rory of the Hills" ("County Mayo" 6; Moore 374; "Outrages" 4; "Richard" 1). MacHale's peers condemned such violence, but not MacHale ("Archbishop Cashel" 3; "Landlordism and Ribbonism" 8; "Lenten" 5). MacHale's conspicuous silence may have been perceived as the nod of approval by such societies.

MacHale's permissive attitude toward nationalist endeavors fostered an ethos of radical clericalism and parishioner acceptance. This culture was not sudden, it was honed over time as his archiepiscopal began in 1834 (Bane 45). And it is in this culture that Fenian sympathizer Father John O'Malley of the Neale and Father Walter Conway of Clonbur were schooled (Moran, *Rise* 175; "Solemn Requiem" 6).

O'Malley's influence was presented at length within the context of his Land League presidency and the Boycott expedition. However, it is worth emphasizing that O'Malley's influence was greater in the Lough Mask region in the spring of 1880 than Charles Stewart Parnell himself (Moran, "Daly" 199). Again, this is evidenced by John O'Connor Power garnering the most votes in the general election of 1880 (Parnell's tally was second and Browne was ousted) due to O'Malley's campaign efforts (Moran, "Daly" 199). O'Malley found in the Land League a non-oath bound, association for the improvement of tenant conditions ("Ballinrobe Demonstration" 7; "Cong Demonstration" 7). To O'Malley, its non-violent program seemed the perfect outlet to channel the covert activities of the local secret societies ("Anti-Eviction" 2; "Invasion" 6). Under O'Malley's leadership, the Boycott affair received international attention (Moran, "Origins" 55). The conditions were ripe for riot, but O'Malley controlled his flock ("End of the Boycott" 3; "Invasion of Mayo" 5). The Central Land League's decision to not support the trek to Lord Erne in Fermanagh was seen as a betrayal of the League's founding mission ("The Moore" 2). It is through O'Malley's response to this betrayal that his fears regarding the prevalence and influence of secret societies are articulated ("The Moore" 2). But as O'Malley was

concerned about a swell in secret society activity ("The Moore" 2; Waldron, *Maamtrasna* 17), his neighboring colleague appears conspicuously close to such activity.

The Vice-Chancellor presiding over *Ardilaun vs. Conway* intimated that violence was imminent if you crossed Father Walter Conway ("Chancery Division" 2). This premise is of particular interest when examining the murders of Lord Mountmorres, Joseph Huddy, and John Huddy.

Father Walter Conway of Clonbur is tangentially linked to the murder of Lord Mountmorres ("The Murder of Lord" 6). Conway's own words indicate he was unsuccessful in convincing Mountmorres to rescind the eviction of Patrick Sweeney prior to the murder ("The Murder of Lord" 6). Following the murder, Conway was found at the scene of the crime by a *Freeman's Journal* reporter ("The Murder of Lord" 6). Conway proceeded to describe the murder with startling specificity ("The Murder of Lord" 6). His description even included nuances to the landscape that would yield the most efficient kill ("The Murder of Lord" 6). His words suggest only a man of "well-learned lesson" could plan such a well-thought out assassination ("The Murder of Lord" 6).

In the fall of 1881, sheriff's bailiff James McGrath attempted to serve a summons on Father Conway ("Case of the Rev. Mr. Conway, Clonbur" 5; "Chancery Division" 2). Conway assaulted the bailiff and was subsequently sentenced to two months hard labor ("Case of the Rev. Mr. Conway, Clonbur" 5). On appeal, shortly after, the sentence was rescinded due to McGrath's refusal to prosecute ("Case of

Father Conway: Reversal" 15). McGrath's "change of heart" was attributed to the widespread ostracization he and the others who testified endured following the verdict ("Case of Father Conway: Reversal" 15). The assault demonstrates Conway's propensity for violence. The ostracization illustrates Conway's network was relatively vast ("Case of Father Conway: Reversal" 15). McGrath et al were afraid of Conway ("Case of Father Conway: Reversal" 15).

The Conway-Lord Ardilaun conflict surrounding the Lough Mask causeway escalated during the latter months of 1881 ("Case of Father Conway" 3; "Chancery Division" 2). Conway's refusal to acknowledge the court ordered removal of the causeway forced Ardilaun's hand ("Chancery Division" 2). The timing of the January 2, 1882 serving of the notice of motion to Conway's solicitor and the January 3, 1882 murder of the Huddys is striking ("Chancery Division" 2; "Lough" 10). Returning the families of Joyce Country to relative isolation through the removal of the causeway could certainly be construed as a motive ("Case of Father Conway" 3). Recall, the Huddys were murdered in close proximity to the murder scene of Lord Mountmorres (Waldron, *Maamtrasna* inside cover). As indicated earlier, Land Leaguer J.J. Louden attributed the Lord Mountmorres and the Huddy murders to the work of the secret society, Herd's League of Joyce Country (Macdonald 285).

Considerable effort has been placed herein establishing the tradition of peasant violence in the name of their priest in the Lough Mask region. Assuming this assertion is true, Lough Mask clerical leaders possessed tremendous influence in manipulating local violence. Father O'Malley, for a time, successfully manipulated

his followers to curtail violence during the Boycott expedition. Yet, it appears Father Conway not only engaged in violent acts personally, but he was well aware of the secret society violence within his own parish. Arguably, through his actions he encouraged the violence of the local secret society.

Whether Father Walter Conway participated in or was cognizant of the planning of the Mountmorres and Huddy murders remains unknown. However, what is known is that in the Lough Mask region, as a result of the entrenched culture, Father Conway did indeed possess the power to manipulate his flock away from such violent acts. But he chose not to do so.

The murders in and around Joyce Country did not end with Joseph and John Huddy in 1882:

On the night of August 17<sup>th</sup>, 1882, a party of men broke into a house in this village [Maamtrasna], occupied by a man named John Joyce, murdered him, his mother, wife, and a younger daughter, and inflicted upon his two sons, the only other occupants of the house, injuries so severe, that one of them died the following day (Harrington 7).

The Maamtrasna Massacre received international attention and the circumstances surrounding the trial and subsequent executions challenged the methods and integrity of the British legal system (Harrington 7-15).

It is interesting to note that *Sadlier's Catholic Directory, 1883*, published January 1, 1883, indicates Father Water Conway was no longer affiliated with

Clonbur (53). Father Walter Conway was reassigned to the parish of Knock and Aghamore in Ballyhaunis, County Mayo under the direction of the Archdeacon of Tuam the Very Reverend B. Cavanagh (*Sadlier's 1883* 52-53). By the time of publication of the *Sadlier's Catholic Directory, 1884* Conway was once again reassigned, this time to the parish of Killeen in Spiddal, County Galway (*Sadlier's 1884* 52). It is curious Conway's transfer occurred following such local violence. Aside from the *Sadlier Catholic Directory*, this author has been unable to locate any public reference to Conway's transfer to Knock or his departure from Clonbur in the *Freeman's Journal* or the *Nation*. Due to the fact Conway had a considerable following, it seems odd not to be mentioned. It appears to have been done quietly. It begs the question, was Conway reassigned purposely to be supervised by the Archdeacon Cavanagh? While the scope of this research concludes with the Huddy murders, it is clear the story of Father Walter Conway is far from complete.

Born in Claremorris, Father Walter Conway was raised amongst the Mayo peasantry ("Solemn Requiem" 7). Having been ordained at Maynooth in 1873, Conway's was exposed to a nationalist extra-curricular program (Larkin, "Church, State" 1255; "Solemn Requiem" 7). His nationalist spirit endured and is evidenced in his involvement with the Gaelic League and his commitment to rejuvenating the Irish Language (*Full Report Oireachtas* 4, 5, 14). Conway conducted lecture tours in Great Britain and the United States to "collect funds for churches and schools in the parishes he ministered" ("Solemn Requiem" 7). Father Conway lived twenty-two years beyond his retirement from the parish of Glenamaddy, County Galway. He



died in 1941 at the age of ninety-three ("Solemn Requiem" 7). It appears Father Conway ultimately channeled his nationalism towards academic leadership and parishioner welfare. However, Conway's journey following the murders in the Lough Mask region up until his death is ripe for examination.

Gerard Moran first recognized the complexities of the priest-parishioner relationship in the Lough Mask region with his pioneering research on Father Patrick Lavelle. Father Jarlath Waldron reawakened popular interest in the Maamtrasna Massacre with his *Maamtrasna: The Murders and the Mystery*. Arguably, both works call for extended regional research. *Spiritual Tyranny?: An Examination of Post-Famine Clerical Influence in the Lough Mask Region* attempts to illustrate significant clerical influence and its coexistence with agrarian violence in the Lough Mask region. However, the examples contained herein are far from exhaustive; there is still much work to be completed. Similarly, it is difficult to believe the Lough Mask region was unique. Clerical influence and militant priests certainly extended beyond Connacht. Perhaps similar examination in other provinces could highlight regional nuances.

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